

Oxford for Romania Summer School

Evaluation report 2017

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Foreword



Now in its second year, the Oxford for Romania Summer School became a life-changing opportunity for high school students in Romania. The project was born out of a genuine concern for young people's limited access to high-quality teaching and career advice. Helped by generous sponsors and individual donors, a handful of volunteers from Oxford and London designed a transformative experience for young people with great academic potential coming from less privileged backgrounds.

The aim of this initiative is to connect these young minds with the latest discoveries and help young people cultivate a growth mindset and critical thinking to become engaged citizens and future professionals who can bring a positive change in the world, wherever they are.

Our volunteer lecturers and guest speakers inspired by the Oxford style of teaching challenged students to discover and reflect on critical topics, from automation and vaccines to media stereotypes and non-conventional civic engagement.

Students also discovered various career paths with the help of remarkable professionals working in companies, charities, hospitals and international institutions.

The project gained a life on its own, garnered by motivated volunteers, generous supporters and enthusiastic alumni. Some participants have launched their own initiatives and are following their goals more determined than ever. The contact with teenagers, as well as with volunteers contributed to creating a dynamic network of professionals who share an ethos underpinned by values like equality of chances, responsibility, autonomy, professional excellence and community engagement.

Guided by the strong belief in empowering their younger peers to make better decisions for their future and, in turn, help others, organisers are determined to dedicate their time to improve and advance this cause. This brief report shows the worthiness of this prospect.

Acknowledgements

The "Oxford for Romania" Summer School was made possible through the generosity of our donors.

Strategic partners in the UK

The Ratiu Family Charitable Foundation
 Sir George Iacobescu CBE, CEO Canary Wharf
 Bill Parker, Oxford alumnus, Jesus College
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 Anthony R Rowsell, DPhil (Oxon), FRCS, FRACS,
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Strategic partners in Romania

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 DMV Aviatech Timisoara



Crowdfunding supporters

Additional support was received from individual donors through an online fundraising campaign:

Alexandra Copos, Mihai Vidrighin, Paul Baltescu, Eliza Gheorghe, Andrei Teodor, Ciprian Ploștinar, Anne-Marie Martin, Mădălina Morariu, Adrian Ștefan, Alma Iatan, Dana Untescu, Andrei Gheorghe, Măriuca Morariu, Bogdan Cartas, Richard Bossons, Giovanna Gatti, Livia Dinu, Mihaela Verman, Petru Vaida, Vlad Mixich, Florin Chelaru, Marian Cociș, Radu Sora, Ștefan Luca, Radu Cioată, Radu Ciortan, Radu Chirvăsuță, Andrea Balsamo, Cătălin Condurache, Jack V, Anca Bunda, Adrian Munteanu, Alexandra Trîmbițașu, Răzvan Valentin Marinescu, Cătălina A, Corina Mavrodin, Paul Balogh, Ioana Pristoleanu, Alex Rizea, Alexandra A, Corina Gurău, Irina Ștefănescu, Cristian R., Jamie Buchanan-Dunlop, Mihaela Măstăcaneanu, Alexandru Barbu, Radu Pleșa, Emil Lucian Măgurean, Razvan D., Lili Ciobanu, Liviu Gajora, Octav Prihoi, Cosmina Dorobanțu, Paula P, Bogdan Metea, Cristina Ludușan, Radu Coșeru, Lucia Mirela Feleaga, Mehdi Aminian, Bogdan Toader, Andy Ronn, Carlos Gavidia, Bogdan Dumitru, Helen Bainbridge, Victor Mihăilescu, Iulia P, Monica E, Bayar Menzat, Andreea Iorga, Adrian Besete, Alexandra Ciubotaru, Silvia Metelli, Andra Necula, Mircea Tifra, Natalia Muntean, and others who preferred to remain anonymous.

Special thanks to the Jesus College, the Oxford Physics Department, Oxford Brookes University and Oxford Robotics Institute for hosting us.

Executive Summary

Oxford for Romania Summer School #2 took place during 26 August - 3 September 2017. In total, 24 students aged 16-18 were selected out of 430 applications from all counties in Romania. Participants were funded with the help of sponsors and crowd-sourced fundraising. The selection was based on their academic potential, proven perseverance, personal statement, teachers' recommendations and financial statements accounting for their family income.

For nine intense days, students took part in a diversity of workshops, multidisciplinary activities, and lectures inspired by the one-to-one Oxford tutoring style. As in the previous year, the volunteer lecturers were young Romanian academics and professionals who had previous teaching experience in both formal and non-formal settings. The lectures were held in various Oxford Colleges, University of Oxford Departments and Oxford Brookes University.

The intensive programme included a mix of core classes and electives adapted to participants' needs and latest research in fields like Robotics, Physics, Astronomy, Biology, Maths, Data Science, Political Culture and Civic Engagement, Public Policy, Medical Imaging, Media Literacy, Computer Graphics, Career Orientation, Neuroscience, Photography, and Linguistics. The schedule was designed with a good balance in mind between classes until dinner time and enriching activities in the evening. These included outdoor teamwork, a 'meet the experts' session, documentary watching and discussion, dance, a talent show, and a trip to London.

A challenging intellectual and emotional journey, the summer school proved to be 'life-changing' for participants, as they mentioned in the final ceremony. They discovered exciting career opportunities and gained new mentors, while boosting their self-confidence, motivation, communication skills and teamwork abilities.

OXFORD FOR ROMANIA 2017 IN NUMBERS

24 PARTICIPANTS

aged 16-18 from 17 counties in Romania



30+ VOLUNTEERS

lecturers, guest speakers, staff

2,000+ HOURS

invested in organising the event



£23,000+

raised from 13 partners and 97 individual donors

£30,000

in-kind contribution worth of advice, time and venue



Application and selection



The call for applications was launched in May 2017 through an email marketing campaign. This targeted school inspectorates and all schools in Romania compiled from the website admitereliceu.ro. The announcement was posted on Facebook and quickly turned viral, with more than 1,500 shares and **184,000 people reached in a couple of days.**

Following the first successful year of the project, a large number of applications was expected. In total, 430 valid applications were received, more than four times as many compared to 2016. Thus, more volunteers in the admissions team mobilized this year to carefully assess the profile of all participants. Another improvement was the new website (www.oxfordforromania.org) and the online application form with automatic upload of documents which helped the team organise the process more efficiently.

The application included several questions evaluating participants' motivation, resilience, community involvement and extracurricular activities, academic performance and potential impact of the school for their future. In addition, candidates submitted maximum three digital documents as part of their personal

portfolio and a letter of recommendation from a teacher or adult with relevant insights into their performance.

Each application was independently assessed by two evaluators who shortlisted 50 candidates. To rigorously assess candidates' communications abilities, potential and family circumstances, this year the admissions team introduced Skype and telephone interviews for all pre-selected candidates. During six weeks of evaluation and deliberation, 24 candidates were selected. Three of them were put on a waiting list due to budgetary constraints. All candidates provided the organisers with documents which proved their family income (an upper limit of £280 per family member was established to encourage pupils from families with modest financial means to apply).

Oxford for Romania offered 23 full scholarships covering the attendance costs, transport, accommodation and maintenance. Another partial scholarship was offered after a last minute donation, with the rest of funding being covered by the local community of the selected participant.

Extra-effort was invested in writing rejection letters, since from a large pool of applicants, more than 24 candidates deserved a slot. All candidates who were not selected received a detailed explanatory email which encouraged them to continue to work hard and aim high.

On top of that, roughly 6% of the candidates mentioned in their applications that they dealt or were still dealing with emotional abuse, domestic violence, bullying or mental health issues. The team asked for advice from an experienced psychologist and social carer to deal with individual cases where a simple rejection letter could have had a negative emotional impact on the teenager. Thus, organisers sent personalised emails to those applicants who needed extra-encouragement and information about their rights, as well as relevant contact people in case they needed help.

Summer school programme

All activities were designed to engage students and make them curious about topics they have little contact with at school or can spark their interest if introduced in a new way. Most classes were crash courses with further recommendations of reading.

Participants were exposed to a variety of topics, such as the future with driverless cars and robots, latest research in particle physics, biology and neuroscience, ethical dilemmas in political philosophy and how to navigate critically through fake news and propaganda.

They were challenged to work in teams, ask questions and be creative. By the end of the programme, participants said that despite the intensive agenda, the school opened up new paths and ideas they never thought about.

During practical workshops, they learned how to design their own 3D airplanes on computers, used logics and linguistic skills to decipher an endangered Uto-Aztec language, calculated the age of the universe, analysed their own habits and biases, learned how to critically deconstruct fake news and worked on their own charitable projects and career plans.



Overall, the school curricula combined four areas of knowledge and skills building:

1 Science and technology

Physics, astronomy, biology, neuroscience, maths, robotics, data science, medical imaging and computer graphics

2 Arts and humanities

Political philosophy, documentary film discussion, photography, linguistics, Socratic text-based dialogue

3 Civic culture and media literacy

Political culture and civic engagement, media literacy and critical thinking

4 Career and personal development

A two-parts workshop on career orientation and personal development, outdoor activities, cultural exchange and 'meet the experts' session



Summer school programme

On top of daily classes and thought-provoking debates, students participated in dance lessons, a London trip and a talent show. Everyone had a chance to show their passions, which ranged from guitar playing, poetry writing, Rubik's cube practice, dancing, theatre playing to singing the Mendeleev's periodic table song.

The highlight of this year was a formal dinner at Jesus College facilitated by one of the sponsors, Bill Parker, Oxford alumnus and philanthropist, who generously negotiated students' free access to lecture rooms and free dinners. He was joined by the Dean of Jesus College, Professor Sir Nigel Shadbolt. The honoured guests were uniquely inspirational for students who were given a glimpse of the academic flavour of Oxford.



What did participants say?

Participants' feedback showed huge enthusiasm and determination to learn independently and take initiative back home. Even the most shy participants came out of their shells to actively participate in classes and deliver surprising speeches at the final ceremony.

They had many chances to offer feedback - during the summer school, in various interactions with our team members on email, Facebook and Skype, in local TV interviews and in the personal letters to their sponsors. A couple of selected comments are mentioned as follows.



“

At every moment of my journey I was exposed to unconditional kindness. Everyday people were good to me with inexplicable eagerness and joy. I took back this habit of desiring to do good and help others without having to explain or think of my motives. October will give me my first chance to express it. That is when we finally begin our project of sharing what we have learned with children from our cities all over the country. It is our way of saying 'thank you'.

- Florin

”

“

It gave me the confidence that dreams can come true through hard work and it showed me that even the wildest goals are reachable.

- Paula

”

“

I wasn't good at Physics at all, or at discussions about governments, but during the sessions I understood all the information that was presented and above all, I liked it! The people I met gave me a pure example of what it means to be an expert and at the same time a simple human being. What they did for us, their work means a lot to me and challenges me to do the same things for others, because I would like to share this joy. - Teodora

”



From the first day, my colleagues and the summer school volunteers have become my second family. I learnt so many things from them, such as how important it is to have the courage to be yourself, to express your thoughts and ideas, to be informed and not to take information for granted. They showed me so many interesting fields that I had no idea about, like data science, medical imaging, neuroscience and also presented us in innovative ways some subjects that we study in high school, like physics, biology and mathematics. - Daria

”



Media coverage

Like last year, the summer school enjoyed wide media coverage. This year, the national broadcasting channel (TVR1) published a video story before the school and followed the group to the airport. With little effort to pitch journalists, participants had local press appearances, enjoying positive exposure after the summer school.

The summer school had over 20 media appearances in 2017, in both local and national media. A selection of media titles (translated from Romanian) with links to original articles can be found below.

Television

August 2017

- Summer school at Oxford for Romanian students with modest financial means, [TVR 1](#)
- Romanian students, on their way to the Oxford University, [TVR 1](#)
- Interview with Teodora Popa, Oxford for Romania 2017 alumna, [Nova TV Medias](#)
- Teodora Popa will participate in the Oxford Summer School, [Nova TV](#)



National media

August 2017

- Oxford for Romania fundraising campaign needs supporters, [Business Review](#)
- The selected high-school students for Oxford for Romania Summer School, [Romania Pozitiva](#)
- Oxford for Romania announces the selected students for the second summer school, [Forbes](#)



Local press



September 2017

- Student at the National College 'Ionita Aslan' awarded scholarship to attend the Oxford for Romania Summer School, [Realitatea Oltului](#)
- Student at the National College 'Ionita Aslan', Bianca Ion, among participants awarded a full scholarship to the Oxford for Romania Summer School, [Adevarul Caracalean](#), [Olt-Alert.ro](#)
- Two high school students from Suceava experimented one week of being a student in Oxford, [Monitorul de Suceava](#)
- "Teens should say what they think, make their voices heard and not block themselves" - the Oxford alumni from Husi, [Monitorul de Vaslui](#)

August 2017

- Two high school students from Piatra-Neamt- 1000 GBP scholarships for attending the Oxford for Romania Summer School, [Ziar Piatra Neamt](#)



- Anda Tenie at the Oxford for Romania Summer School, [Zi-de-zi.ro](#)
- Supporting the Romanian youth by offering access to amazing learning experiences, [Auto-boca blog](#)
- July 2017
 - Medias student at the Oxford for Romania Summer School, [Tribuna](#)

- A girl from Medias at the Oxford for Romania Summer School, [Medias News](#)
- One student from Suceava selected to participate in the Oxford Summer School, [Monitorul de Suceava](#)

May 2017

- The Oxford for Romania Summer School opens a call for applications, [Curier Local](#), [Observator de Calarasi](#)
- High school students invited to apply to the Oxford for Romania Summer School, [Timp Romanesc](#)

Finances

With the help of our sponsors and individual donors, we raised £23,278, which were used to cover participants' transportation, accommodation and subsistence. All costs have been negotiated at preferential rates.

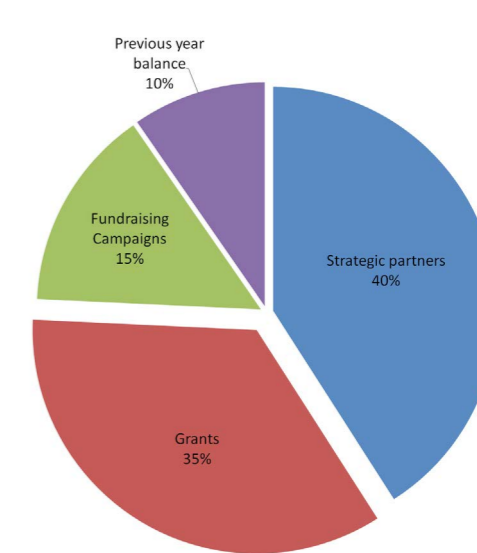
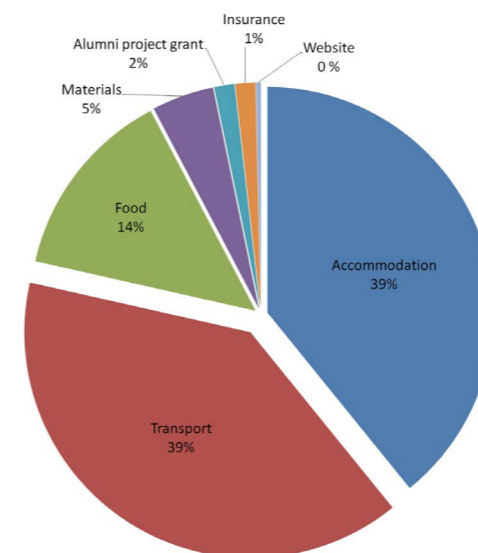
The fundraising team promoted two crowd-funding campaigns which raised £3,770 with the help of 97 donors:

1. [Oxford for Romania Summer School 2017](#) (by the charity Oxford for Romania)
2. [Support a high school student at Oxford for Romania](#) (by Mariuca Morariu who participated in the 30km Transylvania Trail)

Oxford for Romania 2017 Accounts

BALANCE	£5,071.06		
Expenses		Income	
Accommodation	£8,112	Strategic Partners	£10,555.67
Transport	£8,155	Grants	£8,973.20
Food	£2,853	Fundraising Campaigns	£3,770.01
Materials	£920	Previous year balance	£2,486.65
Alumni project grant	£300		£9.64
Insurance	£298		
Website	£77		
Total	£20,714 *	Total	£25,785.53

* Excluding in kind contribution which amounts to £10,000 (lunches, formal dinner and rooms kindly offered by Jesus College with the help of Bill Parker, Oxford alumnus; water from Aqua Carpatica)



Board of Trustees



Monica Enescu (Founder, Fundraising leader, Volunteer lecturer in Medical imaging) is currently working as Research Scientist at Mirada Medical, a company providing medical imaging solutions for cancer care. In 2015, she completed a DPhil in Medical Imaging at the University of Oxford. She also holds an MSc in Biomedical Engineering from the same university. Monica has extensive experience in education, having previously taught both at the University of Oxford and at a number of summer schools. Her area of expertise covers Computer Science, Medical imaging, Numerical methods and C++.



Ciprian Ploștinar (Founder, Volunteer lecturer in Physics) is an Oxford alumnus, having obtained his DPhil in Particle Physics. He is currently a senior scientist at the European Spallation Source, contributing to the construction of the most powerful particle accelerator in the world. He is involved in a number of major international projects in Europe, North America and Asia and continues to have strong links with the University of Oxford through collaborations with the John Adams Institute for Accelerator Science. In addition he takes part in a number of educational and science outreach projects, both in Romania and the UK, with a focus on inspiring and creating opportunities for young people.



Sandor Kruk (Founder, Logisitcs leader, Volunteer lecturer in Astrophysics) is an Oxford student currently studying for a PhD in Astrophysics, within the Galaxy Zoo citizen science project. Member of the Royal Astronomical Society, he is involved in numerous outreach projects in both Romania and the UK. He coordinates the British Astronomy and Astrophysics Olympiad and leads the UK team to the international stages of the Olympiad.



Măriuca Morariu (Communications&Fundraising volunteer, Volunteer lecturer in Media literacy and critical thinking) is the Outreach Manager of Digital Explorer, a Lodon-based social enterprise that brings the real world live to the classroom. She designed and managed pioneering educational programmes and civic campaigns, working for the past seven years in communications, project management and training with charities like Junior Achievement, the CADI Foundation, The Romanian Association for Debate, Oratory and Rhetoric, GRASP, and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. She studied in Romania, Belgium and the Netherlands where she was awarded her MSc in European Communication Studies from the University of Amsterdam.

Board of Trustees



Andra Necula (Admissions leader, Volunteer lecturer in Biology) is currently pursuing her DPhil in Immunology at the University of Oxford. Before she studied Molecular Biology at the University of York. Her research focuses on transplant rejection and the way the immune system can be manipulated so patients will not reject the organs they receive. She has gained practical experience in labs in Australia, Spain, France, Romania and the UK. In her spare time, she worked in several educational projects in both the UK and Romania, with a focus on Outreach and Widening Participation. Currently, she is involved in Aspire Romania, an educational NGO for remarkable young people worldwide. In this capacity, she provides students and young professionals with career guidance, as well as help with university and job applications and self-development opportunities.



Adina Brădeanu (PR, Volunteer lecturer in Film Studies) worked as a researcher for the Museum of the Romanian Peasant in Bucharest before relocating to Oxford, where she is currently the Subject Specialist for Romanian Studies at the Taylor Institution Library, University of Oxford. She is also affiliated to the University of Westminster (London), where she has worked for the Centre for Production and Research of Documentary Film and has taught in the Contemporary Media Practice BA. Since 2013, Adina has been co-programming "One World Romania", a festival of documentary cinema and human rights in Bucharest. Over the past decade, she has researched the professional culture associated with the "Alexandru Sahia" Documentary Studio in Bucharest. In 2014, she started to curate the VINTAGE SAHIA DVD series, which rediscovers the production of the studio.



Oana Romocea (PR leader, Fundraising volunteer, Student group leader) was responsible for PR and Communications at the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford for nine years. Currently, she is using her experience gained in the cultural sector and the education system in the UK by getting involved in various cultural, social and educational projects in Romania.

Volunteers



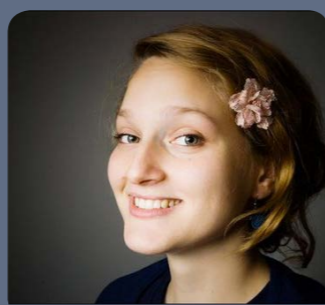
Adrian Gheorghe (Outdoor activities, lecturer in Public Policy) is a health economist with Oxford Policy Management, working on value for money in the health sector, health financing and health sector governance. His projects cover Eastern Europe, Central and South-East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. In his previous role as a research fellow at London School of Hygiene & Tropical medicine he worked on economic evaluation and economic burden of disease studies, health information systems and the Lancet Commission on the future of health in sub-Saharan Africa. He completed his Masters and PhD studies in health economics at the University of Birmingham. In Romania, he is a co-founder of the health services research think tank the Romanian Health Observatory.



Alexandra Năstase (Outdoor activities, Volunteer lecturer in Public Policy) works with governments from Europe, South Asia and East Africa to deliver better policy outcomes for their citizens. She advises on how to drive performance within the government, reduce corruption, and increase administrative capacity. Prior to being a consultant in international development, she worked with the World Bank, United Nations and with civil society organisations. She co-founded and managed a think-tank in international public affairs and collaborated with NGOs as a public policy researcher covering Southeast Europe. Alexandra holds a Master's degree in Public Policy from University of Oxford, having obtained her Bachelor from the Romanian National School for Political Science and Public Administration in Bucharest.



Alexandra Tomescu (Admissions volunteer) is an Oxford alumna, with an MBiochem in Molecular and Cellular Biochemistry, and a DPhil in Condensed Matter Physics (Biophysics). Nowadays, she works in educational publishing where she brings together her love of science and her passion for education to help create student and teacher materials for schools all around the world.



Alma Iatan (Admissions, Volunteer lecturer in Career development) works in technology and helps companies take smart data-driven decisions to grow their business. The vision is simple: she's trying to design a world where companies innovate to put people first. Prior to technology, Alma worked in corporate banking in London and Hong Kong and has an MBA degree from INSEAD Business School.

Volunteers



Bayar Menzat (Logistics, Volunteer lecturer in Neuroscience) is currently a DPhil student in Computational Neuroscience at the University of Oxford. During his undergraduate degree in Computer Science at Essex University he worked in a computer vision lab where he developed gesture recognition algorithms for the Kinect tracking camera. Presently, he is using computer simulations to understand how plasticity shapes reward- and punishment-based learning in the brain of the fruit fly. His enthusiasm for teaching has inspired him to work as a Teaching Assistant for a Graph Theory module aimed at undergraduate students and as a demonstrator for an Introduction to Programming module.



Corina Gurău (Volunteer lecturer in Robotics) is a DPhil student at the Oxford Robotics Institute, working on software that allows robots to better understand their surroundings. Her research lies at the intersection of computer vision and machine learning. She holds a BSc in Computer Science from Jacobs University Bremen in Germany and has previously interned at University of California Los Angeles and Carnegie Mellon University in the United States.



Cristian Roman (Logistics, Volunteer lecturer in Self-driving vehicles) is a postdoctoral researcher at Oxford Brookes University. His areas of interest are wireless sensor networks, vehicular communications and the use of artificial intelligence to help patients with Type 1 Diabetes. He holds a PhD degree in Wireless Communications, a MSc degree in Broadband Networks obtained from his current university and a MSc in Computer Science from Supinfo, France. Cristian has also been an associate lecturer and lab assistant with Oxford Brookes since 2013 in various undergraduate modules related to Python and C/C++.



Cosmina Dorobanțu (Logistics volunteer, Guest speaker) is a Policy Fellow at the Alan Turing Institute, where she works with policy makers and academics to improve the design and provision of public services with the help of data science and AI. She co-founded Aurora Energy Research, a company with 50+ employees, which provides price forecasts and analytics covering British, European, and global energy markets. She also spent five years at Google, shaping the company's investment and business strategy in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Academically, her expertise lies in international economics and statistics, having obtained her DPhil in Economics from the University of Oxford. She is also an Independent Expert for the European Commission.

Volunteers



Eliza Silvia Galoș (Volunteer lecturer in Civic Engagement) is an Oxford alumna with an MSc in Migration Studies. She is currently working as a specialist on human trafficking data in countries in crisis at the headquarters of IOM, the UN Migration Agency. She co-founded the charity Work Rights Centre (WoRC), which offers free support to Romanian and other EU migrants in England who are trapped in precarious work. She has also worked in local government, academia and various NGOs in the UK on issues related to socio-economic inclusion of vulnerable individuals and irregular migration.



Iulia A. Popescu (Fundraising volunteer) is a DPhil student in Cardiac MRI Image Analysis at the Institute of Biomedical Engineering, University of Oxford. Her research focuses on developing patient specific software assessment tools for cardiovascular medicine. Her area of expertise is in numerical methods and programming for image and data analysis.



Maria Dana Pop (Logistics volunteer) is a Project Controller within the Schoolbooks Design Team at Oxford University Press, and has been based in Oxford since moving from Romania in 2013. She graduated from Oxford Brookes in 2015, obtaining a BA (Hons) in International Business Management. Maria is a keen amateur photographer and lover of nature, exercise and cooking.

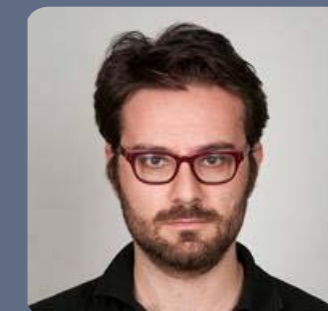


Oana Lang (Logistics volunteer) is currently studying for a PhD in Mathematics within the Mathematics of Planet Earth Centre for Doctoral Training at Imperial College London. Her research focuses on the analysis of certain stochastic partial differential equations with applications in weather and climate issues. Working also as a graduate teaching assistant at Imperial College, Oana is highly motivated by the interaction with younger students and the transformative experience this interaction can lead to.

Volunteers



Răzvan Marinescu (Logistics, Volunteer lecturer in Computer graphics) is a PhD student in Medical Imaging at UCL. In 2014 he finished the MEng in Computer Science at Imperial College and now applies computer science to analyse brain images of patients suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Razvan has also been involved with teaching several programming and modelling courses, and has been a student residence adviser at UCL for three years. He currently organises a competition for predicting the onset and the evolution of Alzheimer's disease.



Victor Dia (Admissions, Volunteer lecturer in Photography) is an art-documentary photographer who graduated from the Arts University Bournemouth and is currently based in Oxford. His interest in urban development and the clash between heritage and modernization has led him to projects looking deep into the fabric of the cities, in locations such as Spain, Romania, Poland, France and the United States. Victor has had solo exhibitions in Romania and England and was awarded a CEC Artslink Residency at Columbia College Chicago in 2014. A firm believer in the power of analogue photography, his favourite smell is that of a newly opened film canister. More information about his work can be found on www.victordia.com.



Vlad Mărgărint (Social activities, Volunteer lecturer in Maths) is a DPhil student in Mathematics working in Stochastic Analysis, Complex Analysis and Geometry. He has a BA in Mathematics from University of Bucharest with a thesis in General Relativity and Differential Geometry and a MA from ETH Zurich where he studied Mathematical Physics with an emphasis on Probability Theory and Geometry. He has been a Teaching Assistant at both ETH Zurich and the University of Oxford, giving tutorials in various topics in Mathematical Analysis.

Special thanks to:

Ana Hastoy, volunteer lecturer in Linguistics
Dragoș Cîrstea, Mariela Neagu and Daniel Bălănescu, generous hosts
Georgiana Gheție, student liaison and logistics volunteer
George Grădinariu, 'Meet the experts' guest
Cristiana Mărculescu, logistics volunteer
Rareș Pamfil, volunteer lecturer in Social Entrepreneurship
Răzvan Dumitrescu, 'Meet the experts' guest
Sorina Câmpean, Text-based dialogue facilitator
Ștefan Săftescu, volunteer lecturer in Robotics
Vadim Toader, 'Meet the experts' guest

Next steps



Last year, our main goals were to become a registered charity, to create a vibrant alumni group and to expand our reach, while keeping our sponsors and contributors engaged with our progress. With incredible help from dedicated volunteers, we successfully achieved these goals: in January we became a registered charity with seven board trustees. We are also in regular contact with our alumni and currently following their progress more closely.

Live broadcasts

We will continue to aim high and bring a unique experience to more high school students. Based on the live broadcasting pilot, more YouTube live streams will be scheduled next year to reach out to more communities in Romania who can benefit from the contact with our volunteers.

Alumni community

Our community will continue to provide advice and support for the summer school alumni and encourage them to help their younger peers. Most volunteers have been in touch with participants and are supporting them by reviewing letters of motivation, writing recommendations, suggesting readings and offering practical advice. In the future, we seek to bring the online community face-to-face, in an annual meeting where alumni from

different generations meet and share ideas which can turn into practical projects. We aim to then offer advice and financial support for promising projects with clear impact, as it happened with the 2017 initiative of three alumni at a school in Caracal.

New volunteers

As grassroots initiatives like this depend on a vibrant community of volunteers, we plan to bring new and motivated young people join the project. Students, academics and young professionals from Oxford and around will have the opportunity to get involved and continue to develop this initiative.

Fundraising and sustainability

We also plan to promote a more sustainable model whereby past participants contribute to raising funds for the new cohort. Until the community becomes large enough to support itself, we will continue to kindly ask for support from our partners and sponsors. They should rest assured that their contribution is a solid investment in young people's future. We are committed to multiply the return on investment through our continuous work, inspired by the belief which was this year's motto: as one famous Oxford alumni, Lewis Carroll, said, "all that is really worth the doing is what we do for others".



info@oxfordforromania.org
www.oxfordforromania.org
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