Learning to be an Effective Public Sector Advisor

A Joint Course in Public Administration
Offered by an American and a Romanian University
With a Study Abroad Field Trip Component

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NISPAcee
THE NETWORK OF INSTITUTES AND SCHOOLS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

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A Joint Course in Public Administration Offered by an American and a Romanian University With a Study Abroad Field Trip Component

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Contents

Foreword 7

Section 1
A Success Story

1. Introduction 13
   1.1 Who are we? 13
   1.2 Idea behind the program 15
   1.3 Background 16
   1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program 17
   1.5 The "engaged university" defined 18
2. Different components of the program 19
   2.1 An iterative process 19
   2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars 21
   2.3 The study abroad field trip 24
      2.3.1 Interviews and data collection 24
      2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable 27
   2.4 Student-run seminar 28
   2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur 28
3. Course products 29
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program 30
5. Wrapping up the program 31
6. Final remarks 33

Section 2
Importance of Study Abroad Programs in Central and Eastern Europe

1. Description of the responding universities/departments 37
2. Main findings 38
3. Some tentative conclusions 44

Section 3

Important Templates for Documents Used Throughout the Program

Appendix 1. Syllabus for the joint course 45

Appendix 2. Course Calendar 51

Appendix 3. Field Trip Itinerary 53

Appendix 4. Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings 54

Appendix 5. Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics 61

Appendix 6. Student Papers 64

Foreword

"Learning to be an Effective Public Sector Advisor" documents the development and evolution over more than a decade of a joint study abroad program implemented by a US and a Romanian university to give graduate students in public administration an opportunity to work in public policy consulting in a cross-cultural context. The course recognizes the need for students to gain this experience as part of their graduate education by incorporating a comparative research and policy field study component together with lectures, seminars, a press conference and the writing of papers with format and content of professional advisors. The Foreword elaborates upon the relevance of this undertaking as expressed by authors from Romania and the United States with public administration experience in Central and Eastern Europe.

By L. Alan Beals

"Learning to be an Effective Public Sector Advisor" is a new book on a multi-year collaboration by the University of Delaware, School of Public Policy and Administration and the Department of Public Administration and Management of Babeș-Bolyai University, in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. It is an important work for several reasons.

The principal purpose of the collaboration is to prepare students, both in the US and abroad, to acquire necessary skills in applied academic research with applications to local governance. This subject is unfortunately not given sufficient attention in many graduate degree programs in American schools of public administration. A survey of Central and Eastern European universities, in the book, did not reveal similar course student offerings. This may in part be due to strict codes of instruction and lack of curriculum flexibility inherent in top down historical governance of higher education still practiced.

The book acknowledges former attempts to create university technical assistance to local government institutions in the United States that were not sustainable or successful. Here, however, a new focus is on a collaborative engagement with local officials, identifying problems, examining options, determining best practices and methods for implementation. If students can be encouraged to engage more thoroughly in the complexities and challenges of effective local governance, at home and abroad, it strengthens our civic polity.

The book develops a detailed program including the use of technology, student teams and faculty assistance to create a "model" for successful outcomes. The relationship between the students and the local officials is critical to the success of the endeavor and is clearly outlined. A public forum and/or a joint press conference with the mayor and/or other principals reports the results of the students' experience in analyzing specific issues, problems and recommendations.

Local governance, in this case, includes not only municipalities but also non-governmental institutions. The inclusion of non-governmental organizations in this model is an important dimension to local governance. In an era of transparency in governmental practice, the role of these organizations can be critical to the success of governmental initiatives, practice and citizen support. NGO's are relatively new to Eastern Europe, as former governments prohibited their existence. Some are emerging and are experiencing all the growth pains that were experienced over many generations by similar organizations in America. There is a need for a quicker pace of development in emerging democracies, a point reinforced in the Appendix of the book in which one of the student papers on the role of non-government organizations in Romania provides an extensive overview of this subject. Institutions of higher education have some excellent opportunities to assist in this phase of local governance.

This book details a successful model for its future use throughout the CEE region at the academic, community and citizen level and is an important contribution to the literature of public administration.

Alan Beals earned a Masters' degree in Public Administration from The Maxwell School at Syracuse University and is an elected member of the U.S. National Academy of Public Administration. As Executive Director of the U.S. National League of Cities (1975-90), Beals was responsible for a program of support and guidance to some 17,000 local governments in the United States. He has provided leadership in international public administration and has consulted and served as advisor to NGOs and local governments and their national associations in countries throughout the CEE region and the world.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

By Marius C. Profiroiu

"Learning to be an Effective Public Sector Advisor" offers a glimpse into what it means to develop innovative joint academic programs, based on a long-standing partnership between a US and a Central and an Eastern European university, in this case the latter being Babeș-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca, Romania. In my opinion, the program which is so thoroughly and honestly documented in the book brings at least three major contributions to the development of higher education programs in public administration from the CEE region.

First, the program includes a study abroad component, focused on the idea of creating valuable interactions among US and Romanian students and faculty in interactive distance learning lecture sessions complimented by an intensive field study program which takes place in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Internationalization of study programs has represented one of the most important strategic goals for many universities in the CEE region. Coming out of the communist regime, Western expertise has always been regarded as a valuable asset toward the development of excellence in teaching and research. Reading the book, I was pleasantly surprised to see the importance NISPAcee has played with regard to the establishment and implementation of joint international programs.

Second, the program described in the book combines in a smart way study abroad with applied research. Mixed teams of Romanian and American students interview local authorities, NGOs, practitioners who act as relevant informants for their policy drafts. Students do not only have to conduct research in an environment which sometimes poses challenges but they also have to write their policy papers in such a way as to be relevant for political decision-makers from both countries. For the majority of the students this is their first encounter with the requirements of being an effective policy adviser.

Third, the program builds on the connection between the university and the city. The concept proposed in the book is that of the "engaged university". While the city-university relationship is old is well developed in the US, in Europe and in the CEE region it is still in its infancy. The program takes a bold step toward tackling this issue and the students learn how to structure this fragile relationship.

It is my sincere hope that this book will help other universities and programs in CEE to think outside the box and to capitalize on the international partnerships which are already in place at their universities. Universities are currently players in a world which is rapidly becoming more and more globalized and integrated and this type of programs can help them to achieve strategic goals in terms of internationalization and international cooperation. As former NISPAcee president, I can assure you that this organization will continue to support its members in such ventures and will help them disseminate best practices. Preoccupation for the development and consolidation of higher education programs in public administration in the CEE region continues to be a significant strategic goal for NISPAcee.

Marius C. Profiroiu is Professor and Vice-rector for international affairs with the Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania. He is also immediate past president of NISPAcee. He is among the first academics in Romania who initiated and contributed to the development of public administration higher education programs.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

CONTENTS

Section 1

A Success Story

1. Introduction

1.1 Who are we?

This publication endeavors to offer some insights into a joint course in public administration offered by an American and a Romanian University, with a study abroad field trip component. The two universities implementing this program are University of Delaware, School of Public Policy and Administration, U.S.A. and Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania (Department of Public Administration and Management).

University of Delaware (UD) was the first university in the United States to offer a study abroad program. That was 1935. Study abroad continues to be an important part of the academic offering at Delaware and across the United States, where study abroad is predominantly an undergraduate experience. The duration of the study abroad offering may vary from a few weeks to a semester or academic year. This writing explains our program of study abroad for graduate students in public administration and public policy using a two-week field trip and a total commitment encompassing the usual length of an academic semester. Our course is designed to help students understand the concept of the "engaged university" (Altbach, 2008; Harris and Holley, 2016), the institutional and personal challenges of implementing an engaged university model, and how they as students and professionals can become more proficient as researchers and advisers. The study abroad field trip component of the course provides practical experience, which certainly could be carried out in the United States, but the study abroad dimension permits a broader range of experience: the challenges and rewards of work in another culture.

The School of Public Policy and Administration at the University of Delaware (SPPA/UD) began in the 1960s as a division of urban studies supported with a grant from the Ford foundation primarily as an applied research outreach unit of the University of Delaware, a land grant university whose mission and reason for being includes a responsibility for engagement with the community. SPPA began a doctoral program in public policy in the mid-1970s that evolved into several masters programs in public

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

CONTENTS

administration, historic preservation, disaster management and public policy, and more recently has included undergraduate programs in public administration and leadership. Study abroad has been a part of the academic offering at SPPA beginning in 1975.

Babeș-Bolyai University (BBU) is an academic institution with a longstanding tradition for developing education and research within a multicultural framework. Higher education studies were first established in Cluj-Napoca within a Jesuit College in 1581, which makes it the oldest institution of higher education in Romania. It is currently the largest Romanian university – approximately 45,000 students and 1,700 faculty staff. The university consists of 21 Faculties many of which have branch campuses outside of Cluj-Napoca and offers programs in Romanian, Hungarian, and German in order to serve its multicultural student population. BBU is an academic educational public institution aiming to promote and sustain the development of specific cultural components within the local, regional, national, and international community.

The Public Administration and Management Department at Babeș-Bolyai University was founded in 1996 with the financial assistance from the European Union and the US. It is located within the Faculty of Political, Communication, and Administrative Sciences (FSPAC). It was the first Romanian department that initiated, with Western assistance, an interdisciplinary approach to the study of public administration. As recognition of the Department's excellence and quality in teaching and research in public administration, both the undergraduate and graduate programs offered were ranked in 2011 in the 1st place by the Romanian Agency for Accreditation of Higher Education. In addition, the masters program offered in English is accredited at the international level by EAPAA (European Association for Public Administration Accreditation).

Most universities from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) understand the importance of international programs, but some have lacked the financial resources and the institutional capacity to offer outgoing study abroad programs (their own students traveling to a foreign university). Another important approach has been to partner with foreign universities and to offer their students an opportunity for this experience through these incoming study abroad programs.

From the very beginning, FSPAC has intended to develop study abroad programs in which the Romanian students would be equal partners with their foreign counterparts. The program described in this publication was designed with this idea in mind – students and faculty from both sides are equal partners, and they have similar responsibilities. The only asymmetrical element of the program – Romanian students do not travel to US, is due mainly to huge costs for BBU which for the moment cannot be covered. However, over the years, individual Romanian students and faculty have been hosted by University of Delaware and other American universities with which

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

CONTENTS

BBU has developed contacts. BBU and UD are currently discussing opportunities for groups of BBU students to participate in study abroad in the United States, which will be done in conjunction with UD.

1.2 Idea behind the program

If educators are to extend public administration and public policy analysis into practice, they will need to help students acquire skills in teaching and advising others. This publication describes a joint course offered by two universities that is designed to help public administration graduate students be better advisors. Mark Huddleston (1999) writes about his experience as an advisor in Bosnia. He reports what others in our field may have also experienced – it's not enough to know the substance of public administration, we also have to be able to transfer what we know to practitioners.

In addition to the need for individuals to acquire the personal skills needed for advising, institutions need to adjust priorities and practices. Peter Szanton (1981) points out that shortcomings by advisors and the organizations they represent may be exacerbated by clients who may not want advice or don't understand how to use it.

The risks to public managers of changing the status quo can exceed the rewards for success. It can be helpful for advisors to think through a process to help public managers explain change to constituents and get help with implementation. Arno Loessner's paper (1999) recognizes a reluctance by public managers to risk innovation, and explains how benchmarking and peer counseling help with problem solution and implementation.

Benchmarking can help public managers reduce risk when adopting best practices, especially when reinforced with peer counseling. Students are encouraged to consider these tools as part of an implementation process.

Our course uses these and other publications to inform class presentations and discussions (see syllabus, Appendices) as we prepare for a two-week study abroad field trip in which graduate students at the University of Delaware work in teams with peers at Babeș-Bolyai University on real-world issues at local level. Students learn data collection and analysis, approaches to better understanding problems, and how to write and present the results of their work to their clients and the media.

A student-run seminar, press conference and written presentation of study results and personal reflections (each the subject of Appendices in this paper) are the student deliverables that supplement classwork to help our graduate students understand how to function as an advisor. We hope our experience with this course may be of interest to colleagues and may facilitate teaching and scholarship in this area of public policy and public administration education.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

1.3 Background

Our course considers the evolution of applied research and public service in American higher education, which has struggled with striking a balance over the years. The current phrase is "engaged university". We examine the transition over time as the debate has evolved – should higher education be a "cloistered" environment at one end of the spectrum, or an "academic service station" at the other end? (Bok, 1982; Kerr, 1963; Veblen, 1918). As is explained below, the University of Delaware adopted what has been referred to as the "Delaware Model" (Denhardt *et al*., 1997), in which public administration teaching and research programs are integrated with a public service experience that involves all faculty and students to facilitate teaching and learning. That approach may mean wading into real-world issues that can be a controversial minefield. Trustees, Presidents and Deans might prefer to avoid complications that can adversely affect institutional reputation and financial support. Academics may wonder if they want to get involved in applied research undertakings that may distract work toward more traditional professional goals.

And there can be resistance from those who receive advice. Public officials may seek advice and assistance that is not wanted or valued by professionals who work for them. Proposals for change can be exploited by political opponents, media or vocal constituents.

In the framework of this endeavor, an interesting question regards how universities in Romania fit into the model of the engaged university. During communism, universities enjoyed little to no autonomy and their functions were subordinated to the objectives of the party. At the very early stages of the post-communist transformation, most of the formerly communist countries launched reforms of their tertiary educational systems pursuing two major goals (Matějů, Řeháková, Simonová, 2003, p. 302): to re-establish academic freedoms and to create conditions for the expansion of tertiary education. Little attention was paid to other functions besides teaching and sometimes research (Nicolescu, 2003). While universities have expanded and diversified over the last 25 years (Dragoescu, 2013), the debate regarding their social role is absent. Large cities understand that universities contribute to their economic growth but there is little debate about other impacts (Andrei *et al*., 2010). There is debate as to whether universities develop skills required by the market, and whether the business sector should do more toward investing in higher education and/or developing partnership with universities (Serbanica, 2011). There is a general climate of inadequate communication, even mistrust in some cases among these three key actors – university, city, and businesses.

Due to its early connections with US universities, FSPAC has been exposed from the very beginning to the US concept of "town/gown relations", including the university as provider of services to the community. Thus, FSPAC is somewhat different among other Romanian universities with regard to its community engagement. FSPAC is

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

probably the first higher education institution in Romania which has already implemented community outreach/engagement projects. These projects are part of a strategic direction pursued by the School which is striving to become a key partner for the city/community and the business sector. Throughout the years, FSPAC has "adopted" poor rural communities and has offered technical assistance to them; it has awarded students scholarship in order to promote sustainable community interventions and has worked with the City of Cluj-Napoca and other cities in order to develop sustainable long term development plans. Some of the funding for these efforts has come from local companies which partner with FSPAC for other projects. FSPAC also helped urban and rural communities build strategic planning processes.

As teachers of applied subjects, we recognize that obstacles exist and help our students think about working in this environment as they prepare for meaningful careers. We continue to seek opportunities for students in public administration to acquire an understanding of how to apply what they learn in the classroom and extend what they know into practice. That is an intended purpose of thecourse that is the subject of this publication. We have offered the course four times (2007, 2009, 2013, and 2017). Each offering builds upon previous experience, advice, reaction and feedback from participating students, faculty and practitioners.

1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program

In an earlier publication (Loessner *et al*., 2009), the value of study abroad for students of public affairs and public administration was discussed in the context of a course with an earlier iteration of our field trip in Romania. Among the advantages of study abroad are:

- Enhanced learning, personal and professional growth, development of leadership skills and experience with working cooperatively with other professionals in another culture and language.
- Opportunity to compare and assess practices, priorities, approaches and understandings at home with those in another place.
- Opportunity to reflect upon personal habits of mind, professional habits and self-confidence as a professional in the field of public administration.
- Opportunity for students to take responsibility for the development and conduct of a study abroad course –helping to organize and implement the course.
- Opportunity to develop research and reporting experience, writing techniques and personal skills that are important to the public administration advisor/consultant.
- Recognition that some of what is learned during the study abroad field trip may differ from more traditional techniques and skills experienced as a public administration student at home.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

The course theme introduces the concept and practice of "the engaged university" – higher education as advisor and partner with government and civil society. This includes service by faculty and students as advisers and analysts to help public service clients understand how to manage and implement change. University departments of public administration teach the principles of the field, which can then be applied during a study abroad field trip designed to provide an opportunity to practice functioning as a professional advisor, to work with a client to design and conduct a study and to communicate a work product effectively in the delivery of a useful report. The "engaged university" concept encourages faculty and students to extend the university's abilities through applied research and public service so that the institution is "engaged" with the broader community. That's the object of the exercise – the issue is how to do it meaningfully in practice. We begin by examining past efforts.

1.5 The "engaged university" defined

Dating to 1862 and the establishment of the Land Grant University by the U.S. Federal Government, the Land Grant Act established state-level "Land Grant Universities" and required, as a condition of the receipt of government funding, academic programs in agricultural sciences, mechanical sciences (engineering), and military sciences. These courses of study were, and continue to be, important to the social and economic development of the United States. With specific reference to agricultural sciences, the "Agricultural Extension Service" has served as an outreach to farmers to help them translate academic research into agricultural practice.

Hoping to extend the Agricultural Extension Service experience beyond the farm to the cities and suburbs of the United States, the Ford Foundation, an American private philanthropic organization, funded several American universities in the mid-1960s in programs intended to apply the successful agricultural program to public policy applications. University faculty were to serve as consultants/advisors to subnational governments and NGOs. Instead of extending advice on planting and animal husbandry to farmers, "urban agents" were to advise state and local government officials and NGO managers and trustees, and the topics were the subjects of public administration.

For a variety of reasons, which are the subject of Peter Szanton's book, the urban agent program was not successful. The institutional capacities, cultures, and incentive structures of both providers and recipients lacked the elements needed for success. Providers needed to be more than technically competent – they needed to better understand how to translate theory into practice, and they required academic program incentives and management that were conducive to supporting them in the field. Public and nonprofit managers were not prepared to interact effectively with universities or inclined to accept advice, at least not without a good bit of help with implementing change, help the university staff were not prepared or equipped to provide. In short, it was not a good fit.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

CONTENTS

In Romania, as in many European countries, the debate on universities' engagement in their communities is in its infancy. However, there is growing interest in this topic and students in public administration are usually extremely interested in approaching such an innovative concept and learning about experience elsewhere.

The course examines the reasons for lack of success of the Ford Foundation experiment, combines practical experience of the instructors in applied research and then offers the students a field trip practicum in another culture to gain experience of their own.

2. Different components of the program

2.1 An iterative process

Collaborative work between BBU and UD began with a simple memorandum of understanding in which it was agreed, among other things, that visits to each other's University would be encouraged. UD faculty visits for short-term teaching assignments were facilitated by support from both institutions and the Fulbright organization. Visits of students to conduct research and take courses were also involved. The first study abroad field trip involved UD students traveling to Cluj-Napoca and meeting with FSPAC students there for the first time. The US instructor offered lectures and oversaw the course in which students from UD participated in meetings and excursions for which BBU students served as hosts, guides and translators. BBU students were only tangentially involved in the academic work of the course. This was repeated but with increased involvement by FSPAC students in the second offering of the course. After discussion between the US instructor and his colleagues in America and the chair of the BBU public administration department, the third iteration of the program took the form of a joint course with co-instructors and more specific academic expectations for both groups of students. At this point, BBU students were more actively involved in pre-field trip class sessions, took a greater role in the development of questions to be asked during the interviews, interpretation of the meanings of and significance of responses from well-informed individuals, and a more active role in the press conference presentations.

The most recent (fourth) iteration of the course treated all students as fully equal participants in the course with expectations for class attendance and participation. The most recent course included a student-run seminar to reinforce the central theme of "the engaged university" and to reinforce the importance of all students being involved in all aspects of the course.

The idea to conduct a study abroad field trip at BBU began with the intent of providing students with cross-cultural exposure as well as applied research field experience. It has become an academic experience that benefits both visitors and hosts. The course begins

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

CONTENTS

with joint class sessions using distance education voice and video transmission during the fall academic semester. The field trip takes place during the five-week January "winter session" at UD. At each institution, interest sessions are conducted at which course instructors explain the study abroad concept and specifically the course to be offered and activities to be undertaken during the two-week field trip in Cluj-Napoca.

At the University of Delaware, the involvement of a student in this course includes a fairly significant financial commitment, as well as a time commitment and the obligation to be away from home for two weeks. Information sessions inform students about the study abroad course, the activities during the field trip abroad, costs involved, experience of students who taken the course previously, etc.

Students apply for the study abroad course using a form and a short essay developed for this purpose. This exercise helps the student think carefully about the particular area that they propose to study, and why they feel the study abroad course will enhance their academic program. In other words, the application process helps develop a sense of commitment to the course, as opposed to simply wanting to travel abroad. When the application is received, it is usually helpful to hold one-on-one meetings with student applicants to get a sense of their personal commitment and willingness to accept the responsibilities of participation, and to give them a further opportunity for asking questions and checking details. Students accepted for the study abroad course are asked to sign a student responsibility and commitment statement that they will participate in every activity involved in the course.

Public administration students at FSPAC cannot be specifically enrolled in a study abroad course. Thus, in order for them to receive recognition, it was important to establish a "reward system" to want to get involved and do high quality work. A major challenge in selecting students is the fact that in January, when the American students are in Cluj-Napoca, the Romanian students have their final exams for the winter semester which ends very late in Romania and most of Europe – mid February.

In September, the Romanian coordinators of the program, sometimes with input from other faculty, directly contact first and second year master students whose strong academic performance and English language skill make them candidates for participation in the study abroad course. They are offered a brief presentation of the program and are enrolled, if interested. By early October the call for applicants is open to all interested masters and Ph.D. students. If the number of Romanian students exceeds the number of American students, it permits some of the research teams to have more than two Romanian students. In this way, if something unforeseen happens – illness, dropout, family emergencies, etc., the research teams will still be able to continue their research.

The main reason for BBU students to get involved, in the absence of traditional academic recognition via credits, is related to the experience itself. Participation is done on

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

CONTENTS

a purely voluntary basis and thus far, FSPAC has not experienced problems attracting students to participate in the course. FSPAC students are very interested and eager to meet and work with their American counterparts. In the past our students reported that this experience helped them to work in international and multicultural contexts.

Financial and logistical planning for the study abroad course are institution-specific. The additional work that is required for the instructor to organize and carry out a study abroad course justifies a supplementary payment or stipend to reflect the additional effort. It is also helpful if the institution can provide financial assistance to help defray student and faculty expenses. In Cluj-Napoca, the main categories of costs included: lodging, some group meals and vouchers for individual meals, group trip to cities in Transylvania (e.g. overnight stay in Sibiu) and some additional costs regarding local transportation). Some flexibility is needed in setting up the budget because unpredicted expenses will most likely occur. The intent is to have the majority of costs of the study abroad program be paid by the visiting students and/or their university, though some out of pocket expenses are met by FSPAC.

In addition, the amount of detail that is required in the organization of the study abroad course and field trip suggests the importance of having a senior masters or doctoral student to assist the FSPAC and UD instructors with course logistics and help provide regular communications with course participants, who are often in several directions conducting surveys, attending meetings and trying to organize their work.

2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars

The syllabus for this course provides for three lecture sessions prior to the field trip with associated readings for each session. Readings are focused on the course theme. The number of readings is purposely reduced from what might be expected in a graduate-level course to recognize the need for readings that are focused, likely to be understood by a person whose mother tongue is not English, relatively easily obtained by both groups of students, available electronically if possible, reasonably applicable across cultures, and sufficiently applied in content to provide grounding in the topics. This approach to the selection of readings makes it more likely that course readings will indeed be read by and understood by all students.

The first reading assigned in this course is a book by Peter Szanton, "Not Well Advised". The book, available on-line from Amazon, presents the successes and failures of the Ford Foundation program mentioned above, conclusions about both provider and recipient of public policy advice, and some practical advice to University and government/civil society practitioners and policymakers. Important conclusions include the need for institutional commitment on the part of both provider and recipient of advisory services, the need for advisors to provide practical/workable recommendations and for clients to learn how to be advised – how to accept, adapt and implement recommendations

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

CONTENTS

in a partnership that that intends to implement recommendations. The book stresses a need for both sides – advisor and advised – to revise usual ways of approaching their work, and a need for new incentive systems and understandings. Instructors with experience in applied research and public service will certainly complement this reading with additional advice.

After considering the American experience as presented by Szanton, and particularly the lack of success of the Ford Foundation program, course discussions turn to considering how the individual advisor should approach advising/consulting work. Here, Mark Huddleston's Public Administration Review article "Innocents Abroad", (Huddleston, 1999) provides a helpful discussion of how public administrators need to rethink their approach so as to recognize differences in the ways other cultures think, act and function. No matter how well trained the adviser may be in the principles of public administration, it is important to understand that approaches are not uniformly understood, accepted, or applicable. What may make perfect sense to an American may seem ridiculous to a person in another place with different value systems and cultural experiences.

This reading offers a rich opportunity for class discussion. It is equally applicable to the American student and the CEE student. While student interest is strong in understanding the points raised by Huddleston, the fact is that students have not had such an experience, which provides instructors an opportunity to link readings to the upcoming field trip. It is important at this point in the course to emphasize that both sets of students will soon be interacting during the study abroad field trip in settings that may be very similar to that described by Huddleston – people talking past one another about ideas that mean one thing in one place and something different in another place, that different sets of priorities and personal incentives are at play, etc. As an aside, though an important one, if discussion is to ensue in a class in which students are separated by thousands of miles, it is particularly important to have the technology and classroom organization be conducive for students to participate in discussion. At minimum, this means being able to see and hear each other well. It is also important for students to feel comfortable engaging in critical discussion and exploration.

After considering the need to carefully consider organizational issues (Szanton) and personal characteristics (Huddleston) as primary factors in determining success in the practice of public administration advising, the course turns to evaluating approaches and techniques that can advisers can use to help clients think through recommendations and methods for implementation. The course employs Loesser's article, "Estimating Local Financial Support for Public Libraries: a Tool to Facilitate Benchmarking of Best Practices among Counties in the United States" (Loessner, 1999) to help explain techniques for helping governments and NGOs adapt and adopt successful practices in other settings – "benchmarking".

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

CONTENTS

The public sector offers fewer pecuniary awards for risk-taking than the private sector, so taking risks with changing current practices can mean potentially high political cost if things don't go well. The thoughtful use of benchmarking can help public and nonprofit leaders and organizations, particularly, as is explained in the reading, if the adopted practice is carefully tailored by linking to places with relevant demographic/economic similarities that are likely to help improve the probability that policy and program changes will be accepted by constituents in the receiving place. Successful benchmarking combined with peer counseling goes beyond "best practice transfer" by trying to reduce the risk of failure. It can also increase the risk of personal criticism leveled at government and nonprofit leaders by the press and others.

A further reading used in the class is by Calin Hintea, "Public Administration Schools in Romania: Strategic Choices for the Future" (2013). This article mainly focuses on the complicated relationship between universities and community in the CEE countries, and more general in Europe. This is an excellent piece which allows students from different backgrounds to be able to understand different traditions regarding university's engagement in community and various policies which are needed to change this.

Each of the readings and class sessions is intended to be integrated into the development of a research plan by students. Instructors help students understand that the specific research project is important, as is the process by which it is carried out. Emphasis is given to the second- and third-order issues of institutional organization, personal and professional approach, use of implementation-assisting tools such as benchmarking, and finally the formatting, content and presentation of the consultant's report. The importance of having a field trip to apply practice to these concepts cannot be overstated.

The student comfort level is enhanced if students communicate directly using email, Skype and during class sessions to get to know each other, and develop a sense of common purpose about research topics and team member responsibilities. A fairly significant part of the first class session is devoted to student introductions and discussion of the work that will take place during the field trip to help students understand and gain comfort with the extent to which they will be actively involved in the conduct of the course and especially the field trip. In addition the following may be considered:

- a seminar format set up of the class with students organized around a table or in a semicircle, as opposed to a more typical classroom organization;
- good acoustics, with microphones that are easily accessible, as well as good lighting and camera direction so that speakers can be easily seen and heard.

An important aspect pertaining to these online interactive sessions has to do with the technology used for having the online lectures. For the online lectures the two universities use videoconferencing systems that allow both parties to see and hear each other so as to mimic the onsite interactions as closely as possible. University of

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

CONTENTS

Delaware uses a specially designed room in which every student has their own camera and microphone, which is part of a centralized videoconference system operated by a specialist. At FSPAC the videoconferencing system is in a non-dedicated room comprised of a wide angle camera and a high-gain microphone attached to a big LCD screen. The equipment used is TANDBERG 990 MXP. The main limitation of the system at FSPAC is the fact that not every student has his/her own station which somewhat limits the quality of interaction, but by being attentive to this, instructors have been able to largely overcome the issue.

2.3 The study abroad field trip

2.3.1 Interviews and data collection

Students work in small teams each comprised of students from both institutions over two weeks to interview, research, write and prepare presentations. The research topic approval process typically involves negotiation and discussion, initially among students followed by advice and approval by instructors to help students narrow topics to a scale that can reasonably be accomplished during a two-week study abroad field trip. The availability of locally-based, well-informed individuals to assist with the interview and data collection process is critical to the success of this program. The importance of a dedicated team of professors at the local level where the interviews will take place cannot be overstated. It takes at least 3-4 months in advance to prepare the visits and contacts. In addition, the host school should be reasonably well connected with the community and with the rest of relevant stakeholders. It would be far less effective to start initiating contacts just before the American students come. Those connections need to be pre-existing.

Study abroad combines traditional teaching with new experiences – balancing preparation and self-discovery. There is benefit from experiencing things on your own, yet there are protocols, courtesies, etc. that should be explained in advance. Hence, over the four offerings of the course, we have given considerable thought to how much an instructor should tell students in advance. How much can be understood in the absence of experiencing something first hand? One way to help students prepare is to ask them to prepare questionnaires that could be used in the work of their teams in Romania. The process of preparing questions for use in a survey while in Cluj-Napoca begins several months before the field trip. In addition to getting a draft survey instrument under way before arriving in Cluj-Napoca, the process is a useful device for honing topics and deciding on relevant questions. Several drafts were exchanged between students and professors, some are shared with the full group. In the course of this exercise, students came to think carefully about what they wanted to learn, how to clarify questions for use abroad by using words and terms that are more likely to be generally understood

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

CONTENTS

and how to order questions sequentially and logically. It was important to deal with topics that are conducive to comparative analysis.

The survey question exercise helps focus reading and data searches and simplifies the explanation of research topics that subsequently helps identify partner students and facilitates communication between students. It also helps build supportive connections between the participating UD students as they share the several drafts of their survey instruments. Upon arrival in Cluj-Napoca, students meet with their teammates and, not unexpectedly, revise once again the questions and the practices they will follow. This process of iterative revisions is an important part of learning to work together that can be taught in no other way. It needs to be stressed that very often the initial research questions/topics undergo significant changes. Students learn that part of conducting empirical comparative research is also the ability to learn and adapt as you go. Encountering methodological difficulties is part of the learning process and we consider this a welcome experience as long as students get some guidance in re-shaping their research.

UD and BBU students receive student partner e-mail contact information approximately two months before departure. Putting the two groups in touch well in advance helps develop a successful program. It is important to keep in mind that study abroad is often seen as an "add-on" to the core curriculum. It is added to existing work and study responsibilities in a curriculum filled with required courses, making it difficult for students to find time to squeeze in study abroad trips. The course is organized to include lecture/seminars on Friday mornings during the fall semester when there are fewer scheduled classes. The morning is necessary to accommodate Romanian colleagues, where the time is seven hours ahead of Eastern U.S. The field trip takes place during January. Students are encouraged to interact on research topics and data availability early-on using email, but experience is that pre-trip contact may be less than hoped for. Students almost uniformly comment in post-course evaluations that they should have had more contact earlier in advance of the field trip. Instructors make the point, but life is what it is. It is one of the certainties of the course that students will make this comment! Setting up the interviews is a multi-stage process, often based on the snow ball sampling technique, explained below. We ask the student research teams to have their research topics defined by the beginning of December, including potential sources of information they want to obtain by interview. We do not request students to identify people by name, of course. We ask them to define title and/or characteristics of the stakeholders they believe will be most relevant for their research – for example chief of police, mayor of a town, medical staff, etc. Based on the research proposals, a small team of FSPAC faculty members brainstorms to identify potential interviewees. In addition to helping identify interviewees, FSPAC faculty members and/or other professors and staff with Babeș-Bolyai University act as „well informed individuals"

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

for initial interviews at the outset of the field trip. This is important because students feel more comfortable for the first interviews with people from the university, who allocate time, understand the research process, possess a broader view of the topic as seen in a more complete context, and generally understand the pedagogical reasons for the interview exercise.

Then, the process moves on to identify and contact 6-10 specific interviewees outside of the University for each topic/team. Once again, it helps that FSPAC is well connected not only with the city hall but also with other public agencies and NGOs, but in the course of this exercise, new contacts emerge – a nice spillover benefit to FSPAC. Very often, the Romanian students make a significant contribution in setting up interviews for their teams, especially in the case of students who work in the public and non-profit sector. The aim is to have at least seven interviews for each of the team. That is a lot of contact work to organize and schedule, all of which falls upon the host program. In addition to 70+ initially scheduled interviews, students are advised to ask original interviewees if they can recommend others who may be knowledgeable contributors to the work on the research topic – the snow ball technique. Our experience has been that during the interviews most teams identify and interview several additional relevant contacts.

It may also be that some well-informed individuals are potential sources for more than one research team. If that is the case, every attempt is made to minimize the number of separate interviews by having representatives of more than one team participate in a single interview. Busy professionals who are willing to provide this important aspect of the education of our students appreciate our recognition of the importance of their time. Another spin off benefit identified is that teams learn more from the group interviews, both substantively and from the interview process itself.

Very often during the field trip, FSPAC students discover research topics and opportunities to interview relevant individuals/stakeholders whom they would otherwise not have met or interacted with. After taking part in the program, some Romanian students decided to pursue a similar topic as their dissertation topic. Both Romanian and American students gain a better understanding of how difficult it is to conduct research in a different language, where confusion and misunderstanding due to language conversions are possible and, in fact, happen quite often.

The ultimate purpose of the empirical research conducted is to have students combine secondary data and survey data to understand the local context, the importance of local context and the benefit of seeing how perceptions of the problem and its solution can vary. The course teaches students the importance of working with data and presenting data in a report. Students often don't understand how to use tables and graphics to clarify and simplify the presentation and understanding of complicated and involved information.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

During the time in Cluj-Napoca, the group bonds and enjoys each others' company, thanks to enthusiastic participation by BBU faculty and students. The BBU administration and staff seem to think of and offer every type of assistance. A room is set aside in the student housing facility, where the group can hold meetings, do research and write drafts using host-provided computers, printers and fast Internet service. This room has proved to be invaluable as students often work late into the night on their projects.

2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable

While participation in meetings, lectures and field visits has been enthusiastic and thoughtful, the field trip is not all work! There have been visits to BBU student and faculty homes for dinner and evenings spent in discussion and fellowship in local pubs and clubs. The students also went bowling together! All this helped create a positive environment for thinking about the experience, and it has the beneficial effect of extending the hours of work spent each day in comparing notes, preparing for and conducting interviews, and writing reports that represent team opinions.

When the program originally started, the idea was to let students have a couple of days off so that they could travel in and around Romania individually. During the first two editions of the programs, small groups of American students traveled to Budapest and Vienna while some others traveled inside Romania – preferred locations were Brasov, Sighisoara, Bran Castle, and the capital city Bucharest. While individually interesting, this type of arrangement was not as conducive to developing an identity for the mixed group of Romanian and American students as it would be if they were offered fun activities which could be enjoyed together. From a logistical perspective it was simpler and reduced the need to advise American students on traveling outside Romania. Also, safety concerns could not be fully addressed in this format.

Starting with the third course offering, both instructors decided that the program should include a one- or two- day trip to visit locations in Transylvania and one or two half days trips to visit tourist locations nearby Cluj-Napoca, the latter being optional. The Romanian students are also encouraged to take part in these trips, especially the overnight one. The two-day trip includes a visit to several recently redeveloped medieval cities in Transylvania. Besides touring these cities, students are exposed to community redevelopment policies and practices and financial mechanisms used by cities to fund these redevelopment strategies.

From a logistical perspective, the Romanian organizers make all bookings. Romanian organizers can contact hotels and restaurant in advance, explain the program, and get special deals. This allows for some flexibility is terms of number of participants and their options in terms of rooms and meals. To the extent possible, the same hotels and restaurants are used each time, which allows for a more personal and direct contact

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

with the managers of these facilities, and that in turn helps with flexibility and last minute requirements. During the trips, students eat as a group and engage in common activities, with the idea of helping them get to know each other and have fun as a group.

2.4 Student-run seminar

The student-run seminar was organized for the first time in 2017 and, based on our assessment, was a real success. In the preparatory stage instructors were not sure whether the students would be willing to get involved and reflect upon the engaged university. Some of our observations regarding the inclusion of such an activity:

- Student ownership of the seminar – this makes them very engaged. We saw the students responsible willing to spend extra time on preparing the seminar and making sure that all their colleagues are prepared and ready to talk.
- All students got involved during discussions; actually we went around the table for each question discussed.
- It was obvious that at the time the seminar took place, the students had already benefitted from being exposed to some research experiences and to the program itself. This helped them to have more personal input and opinions.
- The students offered very pertinent comments/observations with regard to the cultural impact of their experience. They talked about how it is useful for them to do comparative research, to work with partners from a different culture and more generally to be immersed in a different local culture.
- The seminar was a forum for the students to build common experiences with regard to how community outreach should take place and which are some effective strategies for making sure that universities do not operate in isolation from their communities.

2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur

Students conduct a press conference midway through the second week. Each research team presents a review of the work that they are doing, the conclusions that they reached and their preliminary recommendations. Members of the print and television media from Romanian outlets attend the session. Students are interviewed and have the experience of learning to answer questions from members of the media. Students understand how to prepare and issue a press release, and they learn from one another as they experience presentations and the question-and-answer session. A senior graduate student is assigned the responsibility of convener the person who runs the press conference and keeps it on schedule. A second senior graduate student is assigned the responsibility of rapporteur, summarizing at the end of the press conference the reports given and preparing a written report.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

This is another opportunity for students to understand the practice and craft of working in public administration. Students report that they learn a great deal from experiencing the need to distill their presentation into clear summary reports that contain enough of the detail of their work to make it clear that they have been thorough, without being burdensome.

3. Course products

(a) Substantive papers written by students following the January 2017 field trip are organized alphabetically in Appendix 6.

(b) Reflective papers written by students following the January 2017 field trip. Due to the fact that the Reflective papers refer to personal experiences and comments of the students we decided not to disclose them in the book.

Substantive papers may be revised/edited multiple times until students become comfortable with a format that is intended for advisors to use when interacting with advisees – this format is a departure from writing a more traditional academic paper, and students need to understand how it is to be written, formatted. The paper should begin with a problem description, and then cite conclusions organized in a way that coincides with how public managers think and function: resource and needs, organization, legal/political considerations, and budgetary considerations.

While the substantive content of each student paper is important, the process of learning how to conduct, organize and present this kind of work is given priority. The following comment to a student makes the point:

> *"It is doubtful that a mayor or other client of a public administration/public policy advisor will read a 33- page report containing a literature review, especially one that includes references to outdated and only tangentially relevant studies. Clients don't need an academic review of the literature – they expect the advisor to know the literature, to use it appropriately, and to offer a clearly written presentation with recommendations that are likely to result in positive change".*

Students can better understand such advice after experiencing the study abroad field trip.

The reflective paper encourages students to be very forthright – what were the personal lessons learned? Huddleston's article helps with this by providing his own personal insights. How have you been affected by seeing how others live, by traveling abroad and doing independent work and having to stand up in front of strangers and present/explain it? How does the experience help you think about how you will work with others in the future? How well did you accept or offer criticism? How did you enjoy

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The “engaged university” defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

being on the delivery side of the seminar – having to develop discussion, resolve differences of opinion and move to a conclusion? In a class session following the field trip at which all students are present, students explain their reflections and are usually very candid about personal development achieved, stereotypes revised and new perspectives gained.

In 2017 Romanian students were not required to prepare reflective papers. They were a requirement for the first two editions of the course. This was due to the fact that the Romanian organizers underestimated their value – they saw them as simple course requirements for the American students. This will be change starting with the next edition of the course, since we discovered the great insight these papers offer to the students and to organizers of the program.

4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program

- Start well before the field trip – at least three months – to begin organizing.
- Student proposals for topics need to be hashed out early, not later when it is too late to change the research plan because the topic can't be accomplished within the time, skill set, resources available.
- Use email and other means for communication.
- Divide the work and the interaction so no one is left out.
- Insist that students focus on topics and methods to remove the superfluous and get to the point of what it is that they are going to study. This is a process of disciplining oneself and understanding the reality of conducting work abroad in another culture.
- Multiply the impact of this exercise by requiring presentation in class for discussion and scrutiny of research topic and methods as often as possible.
- Reinforce the importance of flexibility and the need to consciously try to anticipate obstacles to have students understand the importance of accepting scrutiny, the need for revision and the fact that, in the field, things may not go as planned.
- Audiovisual interaction is critical to the success of the online classes prior to the American students coming to Cluj-Napoca. There need for working systems between the two institutions, sufficient microphones and bandwidth. The course content is difficult enough that we try not to allow technology short comings to further complicate teaching.
- The importance of co-teachers being able to work out their particular areas of contribution.
- Identifying sources of reliable secondary data is crucial as it adds to the interviews conducted on site.
- Minimizing restrictions on human research by not referring to interviewees by name or other identifying information.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

- Be candid about the need for teams to divide the work responsibilities so that the receiving institution students help with interpretation, as needed, while the Americans may pick up with more responsibility on writing, though not be principal author without input from local students.
- Students need regular interaction with faculty – this is not a case of turning students loose and waiting for the papers at the end of the course, in fact the writing of papers is an iterative process requiring careful, timely and thoughtful intervention.
- Students need to understand that things don't usually work out as expected – this is more often the case than we would like, and it is important to understand how to make adjustments in midcourse to save the project and have a product that meets professional standards. Often data are not available, interviews don't materialize, different sources have different information and impressions so that recommendations need to be sorted out and evaluated while learning to use the literature, local experience, practical expediency and programmatic timing.
- Learning to adapt the work to the client – the interface of integrity and reality.
- Faculty take the opportunity during the entire course to explain how these concepts have to be managed depending upon the situation, and the differences in between advising an individual staff member, or elected official versus practices of advising an appointed blue ribbon commission.
- Willingness and dedication on the part of local organizers to take care of logistical arrangements is essential.
- Setting up the interviews and making sure that the interviewees are relevant informants is highly important for students to develop high quality final reports.

5. Wrapping up the program

Once the activities in Cluj-Napoca are over and the American students return to US, a final class session is held using audio visual communication. The course is discussed, as are suggestions to make it better. Substantive and reflective papers are reviewed. Then, another important sequence in the running of the program begins.

First, instructors on both sides assess and grade the papers and the other outcomes of the study abroad programs produced by each team/student. For FSPAC this needs to happen immediately (in January) in order for the students to have their activity recognized as part of the final grade in some classes offered in the fall semester. For University of Delaware the structure of the academic year offers them a little bit more time for students to prepare the papers for grading.

Second, both universities should assess the program as quickly as possible after its completion. The main purpose is to determine what could be improved in the future. Students are required to fill out evaluation forms and these represent an important

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

stage in the evaluation of the program. In addition the program coordinators discuss frankly and openly about the main challenges and how they could be addressed in the future. This can be done via Skype meetings.

Third, instructors work with the students on the preparation of final papers. On several occasions, individual substantive papers have been extended to group papers, and study teams have presented their work at NISPAcee meetings, as well as at meetings of ASPA, NAASPA and other organizations. Publication results. Papers are expanded and become subjects of doctoral dissertations and masters theses.

Typically, American students have had more responsibilities than the Romanians in the drafting of the final paper but this will change in the future, since we are planning on increasing joint authorship. This was due however also to the added responsibilities the Romanian students had with translating certain documents/helping with documentation.

Papers may be revised/edited multiple times until students become comfortable with a format that is intended for advisors to use when interacting with advisees – this format is a departure from writing a more traditional academic paper, and students need to understand how it is to be written, formatted. The paper should begin with a problem description, then cite conclusions organized in a way that coincide with how public managers think and function: resource needs, organization, legal/political considerations, and budgetary considerations. Benchmarking approaches may be introduced at this point if that approach will be helpful. It is best to keep the course oriented to how to use benchmarking, rather than require benchmarking, the time required being in excess of what is available in this course.

Forth, it is important to identify venues for dissemination of the program results. From the very beginning one important outcome of the study abroad program was for the two universities to broadly disseminate not just the content of the individual papers but more generally their positive experience with study abroad. The final goal was to produce best practices for universities with regard to how these programs can be run successfully. For the first edition a book was published and three teams of students attended NISPAcee (Network of Institutes and Schools in Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe) an international conference in Bratislava and Belgrade. Following the 2017 course, the present publication has been developed, and the US instructor and two American students together with their Romanian partners made a plenary presentation to an international conference on Public Administration Education in November 2017 in Cluj-Napoca.

Fifth, it is important for both universities to do presentations at their home university about the program. Students who did not participate benefit from hearing about the experience of those who did. These presentations can also be useful in getting other

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

CONTENTS

faculty on board, and since the support of university management is always needed, such presentations are excellent opportunities for disseminating positive outcomes and generating support for future courses.

6. Final remarks

The program thus far has proved to be a learning opportunity for both universities. With each edition of the study abroad program the two universities are taking steps to make it a fully joint program – all students from both universities should have the same status and the same responsibilities with regard to the final outcomes. Moreover, the two universities are constantly experimenting with adding new activities and formats in order to increase students' engagement and ownership of certain activities.

The following are some of the main advantages that have emerged from conducting this program:

– There are significant mutual benefits from a joint course with a field trip component to CEE and US universities in our field as a producer of high quality practitioners, researchers and teachers.
– Connections made as a result of these courses facilitate additional inter-institutional and interpersonal interactions that can develop along the lines of the UD/BBU relationship.
– Participation by senior University officials and leaders of government and civil society add not only to the success of study abroad activities, but also to "town-gown" relationships in the host city. We have been pleased with the strong support of the Rector of BBU, the Mayor of Cluj-Napoca and representatives of civil society who have taken a personal interest in our course and have supported it in various ways, including meetings with our students.
– There are challenges associated with running this program. While certain aspects are not always ideal, the approach of BBU and UDel has always been to try and work together within the given context. It is important to openly admit challenges because some of them can be overcome over the time, especially when it comes to systemic failures and rigidity. On the positive side, these challenges have forced the two universities to be creative and think outside the box. The acts of adding physical and technical facilities, enriching library materials, IT support, workstations, microphones, lighting etc. combine to enhance a distance-learning seminar teaching format that enriches US and CEE academic programs both at home and abroad.

We hope that additional resources will be found, but emphasize that perfection should not be an enemy – the absence of cutting edge technical and physical facilities is not a reason to delay study abroad as part of public administration education in any location

FOREWORD

Section 1

A SUCCESS STORY

1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

CONTENTS

We continue to look for opportunities for BBU students to travel to the United States for a study abroad/field trip there, but travel is expensive, so while we await the day that student and faculty participants in study abroad courses travel back and forth frequently, we continue to use technology to bring classes together and use the current field trip model for our students. Thoughts and advice from readers of this document are welcome, and may be sent to any of the authors: loessner@udel.edu, hintea@fspac.ro, neamtu@fspac.ro.

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FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
1. Introduction
1.1 Who are we?
1.2 Idea behind the program
1.3 Background
1.4 Why a study abroad component to this program
1.5 The "engaged university" defined
2. Different components of the program
2.1 An iterative process
2.2 Interactive online lectures/seminars
2.3 The study abroad field trip
2.3.1 Interviews and data collection
2.3.2 Making the field trip enjoyable
2.4 Student-run seminar
2.5 Press conference, press release, and report of rapporteur
3. Course products
4. Summary checklist for organizing a successful program
5. Wrapping up the program
6. Final remarks

Section 2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES FOR DOCUMENTS USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

1. Description of the responding universities/departments
2. Main findings
3. Some tentative conclusions

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

CONTENTS

Section 2

Importance of Study Abroad Programs in Central and Eastern Europe

The course described in Section 1 is more than a study abroad program. Its success is due to the synergy among all the elements described. The field trip to Romania remains however an important and significant part of the program. Willingness of PA schools from Central and Eastern Europe to engage themselves in this type of programs is crucial. In the summer of 2017, a short survey was conducted by FSPAC among the schools in public administration from CEE, with the aim to find out the role of study abroad programs within their curriculum and their internationalization strategy. We are also interested in specific aspects regarding the implementation of such programs. Eight replies were received. Though the number of replies is relatively low, it still offers us a synthetic view on this topic.

1. Description of the responding universities/departments

Geographically, the sample (eight respondents) covers most of the representative countries from Central and Eastern Europe, including Russia, which have higher education programs in public administration. At least one response came from the following countries: Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Most of the schools/departments surveyed were set up in early 1990s, in an effort to re-establish public administration studies in former communist countries. Only the programs from Russia are both established after 2010.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

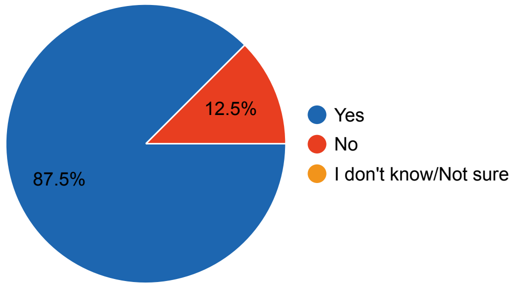
Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE
1. Description of the responding universities/departments
2. Main findings
3. Some tentative conclusions

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

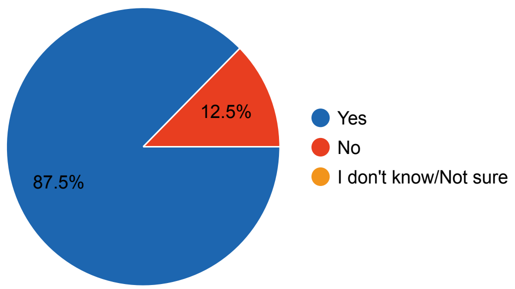
2. Main findings

Most of the responding schools are currently implementing study abroad programs, and this seems to be an ongoing activity at least in the last three years (Q1 and Q2). Where such programs are not currently implemented the main reason is the lack of willingness on the behalf of faculty members to get involved (Q3). However, interest in these programs is present and at least declaratively they will be implemented in the near future (Q4).

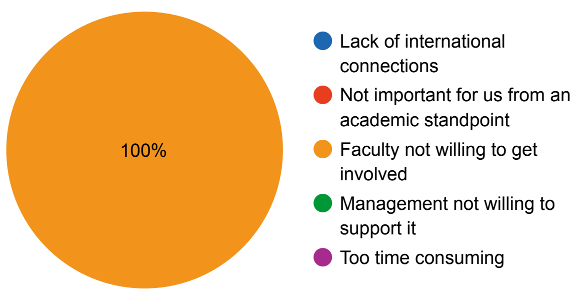
Q1. Has your Department/School ever offered study abroad programs?



Q2. Has your Department/School offered study abroad program in the last 3 years? (if you answer yes please go directly to Q5)



Q3. Which is the main reason your Department/School has not implemented such programs in the last 3 years? (1 main reason only)



CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

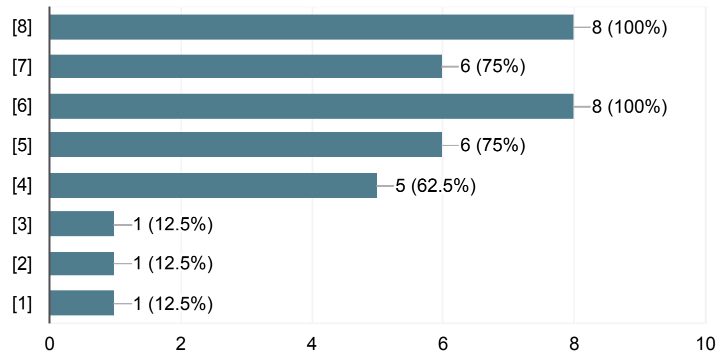
Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE
1. Description of the responding universities/departments
2. Main findings
3. Some tentative conclusions

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

One of the most important things that we wanted to find out from this survey was the structure of study abroad programs. In other words we were interested in whether they are organized for groups or rather for individual applicants (Q5) and whether they include some form of joint courses or research (Q6). All responding universities offer study abroad for individual applicants; however, in most cases they also provide these programs for organized groups of students from partner universities. In five cases there are also joint courses offered as part of these programs.

Q6.1 and Q6.2 looked separately at the dimensions of study abroad for outgoing and respectively incoming students. For CEE students going abroad, taking courses at partner universities is the most important activity of the program. With regard to incoming students, the situation is slightly different. Half of the programs involve taking courses but the other half also includes activities regarding knowing the local culture and society. This can be explained mainly due to the interest of Western countries and US towards understanding former communist countries/regimes.

Q5. Does your study abroad program involve: (check all that apply)



[1] double diplom for masters programme
[2] joint degrees
[3] Faculty exchange, summer schools
[4] joint course(s) with a foreign university
[5] groups of students from a foreign partner university travel to your university (incoming)?
[6] individual students from a foreign partner university travel to your university (incoming)?
[7] group of students travel to a foreign partner university (outgoing)
[8] individual students travel to study abroad (outgoing)

CONTENTS

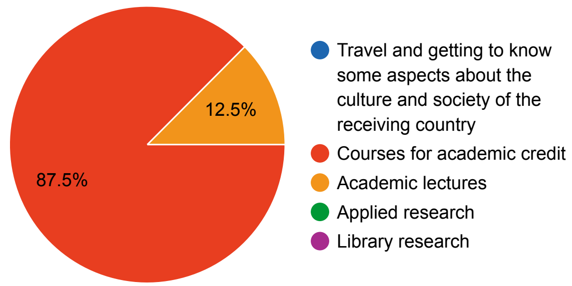
FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

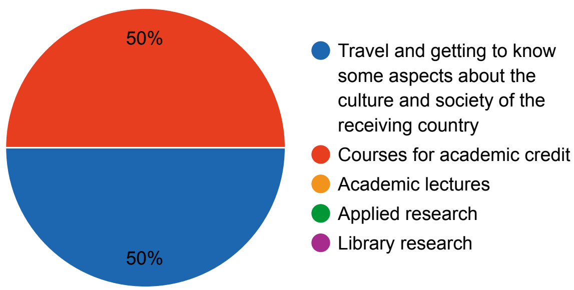
Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE
1. Description of the responding universities/departments
2. Main findings
3. Some tentative conclusions

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Q6.1 What is the main purpose for the OUTGOING component of the study abroad program? (only one answer)

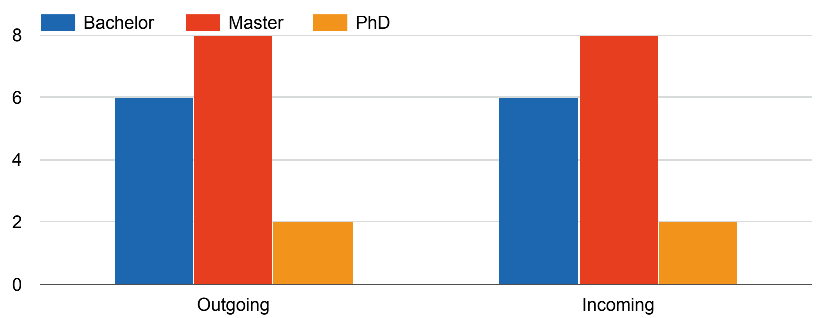


Q6.2 What is the main purpose of the INCOMING component of the study abroad program? (only one answer)



As expected, participation of PhD students in study abroad programs is rather low. It was however interesting to find out that more master students than bachelor ones apply for these programs at the surveyed universities.

Q7. What is the academic cycle of the students taking part in study abroad programs? [check all that apply]



All respondents stated that both types of study abroad, outgoing and incoming, are organized on a continuous basis. This means that the number of one time activities with

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

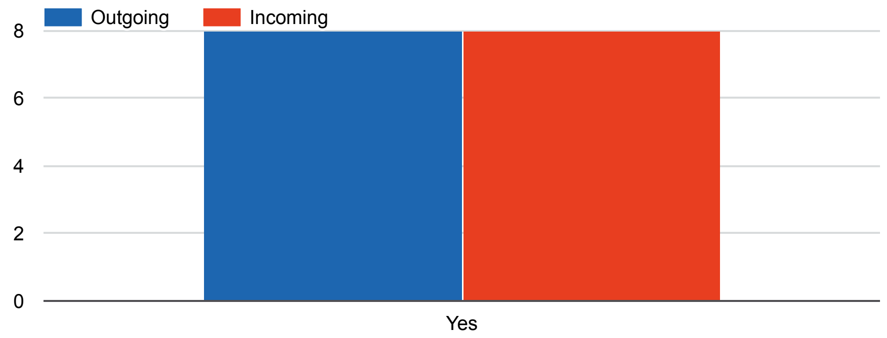
Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE
1. Description of the responding universities/departments
2. Main findings
3. Some tentative conclusions

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

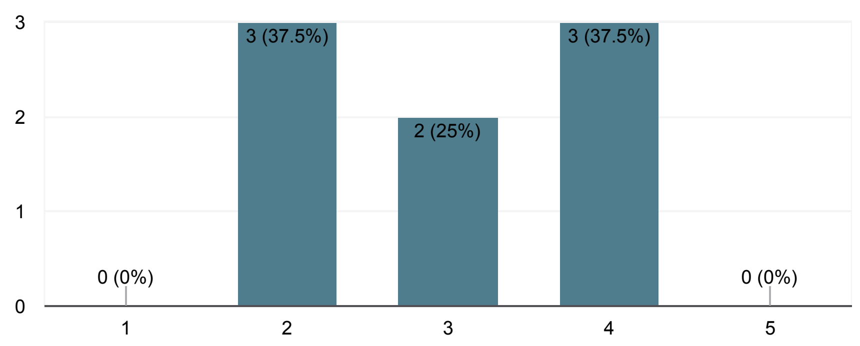
a study abroad component is diminishing and formal programs, based on permanent and institutionalized agreements, are being developed.

Q9. Do you organize your study abroad programs on a continuous basis (every year, every two years)?



We were interested in determining if any innovative practices/activities were included within the framework of the study abroad programs (Q10). Most universities evaluate their programs as rather innovative. Some of their practices are described under Q11. They include: dual degree programs, new experience sharing; Cross-disciplinary approach, new case studies on Russian and global policy context; We are part of the EMPA network - receiving as well as sending students within this framework; We use the LMS system to collect applications, catalogue of programs and all information is on the websites, transparent and fair contests; possibility to study in English and French, possibility to get a double diploma (see the answer above).

Q10. On a scale from 1 to 5 (1- not innovative at all, 5 – very innovative) please rate how innovative the study abroad programs offered by your Department/School are



One important element we wanted to find out from the survey was the importance various school attach to study abroad programs. Our assumption is that if universities highly value these programs, this will coincide with a proactive approach, geared

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

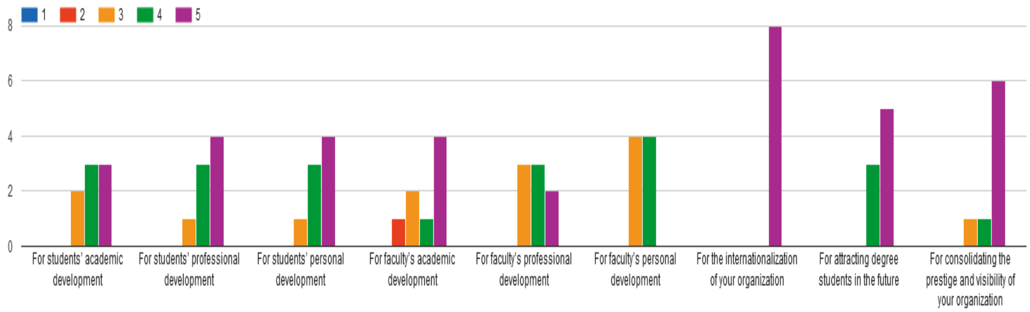
1. Description of the responding universities/departments
2. Main findings
3. Some tentative conclusions

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

toward increasing their number and innovativeness. For students, from an academic standpoint, study abroad programs are perceived as having a medium importance. However, respondents agree that they contribute to the overall development of students, both professional and personal. Results with regard to the importance of these programs for faculty are mixed; highest importance is attached to their role in the personal development of faculty.

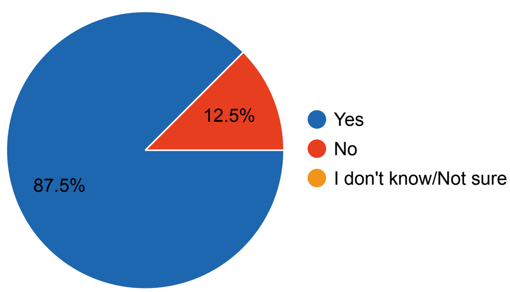
All respondents agree that study abroad programs are important for internationalization; mixed results very obtained regarding their role vis-a-vis the enhancement of the visibility of their organizations and the attraction of future degree students.

Q11. On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 - not important at all, 5 - very important, please rate how important the study abroad programs is for your Department/School, for the following categories)



For most schools, study abroad programs are part of the strategy and an important component of internationalization. In one case however the individual respondent was not aware if this is the case. We were interested in determining if these programs are initiated by individuals or they are the result of organizational initiatives. In over 50% of the cases, they are the result of the university's strategy and involvement. Again, individual respondents to this survey are not always aware of who initiates such programs in their universities.

Q13.1 Are study abroad programs part of the strategy of your Department/School?



CONTENTS

FOREWORD

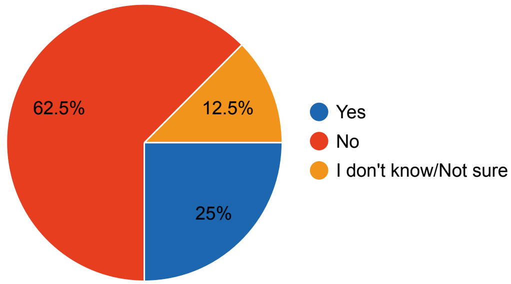
Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

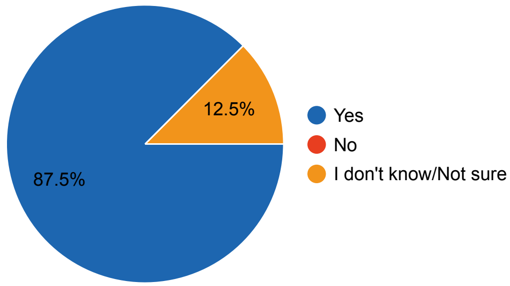
1. Description of the responding universities/departments
2. Main findings
3. Some tentative conclusions

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Q13.2 Are study abroad programs individual initiatives of the faculty or students?

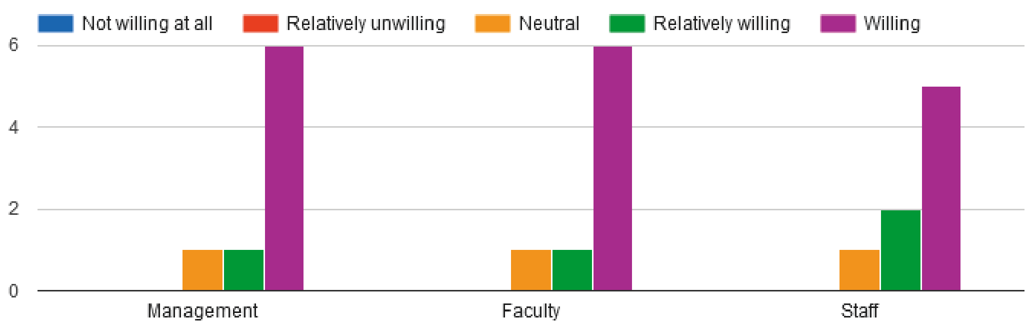


Q13.3 Are study abroad programs part of the strategy for the internationalization of your Department/School?



Willingness to support study abroad programs is important as more than one single type of actor in involved in making them work. The respondents evaluate in a rather similar and positive manner the willingness of management and faculty. Staff is perceived as being medium willing to support these programs. This might represent a problem as the role of staff is important, especially with regard to technical/administrative aspects of these programs.

Q14. On a scale from 1 to 5 please rate the willingness of the following components of your organization to support the study abroad program



CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

1. Description of the responding universities/departments
2. Main findings
3. Some tentative conclusions

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

3. Some tentative conclusions

Despite the small sample, some interesting conclusions emerged. We want to focus here on the fact that most of the responding universities understand the importance of study abroad programs and are willing to innovate in this respect. It was interesting to see that CEE universities are currently trying to incorporate different elements, including joint courses, in the framework of study abroad. This offers us hope that the current study has the potential to inform these universities/school about best practices in this fields.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Section 3

Important Templates for Documents Used Throughout the Program

Appendix 1

Syllabus for the Joint Course

Comparative Public Administration UAPP 667 2016-17

A Joint Course in Public Administration and Public Policy

University of Delaware, U.S.A. and Babeș-Bolyai University, Romania

Instructors

Dr. Arno Loessner, loessner@udel.edu

Dr. Călin Hințea, hintea@fspac.ro

Course Overview and Organization

This is a joint course for graduate students enrolled in the School of Public Policy and Administration (SPPA), University of Delaware (UD) and the Faculty of Political Science, Administration and Communications (FSPAC), Babeș-Bolyai University (BBU), Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The course includes interactive seminars during fall 2016 and applied research on site in Romania during January 2017, when UD and BBU students work in teams to carry out research projects to gain applied experience as an analyst/advisor in an international context. Participation in the course is limited to 10-15 students from each institution and is subject to approval by the instructors. Participation in all class sessions and activities is required.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

During the visit to Romania, student research teams will (1) collect information using interviews and other methods and report team findings and recommendations at a public press conference; and (2) participate in a student-led seminar to examine from a student perspective how teaching, research and public service dimensions of graduate education can contribute to an "engaged university".

An itinerary for the period January 13-28, 2017 provides more detail for all students enrolled in the course.

Primary objectives of the course

1. Consider appropriate roles of the University in society, including the concept of the "engaged university" and some of the challenges and opportunities inherent in achieving success with that model. There has long been a debate in higher education and society generally about whether the University as an institution should venture beyond being a cloistered place of teaching and contemplation to being a more proactive contributor to the social and economic life of the community. This debate will be explored with specific examples and experiences in the United States and Romania.
2. Consider how the model of the "engaged university" might apply to FSPAC. Students will participate in a student-led seminar that considers how teaching, research, public service, graduate student degree requirements and other elements of the American and Romanian graduate degree relate to the engaged university model.
3. Consider appropriate roles of University faculty and students in society and the importance of cultural factors in carrying out applied work in public administration and public policy. The practice of public administration and public policy advisory work require personal and professional skills that are often influenced by local culture. Definitions, issues, priorities, policies and conditions affecting processes and results are not the same from one place to another. In addition, "best practices" in one place may not be directly transferable to other places. It is helpful to consider how to *adapt* what we know as we approach issues in another place.
4. Gain practical experience as a member of an advisory team in a cross-cultural environment. What questions are appropriate to ask during an interview? How should they be asked? How to compare findings and data across cultures? What reporting methods help with client understanding? How to respond to questions from the media? As part of a cross-cultural research team during January, each participant will question what may have come to be taken for granted, consider differences in priorities and protocol, prepare for public presentations by considering how to gain consensus, and decide how best to report findings and recommendations to be both diplomatic and accurate.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Class sessions

There will be three class meetings to be held in Room 304 Pearson Hall (Studio C) from 9:00–11:00 a.m. Eastern U.S. (4:00-6:00 p.m. in Cluj-Napoca). Students are asked to be in place in the studio 15 minutes in advance of class starting time.

The first interactive class session on Friday, November 4. This class will include:

(1) Introductions
   a. Syllabus: class meetings and course policies
   b. Itinerary for course activity in Romania in January
(2) Seminar topic: policy and practice related to applied research and public policy.
   a. American University experience in the role of public policy consultant – Peter Szanton, "Not Well Advised".
   b. "The Delaware Model" and "The Cluj-Napoca Model": A presentation on the applied research and community intervention work of FSPAC in Cluj-Napoca, Romania.
(3) Begin the process for organizing research teams.

Read for November 4:

DelawareModel(2).pdf

Please purchase the following book, available at Amazon:

1. Szanton, Peter L., *Not Well Advised: The City as Client – an Analysis of Urban Governments and their Consultants*, Russel Sage Foundation, 1981; iUniverse.com, 2001.
2. Hințea, C., "Public Administration Schools in Romania: Strategic Choices for the Future", *Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială*, 2013, vol. 42, pp. 294-309.
3. Gallucci, Robert L. "How Scholars Can Improve Higher Education", *Chronicle of Giher Education*, November 26, 2012. http://chronicle.com/article/How-Scholars-Can-Improve/135898.
4. Denhardt, Robert B. *et al.*, "Integrating Theory and Practice in MPA Education: The Delaware Model", *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, vol. 3, no. 2 (May 1997): 153-62 and reprinted in the 1997, "Education Supplement", PA Times, October 1997, 5-7.

The 2nd interactive class session on Friday, November 11. This class will include:

(1) A presentation on "The Engaged University" by guest presenter: University of Delaware University Professor of Public Policy, Dr. Dan Rich.
(2) Class discussion of the "meaning of an" Engaged University" in practice in Romania and in the United States.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Read for November 11:

DelawareModel(2).pdf   CEI op-ed 5.1.2016.final.doc   SA Journal of PA finaldraft 8 22 2013

The 3rd interactive class session on Friday, December 9. This class will provide an opportunity to combine classes 1 and 2 in seeking practical solutions, both in terms of personal preparation and methodology to help implement the "engaged university". This discussion is intended to help inform student preparation for the student-led seminar scheduled for January 24:

1. Individual preparation, practices, habits and approaches can overcome some of the challenges of public service work at home and internationally. Discussion will include Huddleston's article based upon his experience in trying to implement improved budgeting and financial management practices in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
2. A presentation on "best practice" transfer in public administration will include Arno Loessner's article on benchmarking and his experience in trying to use the technique to improve public libraries in Delaware and to transfer innovative public management from Europe to the United States.
   a. discussion of the student-led seminar and press conference: PhD candidate David Karas, who will serve as rapporteur of the student-led seminar
   b. discussion of team research projects: Dr. Bogdana Neamtu, FSPAC public administration department chair, will present logistical information regarding the interviews to be conducted in January.

Read for December 9:

1. Huddleston, Mark W., "Innocents Abroad: Reflections from a Public Administration Consultant in Bosnia", *Public Administration Review*, vol. 59, no. 2 (Mar. - Apr., 1999), pp. 147-158.
2. Loessner, G. Arno, "Estimating Local Financial Support for Public Libraries: A Tool to Facilitate Benchmarking of Best Practices Among Counties in the United States", *Public Productivity & Management Review*, vol. 23, no. 1, Sage Publications, 1999. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271813920_Estimating_Local_Financial_Support_for_Public_Libraries_A_Tool_to_Facilitate_Benchmarking_of_Best_Practices_among_Counties_in_the_United_States.
3. ***, essay from 2013_01_18 Salzburg Seminar/Volker file to be provided in advance of class.

An interactive class session on Friday, February 3 will serve as a course wrap-up, at which reflective papers prepared by students will be discussed, as well as group research papers prepared in Romania.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

To achieve the course objectives, each student will:

1. read assigned material in advance of class meetings and participate actively in all activities of the course;
2. participate in a student-led seminar on the "engaged university";
3. be evaluated for grading purposes on the timeliness and content of two written assignments (course student deliverables listed below) and the student's quality of participation in the course. Since the course is designed as an interactive learning experience, papers will be read by the instructors and may be returned with comments. Students may be asked to elaborate, clarify, revise and re-submit.

Student deliverables for grading

Team-produced substantive paper and report – 60% of the Course Grade

1. Sixty percent of the course grade will be determined by the quality and timeliness of the team paper and presentation in Romania. As a team member, each student will help define, design and complete data collection, fieldwork, interviews, press conference presentation and written report. The work will contain observations, conclusions and recommendations, and will be presented during a press conference in Romania and in a substantive paper to be submitted for grading.
2. Each student in each research team is expected to contribute to the preparation of this paper and presentation. Each student in each research team is expected to answer questions verbally from instructors or representatives of the media and FSPAC faculty attending the press conference.
3. A written DRAFT paper of about 8-12 pages (1.5 spacing) identifying the research topic, what the team did in its study, findings, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for future study. This is due at the beginning of the seminar/press conference on January 25, 2017. Each team will present at the press conference using an outline. Each member of the team should participate in the presentation.
4. All final substantive papers are due to the instructors by March 16, 2017. Teams may be encouraged to further develop their papers for publication. This will be explained during class sessions.

Individually written Reflective Paper – 40% of the Course Grade

1. Forty percent of the course grade will be determined by the timeliness and quality of the reflective paper. Whereas the first paper is a group project, the second writing assignment "Reflective Paper" is to be completed individually and independently by each student in the class. This paper will be a typewritten 6-10 page (1.5 spacing) reflective paper, due on February 15, 2017.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course
Appendix 2.
Course Calendar
Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary
Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings
Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics
Appendix 6.
Student Papers
- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

2. The reflective paper will:
   a. compare experience in Romania with that of another country, using examples that indicate that you have thought about essential elements of your study experience in more than one place and time;
   b. report on what you learned about the concept of the engaged university, and your views as to potential of the concept to your future work;
   c. report on what you learned about yourself and your program of study as a result of this study abroad experience.
3. All final reflective papers are due to the instructors by March 16, 2017.

Quality of individual participation – 10% of the course grade

1. This will be assessed by the instructors based upon quality of each student's participation in and overall contribution to the Course.
2. Students may be asked to complete and submit to the instructors a short questionnaire giving confidential evaluations of individual research team members in fulfilling team activities.

UD students will be graded by Dr. Loessner. BBU students will be graded by Dr. Hintea.

Academic Honesty

All students are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic studies. To falsify the results of one's research, to steal the words or ideas of another, to cheat on an assignment, or to allow or assist another to commit these acts corrupts the educational process. Students are expected to work as a member of a team, and as such to prepare a team project. Each student is expected to pull their own load. Students will neither give nor receive unauthorized assistance. All work used in papers prepared for the course will be appropriately cited. Substantive points made and opinions expressed by well-informed individuals are to be presented so that statements made by persons interviewed will not be directly attributed to them by name or otherwise referred to in a way that identifies them.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Appendix 2

Course Calendar

March 21, 2016	Logistics meeting and discussion Calendar finalized
March 25, 2016	Finalize promotional materials; ensure trip is publicized and posted on SPPA website
March, 2016	Conference call to firm up course/trip plans
April 1, 2016	Finalize preliminary budget; calculate student program fee
April 8, 2016	Send note on course and fieldtrip to SPPA faculty to share class
April 12, 2016	Interest Session 1
April 14, 2016	Interest Session 2
May 1, 2016	Early application deadline (proposal – see email)
May 6, 2016	Letters of acceptance out to applicants
July, 2016	Secure interactive classroom for four class sessions. (2) Order and organize readings for the course electronically. (3) Conclude agreements between SPPA and FSPAC as to logistical arrangements . (4) conclude syllabus.
Mid-August, 2016	Check in with SPPA to assist, if needed, with marketing to new students have someone speak to this during orientation.
September 16, 2016	**Student Application Deadline!!!**
September 19-23, 2016	Meetings with applicants and/or prospects
October 7, 2016	Initial student payment due
October 2, 2016	Balance of program fee/cost due
November 3, 2016	Passports/Visas must be in hand – copies to be turned in to course leaders
November 4, 2016	First course meeting – orientation for UD students 30 minutes before first video class (BBU students will meet with coordinators in advance of this session to do the same) Students to turn in statement of research topic Research teams to begin coordination via email following meeting Presentation on background for trip; firming up plans for topics
November 11, 2016	Second course meeting – video conference session for UD and BBU Introductions and briefing on course/trip overview
Mid-November, 2016	Book airfare and finalize hotel accommodations; lock in other travel arrangements as nec-essary
November 30, 2016	Students to turn in research study preliminary proposal Students to turn in list of possible interview subjects
December 2, 2016	Third course meeting – video conference session for UD and BBU Updates from research teams on study approaches Identification Further discussion about course logistics
Mid-December, 2016	Students to email course leaders to provide update on progress Further details on logistics for January travel provided, and questions answered Offer optional meeting/coffee to discuss for those wishing to participate?

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

Early January, 2017	Logistics emails and other conversations to confirm plans in Delaware and Cluj-Napoca
January 13-28, 2017	Travel and field research in Romania
Early February, 2017	Fourth course meeting – video conference session for UD and BBU Discuss brief reflections on trip Research teams provide updates on progress made with final papers
February 15, 2017	UD Students turn in reflective papers
March 15, 2017	First draft of final substantive paper turned in to course leaders
April 1, 2017	Course leaders provide feedback to research teams regarding potential paper improvements
April 15, 2017	Final papers turned in
May 30, 2017	Spring 2017 semester grades due in UDSIS

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Appendix 3

Field Trip Itinerary

Day	Date 2017	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
1	Jan 13 Fri TRAVEL DAY	1100 – Arrive at Graham Hall parking lot to load luggage in van	1200 – Depart Graham Hall for travel to Newark, NJ Airport (EWR)	1730 – *United Airlines Flight 30*, EWR to MUC
2	Jan 14 Sat	0720 – Arrive in Munich (MUC) 0925 – *Lufthansa Flight 1668*, MUC to CLJ	1210 – Arrive in Cluj-Napoca Transfer to Hotel Topaz Meet FSPAC partners; settle in, exchange money	1800 – UD participants dinner at Hotel Topaz
3	Jan 15 Sun	Late morning brunch at hotel, remainder of morning and early afternoon open to explore Cluj-Napoca	1600-1800 – Hotel Topaz orientation/introductions Meeting with Dr. Neamtu about interview schedules	1800-2000 – Buffet Reception by BBU at Hotel Topaz
4	Jan 16 Mon	0800-0900 – Breakfast Research team activity	Research team activity	Individual Studies
5	Jan 17 Tues	Research team activity	Research team activity	Individual Studies
6	Jan 18 Wed	Research team activity	1230 – Luncheon with Prof. Dr. Ioan Aurel Pop, Rector of Babeș-Bolyai University 1400 – Dr. Emil Boc, Mayor 1600 – Prof. Balogh, Exec. Dir., Civitas Foundation	Individual Studies
7	Jan 19 Thurs	Research team activity	Research team activity	Individual Studies
8	Jan 20 Fri	Research team activity	Individual Studies	Individual Studies
9	Jan 21 Sat	Weekend excursion – Cluj-Napoca to Sighisoara to Biertan to Sibiu		
10	Jan 22 Sun	Weekend excursion – Sibiu to Alba Iulia to Cluj-Napoca		
11	Jan 23 Mon	Research team activity	Research team activity	Individual Studies
12	Jan 24 Tues	Research team activity	1400 – Student-led seminar	Individual Studies
13	Jan 25 Wed	Research team activity	Research team activity	Individual Studies
14	Jan 26 Thurs	Research team activity 1200 lunch in FSPAC cafeteria	1400–1800 – Press Conference followed by group presentations on work in Cluj-Napoca and summary of student seminar report	1900 – Dinner with all course participants at Restaurant ROATA
15	Jan 27 Fri	Individual Studies and wrap up	Individual Studies and packing	Individual Studies
16	Jan 28 Sat TRAVEL DAY	Clear hotel, vans to airport 0635 – *Lufthansa Flight 1673*, CLJ to MUC	0920 – *United Flight 31*, MUC to EWR 1250 – Arrive at Newark, NJ Airport, Board van to Graham Hall	

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course
Appendix 2.
Course Calendar
Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary
Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings
Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics
Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Appendix 4

Student Run Seminar.

Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Graduate Student Seminar

24 January 2017, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Report of the Rapporteur

David Karas, Ph.D candidate, University of Delaware

On January 24, 2017, fifteen doctoral and masters students in public administration and public policy from the School of Public Policy and Administration, University of Delaware and Faculty of Political, Administration and Communication Sciences, Babeș-Bolyai University met in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, where they engaged in a student-moderated seminar on the relationship of public administration/policy graduate education and the graduate student experience with the concept of the "engaged university".

Questions/Discussion Points: The following are to be discussed during the seminar.

1. Students of various professional, academic and personal backgrounds are drawn to graduate school for a variety of individual reasons. What are some of the factors which influenced your decision to attend graduate school? What led you to choose to study public administration and public policy?
   - The University of Delaware students shared their experiences and expectations which led them to pursue a graduate degree in public administration and public policy, including:
     - As an alternative to law school;
     - Inspiration from undergraduate studies in organizational and community leadership, and with a desire to engage in problem solving in the public sector;
     - A student forum and some encouragement from a professor to study the media and public policy;
     - An academic background in psychology and social work, and a desire to study community advocacy and the political dimension of urban poverty;

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

- A background in social work, and with a desire to be proactive in using policies to avoid negative societal and social challenges;
- A desire to continue studies and pursue a career in academia;
- A background as a journalist and with a desire to explore the public policy field and apply problem-solving approaches to public problems and challenges;
- A desire to change disciplines, and with an acute interest in public policy and administration due to its nature as well as the professional opportunities which come with such a degree.

• FSPAC students then shared their experiences and expectations which led them to pursue a graduate degree in public administration and public policy, including:

- The anticipation of working in a public institution;
- A background as a journalist and frequent interactions with public officials which inspired further academic study;
- A desire to study an interdisciplinary field, and an interest in public decision making;
- Inspiration from FSPAC during an undergraduate experiences;
- An interest in NGO work;
- A background in American Studies and a desire to be a part of public improvement;
- Studies in psychology and an interest in the topic;
- A background in psychology and interested in building upon that backgrounds.

• FSPAC faculty then shared their experiences and expectations which led them to pursue a graduate degree and/or a job in public administration and public policy, including:

- Course work in the field, with an interest in the problem-solving approach of public administration;
- Diverse academic background, with a joy for learning and an interest in furthering research and academic work;
- Political science background and subsequent studies in sociology, with an interest in the reform of public administration in post-community societies.

• Several participants then noted the distinction between politics and policy, and how it is often misunderstood among colleagues and family/friends.

2. The “Delaware Model”, which integrates research, teaching and public service as functions to be engaged in by students and staff works well at the University of Delaware, where it has been part of the academic program for more than 50 years Is the concept of “engaged university” one that would have appeal in other parts of the world, specifically in Central and Eastern Europe? Admittedly, not all are capable of doing all three functions, but to the extent that persons can be found who are able to do them, is the Delaware model or a modification of it an appropriate approach

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

for universities in Central and Eastern Europe to consider if developing a program of University engagement?

- A question was raised following the posing of this prompt regarding the broad definition of public service, prompting some additional discussion about the ways in which such public service experiences occur under the "Delaware Model."
- University of Delaware students shared a variety of perspectives, including:
  - Support of the need for such an approach, citing the ability under the "Delaware Model" to put theory and skills to the test while still in the classroom environment and with the support of faculty;
  - The opinion that such engagement should be required, given that students are future policymakers and decision makers – and that such engagement can also shine light on what further research and practical efforts need to be made in various areas;
  - Mention of the UD Alternative Spring Break program and the benefits of working in a community setting – as well as the voluntary engagement of students in such activities after they realize the benefits of real-world experience and service;
  - Mention of one student's home country approach of combining service and teaching;
  - Mention of another student's home country approach of blending theory and practice as much as possible;
  - Mention of another student's home country having no organized community engagement, and a loose conception of research and research methods.
- FSPAC students also shared a variety of perspectives, including:
  - In various interviews during the course of this program, they have come across professors doing all three tenets of the model;
  - Mention of one student's home country and the focus on theory in early studies;
  - Mention of the difference in how universities are perceived in the United States and in other nations;
  - Discussion about the FSPAC communications faculty, and how some professors have decided to engage in these three categories of efforts based in large part around personal preferences and relationships;
  - Discussion about the 120 student-led community-based projects each year, too harsh.
- FSPAC faculty shared their perspectives as well, including:
  - The historic Ivory Tower approach of academics, and the importance of addressing the manufactured disconnect between theory and reality – with an understanding of how important it is for public service to be included among priorities for faculty and universities (i.e. adopting a small community near Cluj-Napoca);

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

– Noting that how a university is defined, as well as what goals it sets, can be crucial in determining the degree to which it plays a role. Such capacity, then, is contextual;
– Pointing out that the public service aspect does not take place as frequently as it should, and that in most of Central and Eastern Europe it is uncommon to see all three pillars in place at a given university;
– Discussing some of the successes in this area within FSPAC, and noting the adoption of local communities and scholarships awarded to students seeking to engage in community service efforts;
– Pointing out that in some universities, even teaching can take a back seat to research – and how, in such contexts, community engagement and public service are virtually nonexistent;
– Noting that now community engagement and service are part of the FSPAC strategic plan;
– Pointing out that FSPAC faculty need to focus more on the community, as universities are affected by the state of the local community.

3. Graduate student workloads may need to be rebalanced so as to optimize exposure and experience in applied research, classroom teaching and student study expectations. How might this be done, and what would graduate study look like if it were done?
   - Generally, University of Delaware students agreed that workloads were heavy and could serve to hamper opportunities for such engagement. That said, others pointed out the availability of research center appointments which might function in the public service. All seemed to agree on the importance of such opportunities to translate theory into practice while still in the classroom – and programs like the Legislative Fellows program, in which students serve as staff researchers for the Delaware General Assembly, were mentioned in this regard. They noted that all graduates will return to the community, and that such skills can be critical in enhancing their professional effectiveness. They suggested explicitly including public service and engagement in curricula.
   - One FSPAC student noted that the workload for many programs is relatively minimal, and students can be engaged in public service if they wish – and particularly if they are receiving support and mentoring from a faculty member to engage in such activities.
   - FSPAC faculty members noted that emphasizing civic involvement and public service in curricula could serve to help make engagement in such activities more practical. Others noted that many students have full-time jobs and it could be hard to strike such a balance. Still, others pointed to the many opportunities that exist for such engagement – volunteer and otherwise – and how some students participate on their own. One faculty member did note that if such engagement is

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

mandatory, it is critical that it be administered properly, given the broad number of students who could need facilitated projects of this design.

4. Peter Szanton, in his book "Not Well Advised ", argues and personal experience confirms that there are some approaches to applied research study that may be less problematic and less controversial. For example, well organized public opinion surveys may be less controversial undertakings than faculty conducted management studies that suggest changes in public policy or existing practice. Should such considerations be taken into account by university managers and their clients in developing a plan for public policy applied research?
   - Members of the FSPAC faculty shared the perspectives that research results can be written in a number of ways – and framed in a way as to sugar coat negative or unpopular findings to help present a more diplomatic report and/or presentation to a client. That said, several agreed that ruffling feathers is an unavoidable consequence of academic research. They recognized the need to maintain relationships with external entities and acknowledged the potential to lose funding related to such controversial research, but nonetheless felt it was not appropriate to corrupt the research process. They noted that debate with students on issues like this can be critical and useful for their educational development as well.
   - Members of the FSPAC faculty also noted the prevalence of consulting in organizations, and pointed to the role that the university can play even in public-sector conflicts, especially given the integrity and reputation of such institutions and the capacity to arbitrate disputes.
   - University of Delaware students discussed the role of academics to pursue knowledge, while acknowledging the inherent challenges with uncovering findings which could prove to be controversial. The issue of climate change research was offered as an example. The students shared the opinion that objective research is critical to uphold the integrity of an institution, and that it can be important to create space for controversial research given its societal significance.
   - A FSPAC student noted the fact that debate about questions like this one is healthy in such an academic environment.
5. If an academic staff member prepares an academic journal article, the normal practice is for it to be submitted for peer review, often followed by several revisions prior to publication. Should research monographs submitted to a public agency or NGO receive similar scrutiny? If so by whom? How might this be done?
   - FSPAC faculty members expressed various opinions on this question. One noted that if a client is happy with a research project, it should move forward – especially given the opportunity to debate its findings later. They noted the complicated relationship between such institutions and clients, and were curious how such an arrangement could be logistically possible. Several agreed that such scrutiny

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

would be valuable and could improve work products, but noted the difficulty in handling poor work products created by colleagues. It was suggested that the client is the appropriate party to evaluate the findings and reports prepared for them, but also acknowledged that many clients do not have the capacity to evaluate research and take the advice of consultants at face value.

- University of Delaware students also questioned who could authenticate or review such research products, and who could determine if they are factual. One noted that a client should be responsible for the risks of commissioning research which might not yield a quality report, but another pointed out that clients are not generally aware of the intricacies of social science research. Another pointed out that many reports, particularly related to NGOs, are cited again and again in subsequent reports – regardless of the relative rigor of such products. In this way, they found that such a review would not be practically simple.

6. Should higher education rethink the extent to which graduate study is conducted to be more effective in the preparation of professionals who are skilled as advisors? Is public policy/public administration graduate education overly specialized? Should universities consider courses that are more generally applicable to help graduate students develop advisory skills?
   - One University of Delaware student noted that such preparation should be part of a graduate program. Several then engaged in a conversation about that fact that while UD students can research anything in their program, faculty might not have a background in such issues. One student noted opposition they have received regarding their topic for this reason.
   - University of Delaware students also noted the need for more training related to serving as global advisers. In particular, they noted the focus of programs at UD on the local level and on Delaware – and the relative deficit in opportunities to learn about global issues and policy solutions.
   - An FSPAC faculty member was supportive of the idea of providing training for such advisory skills, and noted that even presenting basic etiquette and professional skills classes could be useful. The member noted an applied research program during their undergraduate career in which the client determined 40 percent of the students' grades, underlining the need for such skills and presentation abilities.
7. Should applied research be integrated into undergraduate study, as well as graduate study, and, if so, what might graduate students be expected to do facilitate that approach?
   - University of Delaware students generally agreed that this should take place, and some noted that graduate students could help advise and mentor undergraduates in this context. In this way, the graduate students further develop and practice their advisory skills, while the undergraduates develop and learn. One student

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

also pointed out the need for such training – for advising and teaching more generally – in the graduate school experience.

- One FSPAC student noted that some mentoring is already taking place.
- One FSPAC faculty member, responding to a comment from a University of Delaware student regarding the possibility of building such mentoring into a program of study, noted that such an approach is impossible. However, several other FSPAC faculty members noted the ability to find creative ways to incentivize participation.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Appendix 5

Press Conference:

Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Cristina Stănică, Ph.D candidate, University of Delaware

Working towards adapting the university/ community engagement American model, in a sustained effort of democratizing higher education institutions in Romania, is a complex movement that requires the development of new and productive connections between the university and its public. The present assessment aims to summarize the research conducted in January 2017 in the city of Cluj-Napoca, Romania by graduate students in public administration/public policy at the University of Delaware and Babeș-Bolyai University.

The first study "**Understanding the Barriers, if any, to Implementing a National Sexual Health Education Strategy in Romania to Combat High Rates of Teenage Pregnancies**" by Mallory Smith, SPPA, with research assistance from Alexandra Opris, FSPAC, seeks to understand the barriers to implementing a national sexual health education strategy in Romania to combat high rates of teenage pregnancies. Findings of this study point out the need to identify and engage key stakeholders around this cause, and to garner a great deal of community support. The paper identified key challenges, including cultural considerations, and presents recommendations for consideration by government and civil society.

A second research study by Ben Chun, SPPA, with Catalin Hadadea and Helga Thies, FSPAC, "**Report on Mental Health Policies/Services for Students at Babeș-Bolyai University**" analyzes mental health policies and services for students at Babeș-Bolyai University. The report identifies the main factors that influence student perceptions with respect to mental illness, and their willingness to seek support. Societal stigmas play a significant role in education, awareness, and self-diagnosis of such conditions, while little attention is given to promoting mental wellness. The study presents multiple recommendations, most of them revolving around creating professional networks for support. Best practices from the United States can easily be implemented in Romania due to the highly specialized range of academics and practitioners in the psychology field.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

A third research report "**NGOs in Romania: An Assessment of Their Impact on Strengthening Civil Society and Promoting Democracy in Cluj-Napoca, Romania**" by Yuliya Brel, SPPA, with Ada Tudorica and Réka Kelemen, FSPAC, is the result of an assessment of the NGO sector in Romania and its impact on strengthening civil society and promoting democracy in the city of Cluj-Napoca. Conflicting legislation, the absence of regulations for pro bono services offered to the representatives of marginalized communities, and the absence of laws that would give financial incentives to individuals that donate money to charitable and other non-profit organizations are the factors that stand in the way of improving collaborative arrangements with the third sector in the city. Recommendations call for greater coordination with the government, NGO leadership, and public officials in creating a framework that supports a vibrant non-profit sector.

A fourth report "**Comparative Examination of Cross-cultural Perceptions of Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship , a Case Study of Cluj-Napoca, Romania**" by Kelsey Edmond, SPPA, with Alexandra Stoica and Andrea Zolde, FSPAC, represents a comparative examination of cross-cultural perceptions of innovation and social entrepreneurship in Cluj-Napoca. Social enterprises are important actors in public service delivery and can serve as organizations that can help make the transition from one sector to the other. Organizational boundary spanning is a common phenomenon in the era of networked governance, and social entrepreneurship can become an important driver of innovation.

The fifth research team consisting of John Wambui, SPPA with Alina Pavela, Atanda O. Oluwaseye and George Vlas of FSPAC wrote a paper entitled "**What is Poverty: Perceptions and Definitions Dilemma**", which considered the existence of a gap in public scholarship on the concept of poverty, especially as it is related to examining and comparing different perceptions and definitions of poverty as perceived by a wide range of institutions. Since poverty is place and context specific, and continuously evolving, findings pointed out the need to address this problem from the community perspective. Recommendations of this study illustrate the important roles that academia, police, government, and mass media have in shaping perceptions of poverty and designing efficient policies to solve this matter.

The sixth team of Jun Jiao, SPPA with Larisa Antal and Anca Odobleja, FSPAC, wrote "**Distance Education in Romania: An Inquiry and Essay**", in which they conducted research that focuses on distance education in Romania. It identifies the legal and cultural constraints that pose as barriers in developing distance education, the reasons why service delivery is not very desirable in this type of education, and problems linked to the way distance education is perceived by faculty and students. A cross-cultural analysis for China and the United States is provided in this study, to serve as specific examples in setting the next steps for creating a knowledge-based society in Romania.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

The seventh study, "**The Engaged University in Central and Eastern Europe: Case Studyof the Application of the American Model of University/Community Engagement for Social and Economic Development at Babeș-Bolyai University and Cluj-Napoca City Hall**" is by Cristina M. Stanica, SPPA doctoral student whose previous academic work had been at FSPAC. This study aims to identify the first steps in adapting the American model of university/ community engagement in Romania. Through the evaluation of the relationship between Babeș-Bolyai University and Cluj-Napoca City Hall, specific socio-cultural factors and conditions stress out the need for a broad framework for engagement, for creating more accountability mechanisms, and building support for student engagement. It calls for promoting the importance and value of public scholarship in Romanian universities, and for setting up formal promotion and financial mechanisms that would ensure a sustainable engaging working environment that clearly reflects the public interest.

In order to address the multiple problems that Romanian communities face, this overall contribution to the public scholarship stands for broader engagement. It is a necessary condition that is required by the rapid evolution of these problems, which will reflect on the policy outcomes if left untreated. In the era of governance and collaboration, the role of public institutions is crucial for achieving high levels of performance. Through facilitating engagement practices, creating space for dialogue, and eliminating legal barriers, the Romanian administration will become a modern and trust enhancing driver. Engagement in and between universities becomes another factor of success, through the increasing the value of public scholarship, and promoting the work of the growing number of community-engaged groups and networks.

The above summaries are intended to provide an understanding of the range of topics which were considered by research teams during this field trip. On previous occasions, economic development, traffic management, city planning, urban renewal and a number of other topics have been studied. To provide some additional information, all the papers from this field trip are presented in full in this publication.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Appendix 6

Student Papers

1.

NGOs in Romania: An Assessment of Their Impact on Strengthening Civil Society and Promoting Democracy in Cluj-Napoca, Romania

by Yuliya Brel

Acknowledgement: Special thanks to Ada Tudorica and Réka Kelemen for their help in preparing this paper.

We studied the scope, content, revenue structure, and impediments to work of the non-profit sector in Cluj-Napoca as we considered the impact non-profit organizations exert on strengthening civil society and promoting democracy in the City.

Major findings:

NGOs in Romania experience various difficulties in accomplishing their missions, including overlapping and/or conflicting enabling and governing legislation, the absence of regulations for pro bono services offered to the representatives of marginalized communities, and the lack of legal financial incentives to individuals to make charitable contributions.

Recommendations:

Because NGOs have the capacity to be an important supplement to publicly provided services, it is necessary for social and economic development that legislators pay attention to issues that support and promote NGOs and civil society in Romania. To draw the attention of the public and their elected officials to the mentioned problems, NGOs representatives should engage more actively in advocating for the necessary changes to be introduced in the legislation.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Although the absence of regulations specifying the work of pro bono lawyers and other professionals is a specific issue, the problems with overlapping and conflicting regulations, ordinances and laws, as well as with the absence of tax incentives for individual donors affect the work of most, if not all, NGOs. That is why it is recommended that NGOs organize a forum to work out a strategy to inform and influence necessary changes in public opinion and legislation.

NGOs representatives should propose the purpose of new policy, where it will be implemented, and explain how success will be defined. The report should also identify those who will be responsible for implementing the new policy, including specification of the behavioral changes that are expected to be produced as a result of the policy implementation. To the extent possible, it is important to make sure that institutional, organizational, and procedural changes required to support the new policy are specified, and that key tasks necessary to establish new policy are identified. NGOs should also consider threats to implementation and ways of addressing them (Mintrom, 2012, pp. 293-294).

To work out new policies with respect to the identified problems, representatives of Romanian NGOs may refer to the experience of other countries and consider adapting their legislation and practice. For instance, when it comes to the pro bono regulations, the Romanian National Bar Association may take an active stance in encouraging this type of work, and offer to adapt French legislation, as the Romanian legal system is similar to that in France. As for tax incentives for individual donations, American system may be of interest. In America, NGOs such as charitable, religious, educational, scientific, literary, and the like, are eligible to receive gifts from individuals that are deductible from the personal income tax.

NGOs should also make provisions for evaluation of a new policy to facilitate its development (Mintrom, 2012, pp. 294-295). One of the interviewees with whom we spoke suggested a specially created independent committee be charged with evaluating the implementation process and policy outcomes.

Finally, in the course of our interviewing we learned that NGOs have at times been seen by government personnel as being less than cooperative partners in achieving positive coordination. To the extent that this problem exists, NGO leadership and public officials will each need to find ways to work together more effectively as they seek workable solutions.

A short history of civil society in Romania

After the collapse of the communist state in Central and Eastern Europe and disintegration of the Soviet Union in the 1980s and 1990s, 'the concept of civil society re-entered political discourse' (Badescu, 2003, p. 123). Civil society was believed to play a central

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

role 'in the transition from authoritarian regimes,' and considered to be important 'for the durability of effective democratic institutions' (Green, 2002, p. 455).

It is assumed that civil society, NGOs as one of its main constituents, and the process of democratization are strongly connected with each other. This connection is understood as follows: 'while NGOs are part of civil society, they also strengthen it through their activities, which in turn supports the democratic process' (Mercer, 2002, p. 7). Since societies become increasingly heterogeneous, the need for NGOs increases. Also, as governments find themselves increasingly challenged to meet the specific needs of constituents and sub-communities, the need for NGOs grows too. Consequently, as Romania develops, the number and varieties of supportive NGOs must be increased.

The third sector of non-governmental, non-profit organizations existed in Romania already before World War II. However, it was 'effectively dismantled' by the communist governments after the war (Johnson & Young, 1997, p. 303). During the post-World War II communist rule which lasted for more than 40 years, 'the Romanian economy was based almost entirely on government provision of goods and services' (Ibid.). Following the revolution of 1989, numerous non-profit organizations emerged 'as one of Romania's first steps toward democratic society' (Ibid., p. 306). In spite of the fact, just like in other post-communist countries, 'civil society development in Romania after 1989 was stifled by multiple factors' (Parau, 2009, p. 121). Among the factors researchers defined 'a preference for informal networking and a mistrust of formal organizations; material poverty; public demoralization; distrust of domestic institutions, which failed to deliver the promised well-being; and a lack of support by the state' (Howard, 2003; Welch, 2004, as cited in Parau, 2009, p. 121).

Nevertheless, less than a decade after the revolution, there was evidence of the emergence of 'a growing and vibrant non-profit sector in Romania, featuring approximately 5,000 organizations registered with the Ministry of Justice' (Johnson & Young, 1997, p. 304). Most of those organizations were structured as associations, and represented such areas of public interest as education, arts and culture, youth, minorities, etc. (Ibid.). Also, many non-profits developed to meet basic human needs, including advocacy for human rights, facilitating successful transition to a civil society and so on (Ibid.). According to Parau (2009), however, still at the beginning of 2000 the situation was difficult. Romanian NGOs 'were poor in human and financial capital in most areas, including internal organizational management and fundraising. Most were active only at the local level; only a few at regional, national or international levels' (p. 121). As for the size of the third sector in Central and Eastern Europe, according to Toepler and Salamon (2003), at the beginning of the 21st century 'NGOs [were] still a modest economic force in the region in terms of employment or national expenditure' (p. 366).

By 2010, the total number of registered non-profit organizations in Romania had reached 62,000, although only 21,000 of them were actually active (Romania, 2010, p. 6). Out of

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

these organizations, 71% was comprised by associations, 27% – by foundations, and federations and unions made up 1% each (Ibid., p. 11). Romanian NGOs were active in a wide range of fields. Among them were environmental, social, human rights, and other organizations (Ibid., p. 6). From the point of view of statistics, the most important fields in which NGOs were active included sports and recreational activities (18.8%), education (7.5%), and social services (7.3%) (Ibid.). The most important funding sources for Romanian NGOs were the European Union, and foundations or international or foreign governmental institutions (35.2%) (Ibid., p. 8).

It can be thus concluded that Romania used the opportunity of developing a political climate 'conducive to private initiative and to the growth and development of NGOs,' to achieve a higher level of democratization (Green, 2002, p. 460). Also, the country has undoubtedly made an effort to address such important tasks with respect to the third sector as fostering legitimacy, capacity building, and resource development (Salamon *et al*., 1999, pp. 33-34).

As the literature on Romanian NGOs is not voluminous, our team had to do a lot of background research for the purpose of the report, and study the sources that had been produced at the earlier stages of Romanian civil society development. We employed the sources to design questions for the interviews conducted in Cluj-Napoca in January, 2017. Our purpose was to find out how things changed since most of the scholarly literature on the condition of civil society in Romania had been written, and whether any progress or impediments to progress could be detected. The identified impediments to the work of NGOs in Romania served as the basis for our recommendations on how to modify or remove them for the sake of allowing the NGO sector in Romania to develop further.

Methodology

The scope, content and revenue structure of the non-profit sector in Romania were studied by means of secondary data analysis and personal semi-structured interviews conducted in Cluj-Napoca between January 16 and January 25, 2017. The interviewees were selected through purposive sampling, since the study focused only on NGOs whose mission was to support the process of democratization and promote civil society in Romania. The respondents represented a diverse range of NGOs, from the one providing pro-bono lawyers' services to the marginalized communities in cases when the civil rights of those people were violated, to the one engaging in scientific research that was later used to advocate for the introduction of changes in the national legislation.

Each hour-long interview was recorded and transcribed. The information obtained during the interviews was then analyzed in order to offer some recommendations on

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

how to improve the work of NGOs, and the legal environment in which they function while attempting to contribute to democratization in Romania.

Analysis

Characteristics of NGOs

Two decades ago scholars were speculating on the future development of the Romanian non-profit sector. The current state of the third sector in Romania proves that the apprehension that groups might not continue to exist was not justified. Groups do exist in the country, even if not all of them are active or long-lived. Today the country's third sector includes 102,222 associations, foundations, federations, unions, and other entities (Ministry of Justice).

The NGOs under study were founded between 1990 and 2013, with the Soros Foundation deserving a special comment. George Soros, 'the Hungarian-born US magnate of Jewish origin' founded the Group for Social Dialogue in Romania already in December 1989, and Soros Foundation in Bucharest in 1990, whose name was later changed to Open Society Foundation (Katehon, 2016). During the years of its existence in Romania the Foundation underwent a number of changes: it altered its strategy from completely changing some fields to investing more in development opportunities, and transformed its most important programs into 12 independent entities called The Soros Open Network (SON) (The Foundation, n. d.). By 2011 the Foundation was conducting programs dedicated to education, public health issues, culture, civil society, and NGO development (Azzini, 2012). Its main role was 'to act as a change agent for the society, sizing its most pressing problems and proposing practical solutions by combining innovation, resources, and opportunity' (Ibid.). The mission of the organization was defined as 'fuel[ing] the society with new ideas for wide-scale change' (Ibid.).

According to Katehon think tank (2016), Soros has eventually developed 'a myriad of NGOs related to his structures' (n. p.). Some of the best known NGOs are Association Pro-Democracy (APD), Romanian Academic Society, Association for Human Rights in Romania Helsinki Committee (APADOR-CH), and some others (Katehon, 2016). Among the members of these organizations are 'former ministers, advisers to Romanian presidents, directors of state institutions, influential journalists' (Ibid.). The fact gave rise to referring to the previous Romanian government headed by Dacian Ciolos as 'the Government of Soros' since it was 'entirely formed by former NGO activists, Soros students, managers of multinational corporations and ardent Atlanticists' (Ibid.).

Other NGOs that we studied were registered either as foundations or associations. Most of them were started as local NGOs, some as international, which later became local. The missions of the NGOs ranged from involving academics into applying theo-

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

retical research to solving practical problems in the community; to creating debates on public policy, promoting human rights and gender equality, developing philanthropy in Romania, and so on.

Years ago, one of the strengths identified by scholars with respect to Romanian civil society was the relatively easy process of founding a non-profit. The given study confirmed that it is not difficult to establish an NGO in the country, and, according to most of the interviewees, the process has become even easier with time. Representatives of the NGOs also mostly assessed the legislative environment pertaining to the work of the third sector in Romania as quite favorable, although they admitted it was not ideal, and there was room for development.

As for the paid staff, some NGOs had no permanent paid staff at all; some had over two dozens of full-time paid employees. All attracted volunteers, at least as board members. Depending on the project, NGOs used help of between 2 or 5 to over 200 volunteers. In many cases volunteers were the students of BBU, specifically from the FSPAC department. In other instances, volunteers could be people from Cluj-Napoca who were simply interested in what a particular NGO was doing, international students coming through different programs, high school students, interns, and ad-hoc volunteers. NGOs advertise their needs for volunteers by means of internal e-mail lists, on-line, through Facebook posts, etc.

In 2004, Badescu et al. noted that in the former communist countries and, particularly, in Romania volunteering was low (p. 25). The study showed that NGOs, at least those that promote democratization and support civil society, encounter no difficulties with attracting volunteers. However, their volunteers are mostly University students studying political science, or public policy and public administration. These students might be more motivated to volunteer due to their field of study than other people. In any case, the desire and readiness of these young people to volunteer for a good cause is, of course, a great opportunity for the NGOs in question.

About a decade ago, Badescu et al. (2004) also noted that volunteer members, tended to be less numerous than the paid NGO staff members. Our interviews proved, however, that in many cases NGOs employed more volunteers than they had permanent staff; however, the number of the former almost always depended on the project. To retain their volunteers longer, some NGOs offer internships. After the completion of the internship, if the intern and the NGO leadership are satisfied with each other, interns can get a paid position with the corresponding organization.

Establishing legitimacy of NGOs

How do Romanian NGOs that promote democratization in the country and support civil society establish their legitimacy among the population? That is, how do they

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

bring forth and maintain the belief among the local population that the existence of their organization is necessary and appropriate for society?

Some tried, as is done in many other places, to invite influential persons to serve on the board, i.e. people with positive reputation in the community, whose presence it was hoped would help deconstruct the negative image NGOs had in society. Thus, for them a primary source of legitimacy was to present credible representatives of the Romanian society as principal actors in the governance of the NGO.

Some attempted to be an intermediary between the Ivory Tower of the academia and civil society and bring a different kind of expertise. They offered solid, science-based proposals to improve the legislation, and gradually become respected and acknowledged by people. Still others admitted that, as opposed to other NGOs, their results were not always immediate. But the fact that people, the national authorities referred to their studies made their work meaningful. NGOs also established legitimacy by implementing projects that helped solve specific issues in society. They tried to show the added value and the changes they created with their projects.

Sometimes establishing legitimacy was not a problem when society proved to be ready for certain things, like the massive human rights knowledge. The recent street protests of winter 2017 might also be a good example of society's readiness for change. The protests were instigated by the government's adopting a bill that proposed amendments to the Criminal Code and Law on Criminal Code procedures (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2017). The Romanian government claimed that 'the changes were imposed by Romania's overcrowded prisons and … the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, who had threatened with a larger fine if some prison reform would not have been implemented' (Ibid.). The Romanian society and especially 'young educated East Europeans' (Ibid.), however, did not see it that way. After the bill had been adopted as a government ordinance, civil society organizations, part of the media and opposition parties called the opponents of the ordinance to the streets (Ibid.). For days after passing the ordinance, between 100,000 and 330,000 Romanians peacefully demonstrated demanding cancellation of the ordinance and even resignation of the Prime Minister Sorin Grindeanu and his government (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2017; RadioFreeEurope, 2017).

Sources of revenue

All the non-profit organizations that took part in the study used foreign money, at least to some extent, in the process of being established or for their day to day operations. Some of the funding sources they used were as follows: the CEE – The Trust for Civil Society, EEA grants, Charles Stuart Mott Foundation, POSDRU, The Romanian-American Foundation, etc.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Most organizations did not benefit from grants or subsidies from the Romanian government. Two organizations received funding from the Romanian authorities, whereas the rest of them received European funds, co-financed by the Romanian government. Also, in Romania only foundations can benefit from an existing dedicated fund; associations are not required to have this money per the regulations in force.

Only one third of the organizations used commercial activities pursued by their organization and related to their not-for-profit purposes to increase their revenue. They engaged in services and consultancy activities to be able to sustain themselves. In terms of passive income, some of them received dividends and interest. Half of the NGOs considered the method as a new way of self-sustaining and developing their projects.

Most NGOs received donations from local businesses, or from the local branches of the multinational entities. With two exceptions, individual donations were also a source of funding for the NGOs. In almost all the cases, there were individual donors who considered donating to an NGO, one possible way being the 2% individual-directed allocation of income tax payment.

As far as membership fees as a funding source were concerned, the interviews showed that the tendency for the organizations was not to use this instrument to fund themselves. Still, the discussions showed that they might be an alternative funding for some of the NGOs in the future.

As fundraiser is quite a new job title on the Romanian market, there are NGOs which specialize in training other NGOs on how to fundraise. Most of the NGOs in the study wanted to develop a future strategy on this matter or had participated in such trainings. They also mentioned that they were facing great difficulties with fundraising, as there were few trained specialists in the field, and the general idea was that it was very difficult to raise money from small local communities.

As a matter of fact, the 'undermined proclivity for charitable giving ...,' which to some extent was the legacy of the country's communist past that also 'undercut civic culture' was mentioned as one of the weaknesses of the Romanian civil society already in 1997 (Johnson & Young, 1997, p. 317). Twenty years later several respondents did mention that when their organizations first started, the Romanian society indeed did not have the mentality for giving. However, the efforts of the first NGOs and those that followed gradually managed to build trust among the population, to establish their legitimacy, and to change the proclivity of the citizens in a positive way. Although, the law is not conducive to individual giving, many people donate money to a great variety of causes, and volunteering is a habitual thing for many, especially young, Romanian citizens.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

Successful project

The projects implemented by the NGOs were as diverse as their missions. They prepared reports on hate speech, observed elections, contributed to the debates on legislation in Parliament, studied interethnic relations between Hungarians and Romanians, and the Roma population, supported other NGOs fighting for human rights, helped farmers improve their conditions of work and productivity, offered consultancy programs, visited rural areas with a cinema car, and the like.

Most NGO representatives assessed the success of their organization in reaching the goal of a specific project between somewhat successful with a room for improvement, to very successful. The overall success of a particular NGO in implementing projects directed at promoting democracy and supporting the development of civil society in Romania was assessed again from somewhat successful to very successful.

How do respondents define a successful project? In some cases, it is simply doing what one is supposed to do – delivering what the organization is supposed to deliver without ending it abruptly and without having any kind of reporting issues. In terms of impact it depends on the kind of activity they do. When it comes to democracy, it is very difficult to measure it in the short term. If NGOs manage to change the minds of people involved in the dialogue, they consider it a success. They believe that democratization is not only convincing politicians. It is more about becoming a legitimate actor in this entire conversation and the process as such.

The long-term impact might also be difficult to assess. On the level of the whole society the impact may not be very visible. On the other hand, the contribution could be much bigger than one can imagine, although again it is very difficult to assess it and speak about it in terms of efficiency or efficacy.

Some NGO representatives define a successful project as the situation when at least one participant takes back something from the project and follows the recommendations. It is also a success if a new law is enacted and is used in practice. A successful project is also the one that reaches its goals, leads to a change in the NGO sector or in the public sector. These changes might not be visible immediately, so it is good to set short-term goals and see if they have been reached.

A successful project is the one that fits the needs of the beneficiaries, that brings the beneficiaries sustainable results; the one that proposes a model, which can be used as the best practice in the social sphere. Also, a successful project is the one whose budget was enough to achieve the goal and left the donor happy. Finally, a successful project is the one that has a positive impact on society because impact and sustainability are fundamental for such projects. If it is cost-effective, i.e. a positive impact on the community is reached with limited resources, then it is a successful project too.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Obstacles to projects implementation

The difficulties experienced throughout the implementation of the projects were very different from one NGO to another. The lack of immediacy in the results, the expectations of donors and beneficiaries that did not match reality, and the lack of human resources were only some of the hard times. NGO representatives also experienced the lack of time for elaborating and implementing projects. They indicated that large numbers of partners could sometimes slow the process. They also mentioned the reluctance of institutions to send documents that the NGO had requested, despite the law on access to public information, or receiving them too late.

Another set of issues was connected with managing the work of NGOs. In some organizations there were not enough people to handle all the projects. Sometimes the situation was reverse, and there were not enough projects, although it was still necessary to pay salaries to the permanent staff. So, organizations had to learn how to survive in times when there were not enough projects in order to keep the experienced staff in place when new projects appear. Also, when projects were implemented, NGOs consumed capacity and not only produced services or other deliverables. That is why it was important for NGOs to find the right business model, the one that would help to cover the costs of the project as well.

The next problem, singled out by the NGOs representatives, was their perception of mass media's lack of interest in the message the NGOs were trying to convey. In the opinion of the interviewees, mass media were often more interested in the form rather than in the content. Additional difficulties were connected with the changes in regulations for the EU grant funding projects, and with the ones in the Romanian legislation. The difficulties might also arise from the lack of financial resources, or because, as the NGOs representatives felt, they were not perceived as equal partners in society. When the matter concerned generating change, people would usually start with enthusiasm; however, their enthusiasm would gradually fade away. Our interviewees noted, it was their task and challenge to explain to the participants that projects implementation resembled more a marathon rather than a sprint, and that for change to occur time was required.

One more difficulty experienced by NGOs was connected with terminology and regulations concerning terminology (e.g., pro bono or fundraising). For instance, NGOs were used to receiving foreign money, thus the necessity to conduct fundraising in the community, and even the term 'fundraising,' were not clearly understood. That could create additional barriers for carrying out the organizations' activities. The work of NGOs might seem to be abstract to an outside observer. That is why it was important for NGOs to be able to adapt to new circumstances all the time, to be able to change and reinvent what they did and where they went. It was obviously unlikely for every-

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

thing to go as smoothly as NGOs would like to. Thus, the key to overcoming difficult experiences identified by the interviewees was having patience, insisting, making recommendations, and advocating for one's cause.

Most of the NGOs representatives we interviewed did not have to terminate any of the projects they had started. There were NGOs which stopped a project because it had been too soon for it to be on the market, and society was not ready for the project at the time. Some organizations were considering taking a break from a certain program and restarting it sometime later, in order to get a fresh look at it after a while.

Accountability

Transparency was mentioned by all the NGOs representatives as being key to making an NGO accountable to one's donors, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders. To achieve transparency, NGOs filed reports on a monthly and yearly basis, both narrative and financial ones, attached receipts, invoices, as well as other financial documents to show how the money had been spent. They also explained to the donors what their activities were and how those activities were shown online.

Every NGO representative stated that society would still need the services of their organization in five or even ten years. They believed that discussions about democracy, education, values, and attitudes would never end. Indeed, as Romanians acquire increased democratic and economic progress, the need for NGOs to serve constituent 'customers and consumers' will inevitably grow in time. Nevertheless, some of the NGOs representatives considered that the needs were going to change, so the projects would change too. Change was inevitable and the capacity to adapt to the community's needs was part of the process. The need for a watchdog in different areas, such as human rights, or public policy implementation, would continue to be part of the motivation for NGOs to stay active and be involved for years to come.

The main reason to work for an NGO

Why did people work for NGOs? Our interviewees identified different reasons for doing that. First of all, they took it as a civic duty. For them it was not about money. If out of ten people two listened, they considered it not to be wasted time. They also found it tempting to be part of the story.

Some NGO employees come to this field because they want to fight for specific causes, like minority and human rights, or to be engaged in the field of youth participation and fight against human trafficking. They might be passionate about gender equality. Some like to be involved in research as a more abstract, challenging activity. They want to be informed and be active citizens. They also like to feel that doing this job makes a contribution, however small, into making the Romanian society better.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

On the personal level, people who work for NGOs want to help the community, make it more sustainable and powerful. Working in an NGO offers them an opportunity to put in practice ideological debates on social issues and have an impact on society. Finally, they want to work for something with meaning.

Limitations of the study

The main limitation of the study is its focus on only one type of NGOs, namely those whose mission is to support civil society and promote democratization in Romania. The study helps to get a better idea of the scope, content and revenue structure of the non-profit sector in the country, but only with respect to the NGOs that promote civil rights, support democracy, contribute to the development and spread of liberal norms, and the like. It does not present a comprehensive picture of what the third sector in Romania looks like, what its achievements and problems are.

Due to the fact that all the respondents in the given study named certain impediments to their work, it may be assumed that other NGOs, whose missions are not directly connected with supporting the process of democratization in the country, also face difficulties while performing their activities. It seems important to continue studying the condition of the third sector in Romania in order to identify specific problems and barriers to its work and to consider what can be done to improve the situation, and how NGOs can partner and collaborate to advocate for themselves.

A brief comparison with another Eastern European country

Although all the NGOs representatives we interviewed mentioned certain difficulties on the way of accomplishing their organization's mission, the extent of progress civil society in Romania has made since Ceausescu's regime fell is impressive. If one compares the condition of civil society in Romania and in such Eastern European country as Belarus, for instance, one would immediately see a tremendous difference. Belarus used to be one of the fifteen republics of the former Soviet Union. It became independent on August 25, 1991. By the time the Soviet Union disintegrated, Belarus was much better off than Romania with respect to its economic and political condition. Also, Belarus borders on Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia, which aspired to be part of the European community since the collapse of the communist ideology in Central and Eastern Europe, and which are now members of the EU. Belarus seemed to have a great opportunity to become a truly democratic state after the disintegration of the USSR; however, that was not destined to happen.

According to the *Strategy Paper and Multiannual Indicative Program for EU support for Belarus (2014-2017)* elaborated by the European Commission,

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

> Belarus authorities are firmly holding a grip on activities of the civil society organizations. The control is exercised through a complicated system of legislation governing every aspect of work of NGOs. Non-compliance with NGO legislation can lead to loss of registration for the NGO and administrative and criminal prosecution of its leaders (p. 3).

Contrary to the situation in Romania, in Belarus the process of registration of civil society organizations 'is highly complicated' (Ibid.). Also, prosecution of former presidential contenders, human rights activists and independent journalists ended up in their conviction many a time with 'torture and inhuman prison conditions' being repeatedly reported (Ibid.). The document also states that any 'activities on behalf of non-registered organization are a criminal offence' (Ibid.). People had been prosecuted in Belarus on the basis of this article, and eventually imprisoned for several years (Ibid.). On November 13, 2011, Belarus adopted amendments that created new barriers to the activities of the civil society organizations. For example,

> The amendments to the Mass Events Law would require any gathering of people to be sanctioned by authorities, while the amendments to the law governing the operation of parties and NGOs would prohibit them from keeping funds, precious metals and other valuables at banks and other financial institutions abroad, as well as would criminalize the receipt of foreign aid by a political party or an NGO without declaring it to the competent state authorities (Ibid. pp. 3-4).

Until one comes to Romania from a country like Belarus, it is difficult to imagine the degree of transformation that has taken place in the society since the 1980s. Due to the lack of information or deliberate falsification of it by the leadership of some former Soviet republics, people in those countries still think of a country like Romania in the old terms. They do not realize how well Romania has progressed since the collapse of the communist ideology. As of now, it seems that it is going to be very difficult for Belarus to attain the same level of civil society development in the near future.

Conclusion

Almost twenty years ago Salamon et al. (1999) emphasized that 'the existence of a vibrant non-profit sector [was] increasingly being viewed not as a luxury, but as a necessity, for peoples throughout the world' (p. 38). Civil society and NGOs as its indispensable constituent were necessary to 'give expression to citizen concerns, hold governments accountable, promote community, address unmet needs, and generally improve the quality of life' (Ibid.). After the collapse of the communist ideology, Romania faced the necessity to create public policies 'specifically geared toward undoing the Soviet legacy of subservience, compliance, passiveness, uniformity and conformity, and the

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

development of policies that return power to the people, creating a solid partnership between citizens and State' (Palubinskas, 2003, p. 160).

The legacy was largely the result of more than forty years of the most oppressive dictatorship in the Soviet system. Nowadays, in Romania NGOs are emerging and developing because, as with other places of the world, they are required to meet the service needs of a developing social and economic system. The new system should be able to recognize and serve the individual, subgroup and community instead of using the one-size-fits-all approach that was customary for the communist state.

The study conducted by our team in Cluj-Napoca in January, 2017 helped us determine some of the existing impediments to the progress in civil society development in that country. We strongly believe, however, that these impediments can and should be modified or even completely removed. This would allow the NGO sector in Romania to develop further. The impediments such as overlapping and/or conflicting legislation, the absence of regulations for pro bono services, and the lack of legal financial incentives to individuals to contribute to charitable causes can be addressed by means of a concerted, cross sectoral effort on the part of Romanian non-profit organizations. We suggest that Romanian civil society take into account the existing successful systems (e.g., French, American) and use them as possible models, introducing appropriate adaptations and modifications to meet current needs in Romania.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Appendix 1
List of NGOs

1. Center for the Study of Democracy - Centrul pentru Studiul Democrației
2. Open Society Foundation (Soros Foundation) - Fundația Soros
3. Rațiu Democracy Center
4. Center for Public Policy (CENPO) - Centrul pentru Politici Publice
5. Civitas Foundation - Fundația Civitas
6. Equality and Human Rights Action Centre (ACTEDO – Centrul de Acţiune pentru Egalitate şi Drepturile Omului)
7. ARC - Asociația pentru Relații Comunitare
8. Cluj Community Foundation - Fundația Comunitară Cluj

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Appendix 2

Interview Questions

1. Characteristics of NGOs that seek to promote democratization in Romania. Where they come from:
   a. What year was your organization founded?
   b. Was your organization registered as a foundation or as an association?
   c. Was your organization founded as a local NGO or as an international one?
   d. What is your organization's mission?
   e. Was the process of completing legal papers and registering with the local court difficult or not?
   f. How would you assess the legislative environment for the work of NGOs in Romania:
      - Quite favorable
      - Somewhat favorable
      - Neither favorable nor unfavorable
      - Somewhat unfavorable
      - Rather unfavorable
   g. How many paid staff work for your organization?
   h. How many volunteers work for your organization?
   i. How do you find volunteers to work on your projects?
2. How did your organization establish its legitimacy in society? That is, how did you engender and maintain the belief among the local population that the existence of your organization is necessary and appropriate for society?
3. NGO's sources of revenue:
   a. What funding sources did you have when you started your organization:
      - Foreign grants/subsidies? Yes/No
      - Grants/subsidies from the local government? Yes/No
      - An existing dedicated fund? Yes/No
   b. What funding sources does your organization currently have:
      - Foreign grants/subsidies? Yes/No
      - Grants/subsidies from the local government? Yes/No
      - Passive income: interest and dividends, turnover of securities? Yes/No
      - Revenue from commercial activities pursued by your organization and related to your not-for-profit purposes? Yes/No
      - Donations from local businesses? Yes/No
      - Donations from individuals? Yes/N
      - Membership fees? Yes/No
      - Fundraising activities? Yes/No

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

4. Activities of the NGO pertaining to promotion of democratization in Romania:
   - What projects, which help promote democratization and support development of civil society in Romania, did you implement?
   - What projects of the kind are you implementing/working on right now?
5. Effectiveness of the NGO with respect to promoting democratization in Romania:
   a. How would you define a successful project?
   b. How would you assess, in general, the degree of your organization's success in implementing projects that help promote democratization and support development of civil society:
      - Very successful
      - Somewhat successful
      - Neither successful nor unsuccessful
      - Somewhat unsuccessful
      - Very unsuccessful
      - Complete failure
6. Obstacles (if any) that the NGO encounters on the way of carrying out its mission. Ways of overcoming the obstacles:
   - Did you experience any difficulties when implementing those projects in the past?
   - If yes, what types of difficulties?
   - How did you overcome them?
   - Were there instances when you had to terminate a project due to financial, legislative or other difficulties you were not able to overcome?
   - Do you experience any difficulties implementing your projects at the moment?
   - If yes, what type of difficulties?
   - Are there ways to resolve these issues?
7. How do you make yourself accountable to your donors, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders?
8. Do you think society will still need the services of your organization in five years? In ten years?
   - If yes, what makes you think so?
   - If not, why do you think this might happen?
9. What is the main reason for you personally to work for this organization?

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

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FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

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FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

2.
Report on Mental Health Policies/Services for Students at Babeș-Bolyai University

by Ben Chun, Catalin Hadadea, Helga Thies

Introduction: Purpose and significance of the study

The purpose of our research is to examine and analyze the mental health policies and services for students at Babeș-Bolyai University. The goal is to offer recommendations or best practices that have been successful at enacting mental health policies and services for University students.

To the best of our knowledge, there is no previous research specifically looking at University or other publicly-supported services to address the mental health of students at Babeș-Bolyai University. It is important to note that our research is exploratory with the intent of identifying local information which may be combined with professional literature to support future activity in this area. This is significant because our interviews indicated a greater need for awareness and support for these types of policies and services at the University.

We relied on the candid expertise of the individuals we interviewed as well as secondary research of successful mental health counseling models at Universities in the United States and Europe to tailor our recommendations regarding existing policies, services and resources at Babeș-Bolyai University (BBU).

The absence of mental health services for students at BBU is potentially a significant gap. In many parts of the world, mental health services are an integral part of career/student development. Therefore, if health/career/student development services are being offered to students by the University, then we believe it naturally follows that, as they may be needed, mental health services should be provided, as well.

Methodology

This study abroad experience involved travel to Romania to conduct independent research with student partners at Babeș-Bolyai University. The goal was to learn how to work together with students from various backgrounds to review literature, construct

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

questions, conduct interviews, and prepare a report by the end of a two-week period. We chose the topic of mental health services for university students, which we believe to be important public policy/public administration issue not only in Romania, but in the United States and throughout the rest of Europe as well.

Mental health service for students is a growing field in the United States. In part this is due to positive publicity resulting from high profile celebrities who have opened up about their own mental health challenges. Even then, we have only recently started to see that translate to successful University services based on our literature review findings. Therefore, we were interested to see what services were available at Babeș-Bolyai University in order to draw comparisons and make recommendations according to "best practices" utilized abroad.

Mental health service delivery was a new topic for us all and we were initially worried that we wouldn't find much information. This made it critically important to carefully plan how we were going to approach our interviewees about such a sensitive topic.

Our sample for this study consisted of the students and faculty at Babeș-Bolyai University as well as local actors in the mental health field. We conducted in-person interviews with members of the faculty and a student leader in a related student group. All of the interviews were conducted in English and recorded so we could transcribe them fully for use in this report. Fortunately, interviewees were eager to speak to us about the issue and were interested in receiving our final report.

Until the last few years, with the emergence of new studies in the field, there was no comprehensive research of students' mental health and psychological counseling services in higher education that could be compared across EU states. These recent studies have highlighted the growing prevalence of mental illness in young people in the last 15 years with depression, anxiety and problems with self-worth regulation as the primary diagnoses (Ruckert, 2015).

Studies performed in Germany, Norway, Sweden and the UK found that 20-25% of students in those countries suffer from some kind of mental disorder and that 90% of students diagnosed with depressive or anxiety disorders felt they were unable to pursue their studies (Kress *et al.*, 2015).

Though the research and field of knowledge on this issue have improved in recent years, the quality and quantity of mental health counseling services differs greatly between countries in Europe. This lack of consensus in providing education and services to students probably plays a part in the fact that nearly half of the 20,000 German students surveyed believed they were able to solve their mental health problems by themselves (Holm-Hadulla, *et al.*, 2015).

These studies all agreed that further research is necessary and that psychological and mental disorders in students are prevalent. They found that counseling services should

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

be available at every college/university and should offer qualified assessments, diagnoses, crisis intervention, individual counseling and counseling in groups. Cooperation is needed between counseling services, private practitioners and psychological departments to improve services and research (Holm-Hadulla, *et al.*, 2015).

Another study found that it was important to integrate counseling aspects in teaching and into training of faculty. For example, staff can be trained to spot indicators for distress like erratic attendance, avoidance of participation in class and withdrawal from social contact in order to spot those signs and refer those students to the appropriate services. Ultimately, they found that any counseling or psychological services "need to network with student services/support agencies, university administration, program and curriculum developers and academic staff to ensure that mental health and learning support issues are given adequate attention at all levels" (Ruckert, 2015).

Findings

Mental health and subclinical mental health issues (school/career/relationship stress) are barriers to academic/career success.

Societal Stigmas: Their effects on treatment and perceptions of mental health

According to several of our interviewees, societal stigmas towards mental health in Romania have diminished slightly in the last 10-15 years. Especially among young people, parents with small children and people in big cities like Cluj-Napoca, where people are realizing that it is ok to see a psychologist and that it doesn't mean you are crazy.

However, stigmas still play a role in students' likelihood to seek help. There is a problem with students' incorrect self-diagnosis due to lack of education and awareness on mental health issues according to counselors we interviewed. Mental health services at the school and in the country have been described as reactive rather than proactive by multiple interviewees in the public health and psychology departments, meaning…

Mental health is a broad term to define and while the faculty members in the field had a clear definition, the general understanding in Romania is that mental health is simply the absence of a mental illness rather than a promotion of mental wellness. Even in the mental health sector, they still have a medical/biological definition of mental health as opposed to the promotion of mental wellness. The focus is on dealing with the mental illness once the onset of the illness is there rather than taking steps to pre-emptively screen and educate people on it. This highlights the reactive nature of treatment towards mental health.

During one of the interviews conducted at the career counseling center, one of the counselors mentioned that, "Half of the students aren't even depressed; they just say it".

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course
Appendix 2.
Course Calendar
Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary
Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings
Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics
Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

This may indicate the presence of stigmas that exist within mental health practitioners which invalidates students attempting to seek treatment.

The media is another actor that influences societal perceptions about mental health. A resource at the public health department provided us with various information on the media's role in portraying mental health. The source mentioned that the media are not informed about mental health and may, through their reporting, tend to perpetuate societal stigmas by sensationalizing mental health. This is especially true if somebody commits a crime and has a mental health diagnosis. The source also mentioned that the media doesn't follow the guidelines of how to talk about suicide in the press. While not a part of this study, it would be important to examine those guidelines as a potentially important element in addressing this issue, because having the assistance of a well-informed media could be beneficial to the formation of public policy and its implementation.

Limitations

University awareness and policies regarding mental health

Funding constraints for research activity are a significant limitation. Some of the faculty members we interviewed indicated a desire to do research to improve understanding and bring awareness to this issue, but lacked the resources to do so.

The lack of incentives for academic managers to engage in this activity is a second limiting factor identified by our study. There is no University-wide mental health policy for students. Each department is autonomous in creating their own policies and providing services for their students. The relative autonomous nature of each department has resulted in little to no communication between departments and the University administration on mental health issues of students.

A third limiting factor identified by an interviewee from the Psychology department is that different centers at the University offer different kinds of service with no coordination or communication. This was highlighted by the fact that the subclinical counseling center refers more severe cases to the psychology clinic. Yet, there is no follow-up communication between the centers after the referral to track the student's progress hence identifying a third factor which stems from what appears to be an incomplete by Western standards student-information based. For example, at BBU there are centers on clinical issues, one on subclinical issues and another on career management. If the activity of these centers was better coordinated it could offer an integrated approach of dedicated services for students.

However, this hasn't happened, perhaps in part due to the lack of resources and funding available for the existing centers. The psychology clinic relies on external fundraising/

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

donors and the fees they charge in order to keep the few staff they have. In the last few years they have started to change the policy and the University allotted money to hire a secretarial person for the clinic.

A fourth limiting factor is that there is an understanding on the part of faculty that BBU priorities are such that top priority is teaching and research, with clinic duty as a lower priority additional responsibility. Some psychology professors have a treatment component as part of their job description which requires they work in the clinic for a set number of hours. There is no additional financial incentive for professors to work in the clinic.

The psychology clinic and the free student counseling center for subclinical issues suffer from a lack of staffing that has handcuffed the centers from advertising their services to students. They are already running at capacity. Very few students outside of the department even know these services exist, therefore, very few students participate in or attend events organized by these centers. In turn, the centers are discouraged from holding more events due to the low turnout.

The transmission of information was another important limitation found during this study. The psychology clinic and subclinical student counseling center need an online presence clearly stating the availability of mental health for students.

The website for the psychology/psychotherapy department mentions the clinic but requires a great deal of searching to find basic information, which then it is insufficient. The subclinical counseling center has a Facebook page and utilizes social media but there is only a basic description of the services they offer and no educational information available regarding mental health. There are little to no online resources with education for students beyond the textbook definitions of evidence-based treatment on the psychology/psychotherapy website. These can be difficult to comprehend unless you have previous education in the field.

The University offers no information to students on mental health during orientation. Orientation is almost inexistent, consisting in a formal opening of the academic year. Not the place/time for approaching this issue and really there are no other opportunities for the university to do it in a structured manner.

An interviewee from the Psychology department mentioned that outside grants from the EU are available for specific clinical trials. However, the trials are not specific to students but also open to the public as well. These clinical trials are free to all participants. The interviewee did note that recent clinical trials had a large number of student participants, indicating a need for more outreach and free services for students.

Our team is informed that the clinical trials funded by the EU and research done at the psychology/psychotherapy department have resulted in advancements on the treatment side in the last 10-15 years with the emergence of evidence-based treatment. However,

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

these treatments have not been applied to the entire student population due to lack of funding and the fact that there is no framework in place to offer comprehensive/ dedicated mental health services.

Future partnerships for increasing mental health awareness and treatment

The University has committed sufficient funding and support to career orientation/ counseling and increased Alumni career support services. This provides a solid foundation in terms of networking with Alumni, especially in the psychology/public health fields in order to provide more services for students going forward. The career center is free to students and has a comprehensive website with events and information for students. They also have a database of job opportunities for students on their website.

Through our interviews we found that the faculty members in the departments involved with mental health are extremely knowledgeable about the issue and had many ideas on how to make improvements at Babeș-Bolyai. Again, integration of existing services and improved communication between faculty members, departments and the University is needed in order to foster the growth of these ideas into actionable plans.

We also found that the departments at BBU involved with mental health have working relationships with outside NGOS and mental health institutions in the community: They refer clients with more severe cases to outside entities or former Alumni who work in the psychology/psychotherapy field. There are also some internship/supervision opportunities for students in these fields to go and work at NGOS or mental health institutions. It is important to note that there were no statistics readily available about the current partnerships with the NGOS/mental health institutions when we inquired about them.

Although to-date this hasn't translated into many mental health services for students offered directly by the University, the fact that these relationships exist lays a foundation for future collaboration.

Recommendations

BBU should consider the following:

1. Create a dedicated task force that explores how faculty members and students can better recognize and respond to students' mental health. The idea is to bring together all involved entities at BBU in order to foster an integrated approach to developing mental health policies and services communicated to the University as a whole.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

2. Start collecting data on students' mental health services and issues and providing educational materials to students as part of new student orientation and student services at the University:
   - Provide online educational materials about mental health services and issues for students prior to orientation in order to establish a general understanding of mental health and the services available at BBU.
   - Partner with the career counseling/orientation services in order to provide workshops to help develop students coping skills so they're less likely to show up in the counseling center in the first place.
   - In addition to workshops, add a mental health component to new student orientation to help reinforce the online educational materials they received prior to arriving at the school.
   - Train and educate faculty on potential behaviors and how to identify them. Provide faculty with information on services at BBU so they know where to refer students they identify.
   - Consider creating a system of upper-class/graduate peer counselors and provide them with information on the available services for students who may need them.

Adopt a triage model of counseling which has become prevalent in the United States: using screening to steer less-severe cases to group therapy, workshops and online therapy – or asking them to wait (behind more severe patients). (Field, 2016).

- This will help decrease the pressure on the current clinic by properly identifying whether the student actually needs clinical services or not.
- Improve relationships with outside NGOs/mental health facilities and Alumni in the field in order to increase referrals for more severe cases.
- Invite members of outside NGOS/mental health facilities and alumni in the field to participate in these workshops and task forces to involve them in the process which shows students, the University and the community that this is a problem worthy of support.
- Train teachers and faculty members to spot warning signs for mental health and educate them on the resources available so they know where to refer the student for initial screening.

Utilize BA/MA/PhD psychology/psychotherapy/nursing students more to combat lack of staffing:

- Train students on mental health screening so that they can screen individuals who indicate any mental health issues on the survey in order to determine the severity. Students gain valuable experience and provide cheap/free man power to help with lack of paid staffing in counseling centers.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD
Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE
Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM
Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course
Appendix 2.
Course Calendar
Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary
Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings
Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics
Appendix 6.
Student Papers
• Y. Brel
• B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
• K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
• J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
• M. Smith
• C.M. Stănică
• J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas
CONTENTS

– According to a study mentioned during one of the interviews: It has been proven that nurses are equally as effective at screening for mental health as accredited psychologists or psychiatrists.
– Train students on how to lead group counseling so that they can provide support to more students with subclinical issues, perhaps even have student-led workshops that are open to all students to help educate on mental health.
– Studies in the United States that screened students based on a spectrum of mental health found that the majority of students (80%) were only dealing with sub-clinical issues that did not require clinical treatment or medication (Field, 2016).
– Therefore, bringing students with similar issues together will help reduce stigma, initiate dialogue/debate and hopefully form support groups among students so that they can better handle these issues themselves.

Future research

We were able to speak with many faculty members at the University but unfortunately were not able to talk to as many students. Future research should consider surveying the students to find out about their mental health, and their understanding of it.

Another research idea would be to look at student activism and its affects at the University and see if increased activism could benefit mental health policies/services for students.

We were unable to meet with any NGO or outside mental health facilities dealing with mental health to get an outside perspective of students' mental health. Therefore, any future research needs to look at the roles they play from their perspective and their relationship with the University on this topic

Future research could also further examine the media's role in its portrayal of mental health and influence on societal stigmas.

Follow-up on all of the recommendations above in order to see what the findings were in order to tailor future research.

Conclusions

Mental health policies are essentially non-existent at the University because there isn't a universal understanding of its definition and effects on students' performance at school and in their future careers. The fact that the University has increased resources and education for career counseling services shows that they are committed to the success of the student. Therefore, the next step is for the University to realize that mental health (subclinical and clinical) plays a crucial role in the students' likelihood to succeed both at school and in their future careers.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Addressing basic issues like coping skills, stress (school, career, relationship, etc), depression and anxiety prior to new students' arrival at school and during orientation can begin to offer a baseline universal understanding before they even step foot on campus. Partnering with the career center and utilizing their improved online sources could be a low cost way to begin gathering statistical data and providing preventative educational materials to students.

Once they get to school: have trained psychology/psychotherapy/nursing students in screening provide those assessments during orientation and throughout the school year to help decrease the number of incorrect self-diagnoses and filter out all but severe cases that are worthy of clinical treatment. Keeping records of the screenings will also provide useful statistical data that can be used to determine what resources or services need additional funding.

There needs to be a dedicated task force of professors, faculty members, student leaders in order to combine knowledge and expertise and begin integrating the existing services at the University. The faculty members and professors we spoke to all had great ideas on how to combat this issue but they are all so busy focusing on research and teaching that they haven't had the time or resources to put any of them into practice.

This alludes to the discussion we had at the student seminar regarding the idea of the "Engaged University", specifically the component of public service which in this case, public, pertains to the entire student population at Babeș-Bolyai University. There needs to be a fundamental change at the institutional level in order to incentivize certain faculty and students in the field to commit time and resources to research this further. While creating an entire mental health center is costly and perhaps too ambitious at the moment, there needs to be communication and integration of existing entities at the University in order to make incremental improvements as statistics and resources become available.

Of course, none of this will be possible unless there is a change in the way mental health is perceived by all people, not just the University. The University can be the catalyst to this change by conducting research in order to improve education and services not only for the students, but the public as well. Starting a dialogue about this issue can go a long way towards turning the good ideas mentioned by faculty and students into actionable realities.

We are hopeful that by linking mental health and career counseling services, it will change students' perception, by making mental health and its services more relatable and accessible to all students. The intended result of this partnership is to integrate existing resources to bring awareness directly to students while also softening any fears/stigma of seeing a psychiatrist or psychologist by having the services offered through the career center/development services.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course
Appendix 2.
Course Calendar
Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary
Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings
Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics
Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

It is important to note that these are simply recommendations and that the next step is to think about implementation. Based on our findings, the literature review of best practices in the United States and other countries in Europe the goal of this paper is to provide those next steps. Further research needs to be done to determine how to implement, but this report is the first step to bringing awareness to this issue so that it can be debated and addressed by students, the University administration and society as a whole.

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FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

3.

Comparative Examination of Cross-cultural Perceptions of Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship; Case Study: Cluj-Napoca, Romania

by Kelsey Edmond, Alexandra Stoica, Andrea Zolde

Introduction

The term “social entrepreneurship” is admittedly difficult to define as the concept has evolved rapidly in recent years. In the United States, the Social Enterprise Alliance, a movement of over a thousand leading social entrepreneurs, defines the term as, “an organization or initiative that marries the social mission of a nonprofit or government program with the market-driven approach of a business” (What, 2017). In recent years, traditional non-profits and government programs have had a growing interest in alternative sources of revenue through creative initiatives to help offset costs otherwise funded by charitable contributions. Likewise, businesses have begun integrating concepts of sustainability and social responsibility into their strategies. In other words, social enterprises are at the crossroads of market, public policy and civil society, and fuse together conventional approaches that traditionally have only focused on generating either a social impact or a return on financial investment.

An example of an American social entrepreneur is Blake Mycoskie, the founder and “chief shoe giver” of TOMS, a business that donates one pair of shoes to disadvantaged people for every pair sold. Since its inception in 2006, this simple idea has grown into a social movement as TOMS has provided over 60 million pairs of shoes to children. Through this venture, Mycoskie became the forefather of the One for One business model that helps a person in need with every product purchased. This paper investigates how this concept exists, thrives, and is defined in the public and nonprofit realm.

The notion of innovation and social enterprise will be used in a comparative cross-cultural analysis to demonstrate that, consistent with prior academic literature, social entrepreneurship lacks a universally accepted definition that can be instituted across different industries. There is also little consensus regarding which sector should take ownership over fostering innovation, and if it should even rest solely on one domain’s shoulders alone. Disparities between perceptions make the subject difficult to teach,

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

endorse, and utilize as a tool to creatively solve community problems and elicit sustainable social change.

Innovation in governance can boost the pride of citizens employed in public and non-profit jobs as well as encourage a culture of progress. Improving the image and services of the public sector can help the government regain civilian's trust and restore legitimacy. In a country such as Romania which in January 2017 experienced the largest protests since the fall of communism in 1989, fostering strong relationships with the public is a timely need.

To alleviate chaos ensued due to the dissonance of this concept, increased educational programs and trainings for constituents at all stages of life can be implemented to give a frame of reference to those who currently work in, or may potentially pursue, a career in social entrepreneurship. More synergy among the public, private, and non-profit sector will also strengthen the impact innovation can have on a culture. Logical and effective decision-making from administration and authorities can help diminish the societal stigma that may be associated with risk-adverse attitudes that shy away from embracing new initiatives. Overall, this research topic illuminates the abundance of specialists both domestic and abroad who work in an industry that is defined by very blurred lines.

Literature review

The nascent field of social entrepreneurship is one of the most expeditiously growing and sustainable concepts for solving society's challenging and complex problems across the globe. Attracting talent, money, and attention from every corner of the world, this phenomenon is often cited by the media, referenced by policymakers and public officials, and engaged with college campuses everywhere. Social entrepreneurs have won Nobel Peace Prizes, radicalized health care systems, brought endless citizens out of poverty and led movements to diminish corruption, crime, and racism. Because of the tireless efforts of innovators, positive transformations have been made in virtually every sector imaginable, thus deeming the role of social entrepreneurship a viable vector for change.

Social entrepreneurship has been studied by academics for nearly twenty years, yet there is relatively little scholarly output in management, leadership, or entrepreneurship journals. While research regarding this topic is to date embryonic and informal in the United States (Short, 2009), research is unmistakably on the rise. The rate of entrepreneurial articles and publications in management journals increased by 62% over a fifteen year period in the last two decades (Short, 2009). As the concept of social entrepreneurship gains popularity, the certainty behind what it is and does should diminish.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Although the characteristics of innovation are clear to many of those who promote, fund, and drive these activities, definitions have been developed in a number of different domains and the term has become so inclusive its meaning is muddled due to varying levels of implementation. Some descriptions reserve social entrepreneurship strictly for non-profit organizations, while others associate the phrase with for-profits operated by non-profits, or catalysts that cause a company to incur a financial loss. In a few cases it is synonymous with philanthropy, while some scholars embrace a broader classification which includes any individual or organization working towards a social goal (Short, 2009).

The lack of a universally accepted explanation of social entrepreneurship is damaging because it complicates the legitimacy of this field, and hinders research initiatives that seek to examine precursors and outcomes. This raises the research question, "what are the cross-cultural perceptions of innovation and social entrepreneurship, and where does the responsibility to initiate creativity lie?"

Preexistent literature about this subject may be found in articles about management, political science, economics, marketing, sociology, education, and more, which suggests it is reaching a broad audience within multiple domains, and warrants cross-disciplinary examination (Short, 2009). This research paper also explores incentives to innovating among the public, private, and non-governmental (NGO) sector, as well as dynamics between cross-industry partnerships in order to inspire best practices within public administration. Cross-sector analysis is imperative because without it, the ability to understand elements that foster innovation and social entrepreneurship are limited. With Cluj-Napoca, Romania in contention for attaining the title, "European Capital of Innovation," public authorities' involvement in developing innovative solutions is vital to achieving a truly smart city.

Social innovation is time and context specific – what might not seem entrepreneurial in one country may be ground-breaking in another. In Romania, social innovation is a relatively new concept, mainly embedded in the NGO sector and civil society – but a push for the government to innovate more can help combat increasing complexity and elicit change in the global environment.

The development region of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, serves as the sample of this comparative study. This research entails the systematic observation of the similarities and dissimilarities between social enterprises in Eastern Europe to those in the United States.

Methodology

The methodology used for this comparative research incorporates qualitative analyses of field interviews conducted in person with 12 professionals from various backgrounds and industries living and working in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The interviews were

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

conducted between January 16th and January 25th, 2017. Prior to interacting with the student research team, most interviewees had no previous connection with Babeș-Bolyai University (UBB) or the Faculty of Political Science, Administration, and Communication (FSPAC), which served as a partner institution to the University of Delaware. One UBB official regarded those interviewed as "relative strangers." Although some interviewees had more time to devote than others, all were amenable to meeting and the durations ranged between twenty and forty minutes. Only one expert declined consent to tape record the conversation.

Most interviews were conducted at the interviewees' place of employment. One interviewee included a tour and site visit of the creative work space. Though several professionals found interview questions challenging to answer, each question was well-received, and some practitioners complimented the research topic. Many people were interested in accessing the final deliverable of the joint research project, and one interviewee requested further collaboration. Out of the twelve interviews, the majority were with employees of non-governmental organizations, most of which were founded within the last two decades. Their expertise includes a variety of fields, such as agribusiness, information technology, community impact, entrepreneurial education, and so on.

Most of the NGOs are primarily financed by European funds (similar to grants), where some, such as the clusters, receive revenue from membership subscriptions that require an annual fee, non-reimbursable projects, or from income generating activities. A few organizations solicit private resources from local companies that sponsored their programs or hold fundraising events like marathons to ask for individual donations. Metrics for success entail how closely the NGO meets their goals, objectives, and estimated impact according to their strategic plan, which varies based on the nature of the organization. A large measurement of accomplishment for clusters is how much collaboration is transpiring between its members, even though at times it can be difficult to track since much is done outside of the umbrella organization and off the record.

Two meetings were with professionals from the private sector, as were two from the public. Though not a formal individual interview, the opportunity arose to speak with the Mayor of Cluj-Napoca, Emil Boc, and inquire about his perceptions regarding the responsibility of innovation at the city level. All of the organizations were exclusive to Cluj, excluding Impact Hub which was originally established in the capital city of Bucharest and still maintains a thriving chapter there as well as eighty locations around the world. Nearly every contact was able to recommend additional connections or resources that would be beneficial to furthering the work of this research topic.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Analysis and findings

Consistent with the research hypothesis, when professionals were asked for a clear and concise definition for the term "social entrepreneurship," answers varied considerably, even within the same sector. An expert who provides entrepreneurial education to people of all ages stated that they use a very broad definition of social entrepreneurship within their NGO. "What is understood [in Romania] is that social entrepreneurship occurs when you establish an enterprise and the main goal is a social one." She goes on to elaborate that a social enterprise can take the form of a for-profit company or a non-profit organization, citing that it primarily involves working with underrepresented demographics, such as marginalized communities, people with disabilities, minorities, or those who are otherwise disconnected from society. This understanding is in line with financing provided by the EU for this exact purpose. The founder of the same NGO which works in tandem with his separately established consulting company said that he did not have a nice textbook definition of social entrepreneurship, only that he can speak from his experiences – which involves providing social responsibility training to middle-level managers so they may become more aware of what moral obligations they have towards the community, clients, and employees.

Some interviewees worked for an NGO that had more of a business focus in their day-to-day work, such as an accelerator or cluster. The aforementioned terms describe networks of connected businesses and suppliers within the same industry and geographical location that provide support and resources in order to increase efficiency and productivity. Those interviewed that were affiliated with accelerators or clusters had less to say about a universal definition of social entrepreneurship. When asked to describe the terminology meant to him, a marketing specialist for a Transilvania Cluster focusing in agribusiness activities outright apologized and stated, "I don't know." An American working for a business accelerator that collaborates with early-stage startups described the term as mainly a buzzword, similar to how she believed it was regarded in the United States. An employee from Cluj IT Cluster indicated that he did not have a definition, but knows the meaning – any kind of initiative which has a social value. The only contact who started and currently still manages their own business, which helps provides student access to books, chose not to comment on the social component of the term, but defined an entrepreneur as "a person who sees an opportunity in a field other than business – educational field, social field, health field – and who uses entrepreneurial methods in solving the problems from that field." While these findings are consistent with the hypothesis which conveys that there is not a clear-cut characterization for this expression, the information gathered, though representative of a very small sample size, seems to suggest that the more the NGO dabbles in various business endeavors, the professionals working for them are less able to define the phenomenon in their own words.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

According to European Union legislation proposed in 2010 by the Romanian Parliament, a social entrepreneur is understood as a natural or legal Romanian person who recognizes the existence of a social problem and works towards solving it by direct involvement with the principle of solidarity and social cohesion (Law 268/2015). The main purpose of a social entrepreneur is to support, initiate, or develop an ethical and sustainable business, with positive and charitable social impact that benefits the community, without any other material benefits. The Economic and Social Council of Romania, a consultative body of the Parliament that helps to achieve, promote, and develop social dialogue and social solidarity, identified numerous shortcomings of the legislation initiative and rejected the proposal. The key disputed point was that the law confuses social entrepreneurship with the social responsibility of companies, similar to the impression given by an aforementioned interviewee. A new version of the statute was put forth, but was rejected for a second time weeks later (Law 268/2015).

With a variety of perspectives regarding this topic, who should take the most responsibility for initiating innovation? "It's on everyone," expressed a representative from a professional association. "Cities on the level of public administration, NGOs, and companies of course." A general consensus across parties was that there needs to be a partnership, although many voiced that most of the innovation comes from the non-profit and private sector, and less from the government. "It would be nice to have more innovation from the government, or at least be more open to partner with the NGOs and not solely provide them with funds. Just to give the money does not make you an innovator, it just funds ideas that are put out there by other agents," said a project coordinator from an NGO. A similar sentiment was shown from within the same organization. "The authorities should support it, like the Mayor. But anyone in any position should consider innovation as something that should be supported and helped. Of course, the higher up you are, the more impact you may have on others, but anyone should be able to."

However, once again there is a divide between perceptions, dependent on the focus of the NGO. A California-born native who now works with some of the most prominent entrepreneurs in Romania articulated that nobody has the responsibility, and it was reliant on whether or not an individual had the drive and initiative. "In the United States, a lot of the important innovations came from the government, but I wouldn't say it's their responsibility," noting, though, that it is great if the public sector is capable and able to do it. "In Romania, you see a lot of innovative initiatives that waste money and the funds go wherever. It's probably the same in the United States, they are just trickier about masking it."

While that person's opinions are just that – opinions, others interviewed agree that there were some tensions between the way some start-ups were funded and the even-

CONTENTS

FOREWORD
Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE
Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM
Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course
Appendix 2.
Course Calendar
Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary
Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings
Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics
Appendix 6.
Student Papers
• Y. Brel
• B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
• K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
• J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
• M. Smith
• C.M. Stănică
• J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

tual allocation of their resources. "It's really nice that we have the clusters, and we have the funds that are given in this direction […] but Cluj is like a bubble compared to other parts of the country, and it doesn't make sense to give the money to young people and not provide the entrepreneurial education," stated someone from an NGO. A spokesperson from an IT cluster likewise believed that the private sector should be the drivers of innovation, because the public is under pressure on a policy level to be connected to economic and social needs, and bears a burden from the community to provide more relevant results.

An elected official in Cluj-Napoca, on the other hand, stated that it is largely the responsibility of the municipality to provide spaces, facilities, and resources so that innovation may thrive in the city of Cluj. A previous secretary of state who has decades of experience in public management also concurred that it is a duty of town hall to provide the framework and environment, but that overall it is a shared accountability. A businesswoman from the private sector summarized the entrepreneurial spirit well, claiming "all of us have the responsibility to be innovative, no matter the sector or domain we are working in, because innovation represents a source of progress." She explained that while the obligation is spread evenly, the private sector implements innovative practices the most because of their need to make a profit and combat competition they are always facing. Mixed responses suggest that there is room for governmental improvement, and a need for members of the municipality to transition from a backseat role of facilitating creative endeavors, to serving as an active character in initiating more innovative projects throughout the city.

In the United States, the government has played an active role in catalyzing new and innovative ways to do business differently. The Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation, created within the White House under the Obama Administration in 2009, seeks to "advance opportunity, equality, and justice by creating a more outcomes-driven government and social sector" (President's, 2014). The department works across issue areas to identify more effective social solutions that will assist in strengthening communities, enabling economic mobility, and advancing Presidential priorities. To attain these goals, governments at all levels must collaborate with both social and private sectors to increase data availability and analytics, capitalize on new and existing resources, and enhance policies that incentivize achievements (President's, 2014).

With little agreement in Cluj about who should be spearheading initiatives, several interviewees shared their perception of innovation in Eastern Europe. "It's widely accepted," voiced someone from an IT cluster, sharing her experiences with technology companies who have been very open to identifying new ways to innovate. While this concept is easy to garner approval in the technology scene, a public official echoed similar sentiments. "As a city, we do not have large barriers because somehow it [inno-

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

vation] developed naturally." However, he continues on to share a caveat at the national level – leaders tend to favor more tangible things, such as infrastructure, highways, and parks, and it is harder to validate the importance of the creative industry and justify backing it financially.

Still, there is no doubt that the city of Cluj-Napoca is currently in the nucleus of an ever expanding creativity boom due to multiple factors. As the unofficial capital of Transilvania and the second largest Romanian city, it educates over 100,000 students each year between its six public universities Young minds cultivate new ideas from fresh perspectives which later develop into startups, non-profits, or viable products. But the longevity of established relationships has also been attributed to the current ecosystem rife with entrepreneurs. "The people working in this environment have been involved between ten to fifteen years, so we know each other very well and it is easy for us to speak out and build a joint collaboration project," said the iTech Transilvania Cluster, ARIES, which reports that one in twenty-five people living in Cluj are working in the IT trade, signifying that Romania has more IT engineers per capita than the United States, India, China, or Russia (ClujBusiness). Beyond the business segment, Cluj is a popular destination for culture, sports, and entertainment – and home to over two thousand events throughout the year, generating a higher quality of life than competing European tourist cities London, Paris, Barcelona, Prague, or Manchester (ClujBusiness).

Romania is a fertile ground for tech companies, outsourcing contact centers, and software development, so much so that recent business journals began referring to Cluj as the "Silicon Valley of Eastern Europe." Not everyone, however, is on board with the unofficial title. Several turn a critical eye when the media conjures such headlining labels. "I don't believe that working in IT means to be a creative person," clarifies the founder of an NGO. "It is not creativity, it is hard work. There is a kind of distortion." In this case, more business-minded individuals agree, especially those that have been raised abroad in the United States. "This is one of those political processes that goes from country to country. No, of course Cluj is not [one of the most innovative cities] I think now we can just pay our taxes online. It could be, it could be – but there is a long way to go." The founder of an innovation Hub active since 2012 strongly detests the nickname. "Silicon Valley is one and you cannot recreate it; we don't have that set up here so it will be a stupid recipe." Most agree that the press talking about Cluj is positive from a public relations standpoint, and that Silicon Valley is a prime case study that should be critically scrutinized and learned from, but not necessarily replicated. The data gathered do not seem to demonstrate a clear correlation between a given field of work and the opinions of the marketing-based city slogan.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

Recommendations

In conclusion, the research findings confirm what professional literature has determined regarding social entrepreneurship and innovation – that there are several definitions, used interchangeably without a solid consensus. As a blossoming area of scholarly discourse, social entrepreneurship will benefit from increased defined theoretical content and boundaries. Many professionals who work in the heart of Cluj's creative epicenter do not offer clear definitions of the jargon they use on a regular basis or even try to support its validity. Due to what might be regarded as a risk-adverse culture after several decades of oppressive rule by Ceausescu, no specific sector has exclusive responsibility for innovation to or exploration of methods of lateral thinking. Prior research suggests that social entrepreneurs are lower risk takers on average than commercial entrepreneurs because usually there exists a lack of funding that sparks a survival mentality within their organization (Short, 2009). The transition from communism to capitalism can be ameliorated with recommendations of best practices within public administration.

When analyzing the results of our surveys, there is a lack of education and training in this area available for people at all stages of life. Though not everyone possesses the inherent ability to become an entrepreneur, valuable skills can be imparted to almost anyone. In the United States, it is common for employees to be encouraged by their supervisor to mature their abilities and talents, and in many cases are assigned company time to do so as well as an opportunity to work on outside projects. Clusters in Romania are only engaging with creatives already exposed to the craft, and do not target groups who need an intermediate stepping stone. Expanding educational and training opportunities is a very realistic and implementable solution because it can take the form of a business, nonprofit organization, or even city initiative. NGOs that already provide educational trainings can be revamped and streamlined to better focus efforts on a specific demographic. Teaching entrepreneurship to middle-level personnel similar to how they would be taught managerial practices is a step closer to mitigating the gap between the ambitions of an organization and the skill set needed to successfully innovate.

Overall, a strong foundation is key – entrepreneurial thinking cannot flourish without a basic knowledge in the subject. That is why institutions in Cluj have been called on by specialists to take a more proactive role in entrepreneurial education, and portray the model of an engaged university. In *Not Well Advised*, Peter Szanton states that it is typical of American universities to be more "deeply affected by the social currents of the day," than their European counterparts (Szanton, 2001). It may still be the case that universities in the United States are more apt to provide interactive educational degrees or extra-curricular programs that teach problem-solving skills – important skills for the field of social entrepreneurship. In Romania, professionals report that many students

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

have ideas but are deficient in the support needed to bring them to fruition. Universities provide theoretical programs, but not as much hands-on experiences. An integrated academic regime would increase the number of millennials in the work force who are fully equipped to implement their concepts once they are hired. While this solution requires more buy-in from multiple stakeholders, it can be accomplished with smart allocation of resources and a strong analysis of the city's current educational landscape.

Some proponents believed that innovation and entrepreneurial classes (characterized as learning spaces where students are encouraged to work with and depend on one another for success), should be introduced during early high school or middle school, commenting that even learning about it for the first time at the college level was borderline too late. "I would not say kindergarten, even though in western education they do sometimes start at kindergarten," recalled an instructor of entrepreneurial workshops and exercises, "but at least secondary education – to talk, to have career counselors mention that it is a potential career path to be an entrepreneur or being self-employed. We don't have that at the systemic level." Following this advice is a suggestion that encounters the least amount of barriers, since, even though standardized curriculums need to be adhered to, daily and weekly lesson plans are typically left to the discretion of the individual teacher. Educators can teach entrepreneurship and innovation by instilling a sense of inter-dependence in their students, encouraging design thinking, requiring scholars to lead workshops rather than give presentation, and emphasizing the importance of organization and collaborative skills.

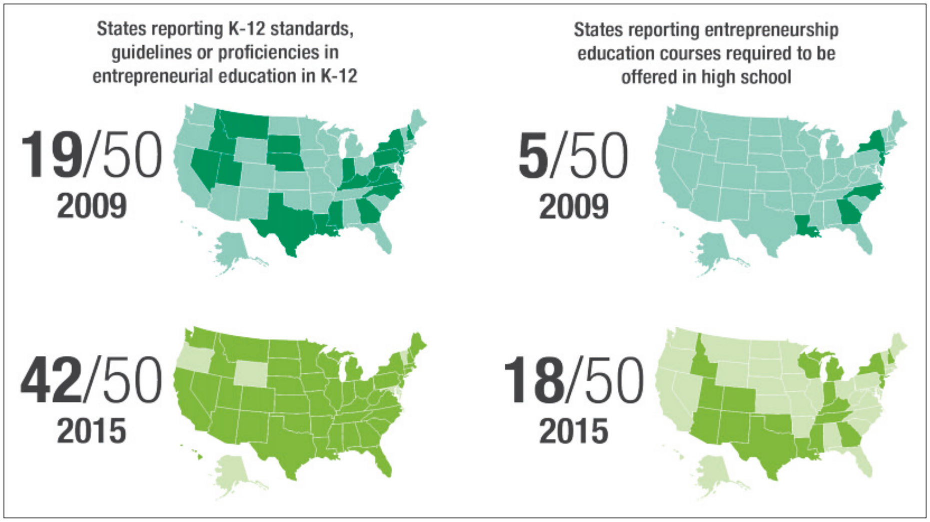

Figure 1: The States of Entrepreneurship in America

Source: https://www.juniorachievement.org/documents/20009/20652/Entrepreneurship+standards+by+state.pdf/494b5b34-42a2-4662-8270-55d306381e64.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Junior Achievement USA, the largest organization in the United States dedicated to providing programs with core content including areas of work readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy, is one of the few nonprofits in the country to use third-party, independent evaluators to gauge the impact of their programs (Bezinger, 2015). In 2015, the institute undertook a review of states' reporting standards, guidelines, or proficiencies in entrepreneurship education for grades kindergarten through 12th, and reported a substantive increase in entrepreneurial education efforts at the state level when compared in a similar study conducted in 2009.

Regarding entrepreneurial education in K-12, 84% of states reported they have strategies currently in place, versus only 38% documented six years earlier. (See Figure 1: The States of Entrepreneurship in America for more details.) Likewise, states that reported entrepreneurial courses being required to be offered in high schools rose from 10% to 36% within the same time span (Benzinger, 2015). Granted, Romania's infrastructure for elementary and secondary education likely will not afford the same spike in the type of course options as seen within the United States, but it can be used as a benchmark to demonstrate the need for improved opportunities.

Another way to foster an entrepreneurial spirit in young children is to create fun and informative games that can be used both in and outside of the classroom. It is a practical scheme a current NGO or startup could undertake, simultaneously providing idea-to-execution experience as well as a sustainable and viable product. Childhood exposure to these prospective occupations would not necessarily provide an immediate effect, but would generate positive externalities long-term.

Another suggestion is to institute more integrated approaches across various organizations and sectors. Efforts are often times doubled due to a deficiency in communication between organizations that are addressing the same issues but not working in unison. A community manager of an innovation hub attributes much of this disconnect to poor financial management between the public and non-profit branch. Correspondingly, others challenged the logic behind funding young entrepreneurs but not supplementing them with the education necessary. Government administration can readjust policies to more effectively integrate into the world economy, as there is a need to respond more adequately to the demands from citizens. Unfortunately, straightening out this predicament is likely out of the scope of an advisor's reach due to the nature of complicated interrelations and ill-defined responsibilities experienced by various parties.

The sole business owner interviewed was the only one to comment on the ambiguity of the proposed European Union entrepreneurship law mentioned earlier. "I have realized that the legal frame is not very clear for social entrepreneurship and this problem does not deal with the local authorities, but the central ones." Inaugurating legislation that reaches a clear consensus, is an accomplishment that would reap benefits in every

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

sector. Seeing as though it has been attempted twice in recent years, however, could possibly be a glimpse of a larger latent issue.

A final proposal was by an agent who provides managerial training in social responsibility. He recommends a cycle that employs young people in research positions until the age of twenty-five, then transitions them to production for ten years, then to management until they feel they have the experience to work as a consultant or an expert. In his opinion, this model effectively utilizes the services and resources the workers possess at each stage of their career ladder – the flexibility and drive while young; the wisdom and experience when seasoned. A setup like this could thrive in certain organizations, but it is mostly contingent on the environment of the industry, work culture, and leadership styles that are in place.

A less feasible proposition provided by the same interviewee was to send Transylvanians abroad to developed countries for two months to contest the traditional Eastern European mentality and illustrate that by working hard and seizing opportunity, they too can succeed. While it is difficult to send European students to the United States, he raises a valid point – due to its history, Romania and many surrounding countries do not embody the same go-getter persona and it is typical for employees to only accomplish things that have been asked of them after their boss tells them exactly what to do. Workers can be trained to embrace a culture of learning and view themselves as active agents of change. By altering the stigma associated with lower-level positions that they do not have the power to initiate change on their own, innovation can be introduced in a new light that will expedite its standardization in the workplace.

Areas for future research

Innovation occurs for different reasons; during times of crisis, regime changes, new leadership, opportunities, or challenges. Many times, people do not begin by deciding they are going to innovate; instead, they start by solving a problem in a way that they themselves or others then recognize as creative. Understanding the origin of social entrepreneurship will provide clarity on how to better nurture the concept within a society, as well as observing factors that hinder or facilitate innovation in the government.

This study can further be expanded upon by investigating numerous other operations recommended by contacts cited in this report. From an international perspective, the Romanian Northwest Regional Development Agency is tasked with delivering smart innovation strategy for the Transilvania region, and maintains a database of statistics concerning tangential research subjects, such as gender equity in the field of innovation. There are a few other business clusters located within Cluj, all honing in on different industries, such as furniture, and an interesting adaptation to this discourse could be to

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

cross-examine creative and innovative practices between these professional associations. Further exploration into other social entrepreneurial models within Romania, such as the Civitas Foundation which aims to stimulate local and regional development, or the Bosch Group, which specializes in corporate research in technological breakthroughs are other application avenues for evolution. Finally, delving into innovative city projects or startup companies who have achieved success due to the assistance of an NGO would complement this project kindly.

As mentioned, the scholarly research published on the topic of social entrepreneurship as a whole has for the most part traversed the period of the last twenty years. That block of time is similar to the intervals studied by academics who report on fads, fashions, and trends. While social enterprises have proven their worth as a sustainable road for change, it would be interesting to discern elements of this concept that follow the same pattern as temporary movements, versus features of a more permanent shift in philosophy. But because social entrepreneurs blend traditional capitalism with solutions that address long-term needs and chronic social problems, it is most likely here to stay.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Appendix

Interviews conducted

– Executive Director iTech Transilvania Cluster Manager, Aries Transilvania
– Marketing Specialist, Agro Transilvania Center
– Program Coordinator, Danis Foundation
– Founder, Danis Foundation
– Managing Director, Spherik Accelerator
– Executive Director, Cluj IT Cluster
– Assistant Manager, Cluj IT Cluster
– Community Manager, Impact HUB
– FSPAC Professor and Entrepreneur; Expert in Entrepreneurial Education
– Founder & CEO, Cluj HUB
– Head of International Affairs and Foreign Investment Department, Cluj-Napoca City Hall
– Faculty, FSPAC, UBB

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FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

4.

Distance Education in Romania. An Inquiry and Essay

by Jun Jiao, Larisa Antal, Anca Odobleja

Introduction and background

In this paper the term “distance education” is used to describe a method of education characterized by its flexibility and easy access for students independent of time constraints or physical distance. This study of distance education, done by graduate students at the University of Delaware (UD) and Babeș-Bolyai University (BBU) examines the current situation and limitations of distance education in Romania. This study makes suggestions to increase the usage of this education technique in Romania.

Increasing availability of distance education programs is beneficial for students who cannot access traditional higher education (Admin, 2008). Depending on the format of distance education used, face-to-face interaction with teachers may not even be required. This means that by becoming involved in distance education, students can study without encountering barriers of time or distance. For mature or rural students, constricted by time, distance, or cost, distance education can provide an effective way of accessing higher education (Admin, 2008). However, technology is one of the most important elements of modern distance education and therefore limited knowledge of or access to technology on the part of information recipients as well as educators is a significant hurdle for distance education (Admin, 2008).

As a study in public administration/public policy, this research is intended to help policymakers consider education policies to increase quality and eliminate barriers in access to and implementation of distance education. This research seeks to answer some questions about how distance education will be funded, staffed, organized and whether or not there might be need for changes in legislation or existing practices over time. Identifying these elements is an important part of the public administration/public policy advisory work. The value, significance and contribution of the proposed work are intended to help better understand the factors that influence the delivery of distance education. It would also help to inform the design of appropriate policies to create an environment favorable to the improvement of distance education.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

This study recommends the following:

1. The Romanian government should consider revising and creating educational policies to:
   a. Revise legal constraints requiring in-person meetings and exams between instructors and distance education students.
   b. Encourage and assist teachers and students to increase participation in distance education.
2. The Romanian government should help educators and students become familiar with using the new technology. Specifically, helping those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, through interventions such as providing scholarships or giving training on how to use information technology to participate in distance education.
3. Non-governmental interventions might include:
   a. **Universities** training educators on how to use information technology and provide a distance education-training center.
   b. **Non-profit educational organizations** giving guidance for students, helping them to adjust to the new form of online classes, and providing training sessions.
   c. **Private companies** providing training opportunities for their employees or the general public.
4. At the university level and departmental level, educators and students have access to training on:
   a. How to use the technology associated with distance education.
   b. How to adjust to a different (not classroom based) mode of instruction and learning. For example, students should have pre-tests or guidance before they are enrolled in distance education programs in order to avoid academic dishonesty problems.

One importance aspect to consider is that in Romania distance learning cannot be combined with other traditional programs. In other words, students sign up for a program which is entirely distance learning.

Case Study at UBB: Outtakes from interviews with administrators, faculty, and students

Our group interviewed members of the Faculty of Political Science, Administration and Communications, Babeș-Bolyai (FSPAC, UBB). We conducted interviews at the distance education center, and the online classes video room. FSPAC, UBB provides an example of how distance education has been implemented through “Moodle”, a platform for online classes. In addition to the online platform, the legal provisions require teachers and students to meet at least twice per semester in person and students are required to take their final exams in physical classrooms.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Table 1: Summary of student and faculty participation in distance education programs, FSPAC, UBB, 2017

	FSPAC, UBB	Distance Education Programs
Students	100% (n=3,500)[a]	15% (n=700)[a]
Educators	100% (n=100)[b]	50% (n=50)[b]
% Students w/ access to devices[c]	80-90%	100%
Student Participation in Course Evaluation [d]	10%	10%

(a) The total number of students enrolled in both distance education and traditional classroom based courses at FSCAP, UBB is approximately 4,500, of those students, 700 (15%) have participated in distance education programs.
(b) There are approx. 100 professors in FSPAC, UBB; of these educators, at least 50 also teach at least one distance education course, though they may not teach this course every semester.
(c) "Devices" refers to the technology required for students and professors to access distance education, for example, a laptop, iPad, desktop, or other computer with internet access.
(d) Across the board in traditional classroom based classes as well as in distance education programs, only 10% of enrolled students complete end-of-the-semester course evaluations. These evaluations request impressions and suggestions on the layout of the class, the effectiveness of the teaching methods used by the professor, etc. Returning these evaluations is not required, likely contributing to the low participation.

Source: FSPAC Staff, Personal Communications, January 2017.

Table 2: Summary of tuition and class hours of distance education programs, FSPAC, UBB, 2017

	FSPAC, UBB	Distance Education Programs
Tuition	500-600 USD (2700-3000 Lei)	500-600 USD (2600-2800 Lei)
Course Length	14 weeks • 4 hours per class (2 hours course and 2 hours seminar) • 14 x 4 hours direct contact in classroom	14 weeks • 8 hours (face to face) • 4 hours (online class - tutoring) • Rest of hours – individual study
Course Credits	1 Course: 6 credits[e] Degree: 150 credits	1 Course: 6 credits Degree: 150 credits

(e) Number of credits per course range from to 3 to 8

Source: FSPAC Staff, Personal Communications, January 2017.

One barrier to increasing the quality and availability of online classes (distance education) is a lack of participation in the classes offered online (Personal Communications, January, 2017). From the table above we can see that only 15% of the students participate in distance education in FSPAC, UBB. This may be due to a lack of access to the required technology. Approximately 10 to 20% of students do not have their own laptops, which is a limiting factor for participation in distance education. Another reason for this low participation is a lack of trained educators, as almost none has specialized training regarding online teaching platforms. This lack of participation and engagement in such courses also results in limited feedback to improve the quality of distance education, as only 10% of students return course evaluation forms.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

At FSPAC, UBB, the "Moodle" platform was implemented successfully. The platform requires FSPAC, UBB to combine a few off-line in-person meetings and in-person exams on campus with the online coursework. According to a professor from FSPAC, UBB, "Having an online class today in UBB is not a fully online class, it is more like a combination between online and offline classes and only this type of online class can legally exist in Romania today" (Personal Communications, January, 2017). Therefore, this may make access to higher education very difficult for students living in rural areas far from universities.

For distance education courses (within the framework of entire programs), FSPAC, UBB asks for 8 hours of face-to-face instruction, 4 hours of online tutorial, and the rest of the course time is allocated for individual study. This limited amount of direct contact means that it is often difficult for students to learn as efficiently and effectively as in traditional classrooms, where the face-to-face instruction is about 60 hours per semester (Personal Communications, January, 2017).

Distance learning educators are required to upload their learning materials on "Moodle". However, through the interviews, the study team learned that these teachers organize their course meetings to meet only the minimum requirements, and often do not upload materials in a timely manner. This may be due to the commonly held impression that students who participate in online classes are not paying as much attention or putting in as much effort as their counterparts in traditional classes. Additionally, some professors state that they are not well trained to use the necessary technology (Personal Communications, January, 2017).

A benefit of Moodle platform in FSPAC, UBB is that there are not a lot of online classes provided in Romania. FSPAC, UBB could pioneer the implementation of distance education courses. However, due to the lack of participation, concern, and the national legal preference for face-to-face instruction, distance education in FSPAC, UBB is not yet capable of meeting the demand for fully online, flexible higher education from rural and mature students.

Moodle is used only by FSPAC, since the school believes it is better. However, all universities which implement distance learning programs are forced by law to implement an online platform (it is part of accreditation requirements).

Existing problems with distance education in Romania

We found the following problems and issues in the implementation of distance education courses in Romania. There are legal constraints, inadequate access to technology including computers and Internet, inadequate training for faculty, and conservative ways of thinking that prevent progress in this area (Personal Communications, January, 2017).

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

First, legal constraints hinder the development of distance education in Romania. The current education policies in Romania do not allow students to take classes fully online. Therefore, participating in distance education can only occur in large universities, and is still not very popular (Personal Communications, January, 2017).

Second, in Romania, there exists unequal enrollment in distance education among students from different socio-economic backgrounds. Low-income students may not be able to afford the necessary technological devices required to participate in distance education. Additionally, some students may not have adequate Internet service delivery (Personal Communications, January, 2017). Some universities are trying to correct this – BBU for example offers free notebooks for distance education students starting a couple of years ago.

Third, even the Romanian universities that implement distance-learning programs face some problems concerning a lack of well-trained educators who are able to use information technology skills to conduct their courses online (Personal Communications, January, 2017).

Fourth, Romanian national policy is characterized by conservative thinking with respect to delivery of higher education, which is an impediment to the development of distance education. (Personal Communications, January, 2017).

Conclusions: Current state of Romanian distance education

Our conclusions with respect to each of those issues are as follows.

In Romania, legal constraints, which restrict access to distance education, have been put in place because policy administrators believe that teaching students via the Internet will decrease the quality of education, since online learners are required to do more self-study (Personal Communications, January, 2017). Without face-to-face interaction, knowing how to effectively prepare for a class can be difficult. These legal constraints and educational policies can be seen as a major hindrance to the development of distance education. A professor from UBB stated that the legal restrictions in Romania are reflected in terms of student access to distance education (Personal Communications, January, 2017). Each faculty member implements their own rules based on the legal aspects provided by the National Education Law, which can be confusing.

However, current research suggests that online platforms can be just as effective as traditional classrooms because they have their own models and systems for assessing contact hours and collecting reports to evaluate students (NRS Guideline for Distance Education). Romania currently does not have a way to ensure that the educators and students' performance meet a certain standard due to the previously mentioned legal constraints (Personal Communications, January, 2017). Until these constraints are lifted,

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

and assessment of online course platforms can take place, it will be difficult to increase investment in improving distance education.

A professor from FSPAC, UBB stated that Internet service delivery is a significant challenge for Romanians today (Personal Communications, January, 2017). The speed of Internet is no longer a problem in Romania (Do Speed Test, 2016). However, about 10 to 20% of students still experience difficulties because they do not have access to their own electronic devices, such as laptops, and therefore cannot get access to online classes (Personal Communications, January, 2017).

To address the problem of service delivery, administrative staff could implement programs to help poor students gain equal access to computers. For example, UBB has a distance education center, which provides a place for those who do not have their own laptop to get involved in distance education. At distance education centers, students can get access to the online classes easily; they can also get technology support whenever they meet any difficulties during their online classes or assignments. While students without laptops who study at UBB can go to a distance education center at the school to participate in online classes, those from rural areas without electronic devices find it almost impossible to attend classes online. Administrative staff from UBB in Romania explained, students who are either from low-income families or from rural areas do not have equal access to distance education (Personal Communications, January, 2017).

In general, there is a relatively lower level of technology usage in Romania because only young people in certain major cities are capable of using technology effectively (Personal Communications, January, 2017). The reason that there is a lack of well-trained teachers is because most teachers are middle-aged, which means that it is difficult for them to pick up new technology skills (Personal Communications, January, 2017). This is especially difficult, as they need to teach and research while taking care of their families at the same time. Therefore, it is challenging for them to devote a decent amount of time to learning how to use technology.

A professor from UBB mentioned that the best way to improve the development of distance education is to change people's ways of thinking. He suggested universities in Romania advertise the benefits of distance education via TV, newspapers, and radios. Until the day when students, educators, universities, and the whole society realizes the benefits of getting involved in distance education programs, this problem will continue to exist (Personal Communications, January, 2017).

Suggestions for policy change

Our suggestions for policy change are as follows. Romanians can learn from the cross-cultural examples of positive distance education policy, specifically successful educational policies implemented in the United States and China.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

In the United States, many policies support distance education. The Online Education Policy Initiative (OPEI) helps to build online education more broadly. The online platform will not replace teachers, but it will enhance the value of in-person education by adding in online learning experience (Karen *et al*., 2016). Specifically, learning through online classes can provide students learning experience, in addition to degrees or certificates. There are many online degree programs in the US. Through participating in those programs and meeting the requirements, it is possible for students to get their degrees by participating in fully online programs. For example, Capella University has over 50 distance learning degree programs, through which students can save their time and money and receive degrees aligned with their desired professions.

In China, the government also supports online distance education, and it has grown to be a very popular and well-respected mode of education (Ding *et al*., 2010). Like MOOC, a formal learning platform, there is also One-Minute Online Class, another type of informal online learning class. Some highly regarded universities in China, like Beijing University and Qinghua University developed distance education programs because they wanted to share their high quality courses with the general public. There are free options as well as courses that must be paid for. For example, in October 2014, when Beijing University first joined MOOC with a class about English Learning and English Interpretation, over 1,000 students registered.

The Chinese government has also introduced an educational policy, "Looking Toward the 21st Century Education Promotion Action Plan" to help to achieve the goal of building a knowledge-based society (Ministry of Education, 1999). A year later, the Ministry of Education confirmed that "The Rule of Temporary Implemental Management of Education Websites, Internet Education and Online Temporary Management" played a major role in establishing a new online education system. Today, the Chinese government still strongly supports distance education since it can provide more information to a greater number of students. It can also improve the availability and quality of education, and enable most students regardless of their different schedules and geographical locations to help them get an education (Song, 2006).

Both the US and China's educational policies show more supportive aspects towards aiding education departments and institutes to develop online classes and online learning devices. The reason why both the US and China developed successful distance education programs is because they both take developing online classes very seriously, and their policy administrators put a lot of effort into designing the appropriate policies to support its development.

We suggest revision of the legal constraints and educational policies in Romania, so that all students have the same ability to access distance education. As a professor from UBB mentioned, educational policies should be revised to allow universities to hold fully online classes; to give permission to students as well as general public to register

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

for distance education; and finally, to let educational non-profit organizations and private educational companies provide online classes in addition to universities (Personal Communications, January, 2017). All these changes would help to improve the amount of involvement in, and the quality of, online classes. In this case, the government could also help to provide financial support, technology training, and adequate resources for both educators and students to increase overall involvement.

As shared in an in-person interview with administrative staff from UBB in Romania, students who are either from low-income families or from rural areas do not have equal access to distance education. To address the lack of access to necessary technology, as mentioned by a UBB professor, administrative staff should implement programs to help poor student gain access to computers (Personal Communications, January, 2017). For example, UBB has a distance education center which provides a place for those who do not have their own laptop to get involve in distance education. Similar centers could be set up outside of universities and major cities. By learning at distance education centers, students can also access technological support whenever they meet any difficulties during their online classes or doing their online assignments.

It is hard to ensure the educators' performance. As mentioned above many educators do not think that it is worthwhile to put much effort into teaching online classes, because the students are not as engaged as students in a traditional classroom or lecture hall (Personal Communications, January, 2017). In addition, without basic knowledge of technology, educators cannot use online platforms like MOOC effectively and may therefore believe that these online platforms are inferior to traditional education. Thus, training programs targeting online educators should be implemented in universities as well as other entities. Such programs would benefit from governmental support and incentives to participate.

For example, though UBB organized a training course for distance education educators on how to use online platforms, the administrative staff stated that only around 5% of teachers were interested in participating in this training (Personal Communications, January, 2017). One way for universities to incentivize participation in these training and in providing distance education would be increasing the salaries of those who successfully complete their online classes with a certain expected testing standard for students. Giving additional awards to educators who receive high comments or great evaluations at the end of each semester, would also be a good way to help increase the quality of distance education in Romania.

In addition, non-profit educational organizations could give guidance to educators and help them to develop their new online structure of their classes. Non-profit organizations can also help to provide some free training sessions for educators who come from disadvantaged backgrounds to allow them learn how to use technology. A similar structure of assistance could be used for students who require the same type of training.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course
Appendix 2.
Course Calendar
Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary
Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings
Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics
Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Finally, private companies could also implement more targeted courses similar to those already implemented in the US and China. This type of training would be more precise compared to what would be provided by non-profit companies. For example, one-on-one lab sessions would be very practical, for professionals wishing to gain additional skills. Alternatively, courses could be designed for specific demographic groups - for example, senior citizens and retirees who have enough money to pay for a course, but want to learn at a more leisurely pace. That would not only help individuals, but also the private companies interested in recruiting and training new hires.

Future directions

While the study done was limited due to time and resources, we believe the following are topics worthy of additional study:

First, though we make suggestions on how to implement training for teachers, it is always efficient to attempt a sample model. This would allow BBU to see if the sample model has a significant effect on how educators are able to use the required technology for distance education. Setting up a sample model such as "Moodle" in FSPAC, UBB is necessary to provide a guideline of how to implement distance education. Analyzing and evaluating the data collected in a small-scale implementation of a training program would be helpful for the future development of online education. In addition, these outcomes could also provide a reference standard to give a clear guidance for the future development.

Another area of future research is addressing the low participation rate in end-of-semester course evaluations. These responses would make a big difference in determining the direction of development because the input of students currently enrolled in distance education can provide valuable suggestions on how to improve the quality of distance education. In order to address this lack of information, we suggest the creation a nationwide survey of students and faculties. Such a large sample size would give reliability to analyses of effective educational techniques.

This research was intended to help policymakers and administrators gain a better understanding of the current status of distance education at FSPAC, UBB. We identified some of the major limitations in the establishment of distance education in Romania, including, legal constraints, inadequate access to technology including computers and Internet, inadequate training for faculty, and conservative ways of thinking. It is our hope that the suggestions outlined in this paper will help inform the evaluation of current education policies so as to increase quality and eliminate barriers in access to and implementation of distance education.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

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FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

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FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course
Appendix 2.
Course Calendar
Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary
Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings
Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics
Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

5.

Understanding the Barriers, if any, to Implementing a National Sexual Health Education Strategy in Romania to Combat High Rates of Teenage Pregnancies

by Mallory Smith

Assisted by Alexandra Opriș

Introduction

Romania has some of the highest rates of teenage pregnancies in the European Union. This, coupled with increasing incidences of sexually transmitted infections and HIV, suggests that Romania needs an effective national program to deal with these issues, including a sexual health education strategy. This paper reports on the results of interviews conducted in Cluj-Napoca, Romania during January 2017 to gain an understanding of the problem, barriers that may exist in the implementation of a sexual health education strategy, and other suggestions from professionals on supplemental strategies that can be adopted. We found the effects of teenage pregnancies go beyond the harm inflicted upon those most directly affected—mother and child—extending into the entire society. A program to reduce high rates of teenage pregnancies will require a national strategy in which the several stakeholders must be fully engaged and consulted.

Methodology

In advance of fieldwork in Cluj, our team of graduate students studying public administration at University of Delaware (UD) and Babeș-Bolyai University (BBU), collected data and, identified the major stakeholders to be interviewed. Due to time constraints and the sensitivity surrounding this topic we were unable to interview everyone we would have liked and in three cases resorted to email correspondents to gather information. Based on the integrity of BBU's contacts we fully trusted our emails and questions were received and completed by the interviewee.

In the interest of maintaining confidentiality for those interviewed, interviewees are referred to by general job title. Those interviewed included a counselor of pregnant

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

women at a pro-life clinic, a former sexual and reproductive health specialist, a social worker, a professional in child protection services, medical inspectorates in schools, faculty in the BBU school of public health, former ministry of public health employee, a health educator, and an experienced teacher. We wanted to interview teenage mothers and Romanian students between the ages of 15-18. Interviewing this cohort would have offered a personal and unique narrative that might have provided actual insight, as opposed to hypothesized, as to what led up to so many of these young women becoming pregnant, if they have knowledge of different modern contraceptives, and why they did or did not use them. Interviewing teenagers in general would have allowed us to better understand where Romanian youth look for information regarding sexual and reproductive health, who they have discussed the topic with, and the accuracy of their information. Interviews in Romania offered insight to the scope of the problem of teenage pregnancies, how it manifests itself, current available solutions, how in-country political climates have and may affect the implementation of such solutions and new innovative solutions as well. These additional interviews will hopefully be carried out in a future extension of this work to gain additional perspectives.

Background

Sexual and reproductive rights have changed dramatically over the past 60 years in Romania. In 1957, abortions were legalized in Romania under certain circumstances as the government's attempt to advance women's health and support a woman's right to choose (United Nations, 2002). During this time, communism was the enforced political and economic system in Romania and thus, more women were entering the workforce and contributing to the general economy of Romania. A common outcome of having more women in the workforce is lower birth rates, which is exactly what occurred. In 1966, after 9 years of abortion used as a means of fertility control and birth rates steadily decreasing, the Romanian Council of State passed decree 770 as a means of addressing decreasing population rates by limiting women's access to abortion, which became legal in only limited circumstances. (United Nations, 2002). This law restricted women's access to contraception in general, and incentivized having children by offering allowances to large families. Women in Romania were denied basic sexual and reproductive rights.

The implementation of this law led to one year of decreased abortions and saw the increase in live-births. However, after that one year the oppressive law was no longer having the desired effects. An underground illegal abortion network had been created offering women an unsafe option of family planning. Throughout the period, from 1965, when the decree was enacted, to the mid-80's, maternal mortality doubled in Romania, making it the highest Europe had ever seen (Sedgh *et al.*, 2002).

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

In 1984, to address these still unrivaled rates of maternal mortality, and the reality that the number of abortions in Romania was larger than the number of live births, a campaign was undertaken to increase the country's population. New, extreme, measures were implemented that redefined oppressing women in modern-day Romania. Special taxes were enforced for both unmarried people over the age of 25 and couples without children, who did not have a medical excuse. Investigations were initiated into cases of miscarriages amongst citizens. Possibly the most invasive of them all, gynecologists regularly came to do check-ups on women at their place of work to check to see if any women were pregnant and if they were, monitor them to ensure they had their child and did not get an abortion (United Nations, 2002).

During these years, sexual health education barely existed and health education taught in schools referred to basic anatomy and hygiene (Rada, 2014). After the revolution of 1989-90, the restrictive policies were lifted; however, it was not until 1996 that new abortion laws were passed making them more accessible for citizens. Shortly following the new regime, there was a surge of funding from international health organizations for public health programs, as abortions became legal in Romania and the oppressive communist policies were lifted (Rada, 2014 & Melnic, 2004). The US Agency for International Development (USAID) funded a ten-year family planning program, which educated the public, in both urban and rural areas, on sexual and reproductive health. They are responsible for training a significant number of family planning specialists throughout the country (Melnic, 2004). UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) and USAID made a major donation of free contraceptives to Romania to increase usage. Even with more than 3,000 doctors trained in family planning around the country and the availability of free modern contraceptives, in 2004 people living in low-income and rural communities in Romania were still relying on abortion as their primary mean of regulating pregnancies. Romania's accession to the European Union ended USAID and UNFPA funding and the important trainings and free contraceptives ceased with it. The push towards family planning and accessibility of modern contraceptives served a role much greater than restoring women's sexual and reproductive rights in Romania. They were also emphasized to combat high rates of teenage pregnancies, STIs, and HIV/AIDs and the sudden disruption of resources led the country's rates to increase rapidly (Sexual and Reproductive Rights Specialist, personal communication, January 23, 2017).

Present problem

Now in 2017 the effects of these major organizations no longer investing in family planning in Romania are showing. Adolescent pregnancies in Romania are amongst the highest in Europe, HIV and STIs are on the rise, maternal mortality is higher here than any other EU member state and talking about sexual and reproductive health

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

is taboo and politically unfavorable (The World Bank, 2015; Turcescu & Stan, 2005). While some family planning specialists who were trained through USAID programs may still practice since the program termination ten years ago, it can be assumed many new untrained personal have entered the field and several of those whom were trained have retired. This has presented a serious problem in Romanian culture with the personnel not existing to disseminate family planning and sexual health education best practices. There has not been a great deal of community support or pressure put on governmental officials to implement solutions because most citizens are not fully aware of the scope of the problem.

Romania leads most European countries in both highest rates of adolescent fertility and number of adolescents between the ages of 15-19 who gave birth. Romania's data on abortions are incomplete thus the number presented in Table 1, of both rate of pregnancies and abortions, is likely lower than the actual rate of abortions among adolescent females. Research conducted by the Guttmacher Institute found Romania, out of 23 other countries, had the highest rates of young adolescent pregnancy (10-14 years old) and they were likely underestimates due again to incomplete data (Sedgh *et al*, 2002).

Table 1. Rate of Adolescent Pregnancies per 1,000 females 15-19

Country	Pregnancies	Abortions	Births
ROMANIA*	**61**	**17**	**35**
Estonia	43	19	19
Belarus*	39	12	22
Hungary	38	16	18
Iceland	30	15	11
France	25	15	7
Portugal	25	8	13
Finland	23	13	8
Denmark	21	14	5
Croatia*	17	3	12
Slovenia	14	7	5

* – Countries with incomplete official abortion statistics

Source: Guttmacher Institute Report on Adolescent pregnancy, birth, and abortion rates across countries.

Teenage pregnancies in Romania are a complex problem. Adolescents who become pregnant are often of low socioeconomic backgrounds and come from a broken family. An indicator that many of our interviewees regard as a major cause of pregnancies is teenager's feel a lack of purpose in life and sees becoming a parent as a means of "becoming something" (Social Worker & Pro-Life Clinic, personal communication, January

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

25, 2017). This issue is convoluted because while it is a glaring problem to public health workers both domestic and abroad, it is not in the public sphere. Those interviewed who work with pregnant teenagers and adolescent mothers daily have expressed the view that there is no normalcy in how those teenagers deal with their pregnancy. Some choose to carry their child to term and either drops out of school and are left alone without the support of their family or the father of their child while others are supported and continue school after giving birth. Pregnant teenagers are also occasionally sent to a distant relative to have the child remotely and then return to home and to school when their pregnancy is no longer obvious (Social Worker, personal communications, January 25, 2017). In other cases, the pregnant teen may choose to get an abortion. Out of these options, only one makes the reality of teenage pregnancies visible to the public. The teenagers who have an abortion, those who drop out of school, or have their child remotely, these adolescents are not seen walking around and displaying their pregnant state. When speaking to random Romanian citizens, if asked what their perception of Romania's rates of teenage pregnancies oftentimes my research partner and I were met with confusion. We concluded that the public was not visibly exposed to pregnant teenagers at a rate that reflected the actual data. This may explain the lack of general concern regarding this topic and the lack of awareness beyond public health professionals and those working directly with people affected by teenage pregnancies. It could also be that the people you asked live in urban environments (most of these young mothers are from rural country side) or are part of socio-economics groups where this is a rare phenomenon (if you do not come into contact with poor segregated communities you might think this is not a problem).

Costs of teenage pregnancies

Having the second highest rates of teenage pregnancies in Europe is a burden that extends beyond the impregnated women. There are financial, societal, and opportunity costs the entire country bears when such a large rate of young adolescents are becoming pregnant. The social worker we spoke to described many government funded welfare programs that support pregnant teenagers in Romania and cost a great sum of money. While no research has been conducted in Romania to quantify exactly how much it costs the country to provide these services, in 2008 an in depth study was conducted by Kids Count in the US which looked at state and federal costs of teenage mothers (Brace & Hall & Hunt, 2008). To offer some context according to the World Bank the US, as of 2015 had a rate of 21 per 1,000 adolescent fertilities, Romania a much smaller country has a rate of 35 per 1,000 (2015). With that in mind, in the US specifically the state of Georgia, each teen 17 years or younger that gives birth to a child costs the state $3,562 annually (Brace *et al*, 2008). This number took into account costs of a child's participation in the state's public health system, foster care, child protective services, criminal

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course
Appendix 2.
Course Calendar
Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary
Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings
Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics
Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

justice system, and public assistance programs for parents. The number calculated in the study also accounted for the societal costs associated with teenage pregnancies.

The World Health Organization (Mangiaterra, Pendse, McClure, & Rosen, 2008) prepared a report that claimed there is an association between teenage mothers and high rates of poverty and low rates of educational attainment. Adolescents who give birth are less likely to finish their schooling and generally, those who do not graduate high school are more likely to live shorter, less healthy lives and depend on the government for aid and health care (Brace *et al*, 2008). The WHO study also found a correlation between social deprivation and teenage pregnancies in developed countries. Women who are dropping out of school, not finishing their education, and raising children as adolescents experience a number of opportunity costs. Without a high school education, teenage mothers are likely to have a lower salary than their female counterparts who finished secondary education. Teenage mothers are also more likely to raise their child in a single-parent home, which increases chances of physical abuse and neglect. High rates of teenage mothers also result in less women contributing to the country's workforce.

With all of these costs, the Social Worker we spoke to explained little funding in Romania goes towards preventative programs to decrease these high rates of teenage pregnancies; instead money is spent on reactive services that help support teenagers that have already given birth (Social Worker, personal communication, January 25, 2017).

Understanding the problem

A proactive and preventative program that many countries have adopted to decrease social welfare costs and increase the health of mothers and children is sexual health education in schools (Social Worker, personal communications, January 25, 2017). Literature from all over the world, and research that has been done specifically in Romania have found this to be one of the most effective means of decreasing rates of teenage pregnancies, STI's, and HIV (Rada, 2014). While a national sexual education strategy would be a suitable solution for Romania, a major stakeholder has consistently protested such a program.

Romania is predominantly a Christian society, and this is said to affect the taboo that currently surrounds sexual health in modern Romanian society (Turcescu & Stan, 2005). In 2015, 19 Pro-family NGOs, many with religious affiliations, signed a public letter to the Minister of Health for parents to be consulted on matters of sexual education and the importance of delaying sexual intercourse until marriage (Stiripentruviata, 2015). While the church is very influential in Romania society, it has less sway on Romanian adolescents. The sexual and reproductive health specialist explained young Romanians, unlike their parents and grandparents are less likely to follow the teachings of the

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

church (Sexual and Reproductive Health Specialist, personal communication, January 23, 2017.). Estimates indicate youth in Romania are engaging in sex at younger ages than ever before and their access to information on the internet provides an alternative to their religious education; policy makers must keep up with these changes in practice to keep Romanian youth healthy and safe (Rada, 2014). All of the interviews we conducted reflected this research. Every interviewee was asked where they think adolescents receive information regarding sexual and reproductive health and the responses were uniform throughout. Most responded the internet and the media in general are a major source of information for teenagers, also citing peers as a means of information (Public Health Specialist, personal communication, January 17, 2017).

Sexual health education does exist in Romania. Some NGOs offer it in schools, but depending on the organization providing it, the education and information offered may fluctuate. One may emphasize delaying sexual intercourse and how contraception fails while another teaches the importance of protecting oneself if one so chooses to engage (Pro-Life Clinic, personal communications, January 25, 2017.)

Schools can offer health education as an optional course but biology teachers who have not had training specific to teaching sexual health education usually teach it. In most schools, the administrators decide if the topic will be taught and in some cases, NGOs teach it and in most cases, a biology teacher already employed at the school will teach it. A biology teacher who has taught for 35 years explained teachers need permission from the school and parents to teach this optional class to students, and in some cases, need to purchase their own textbooks to supplement the class (School Teacher, personal communications, January 25, 2017). Recently, a law in Romania passed the senate to imprison teachers who teach classes on sexual education without the consent of parents. Prison time could last between 2 -months and three years (Serghescu, 2016). Threatening teachers with jail time for disseminating information that has proven can improve adolescents lives and decrease their risk of STIs, HIV, and teenage pregnancies is a serious precedent the new Romanian government is setting. The adoption of the law is pending, in May 2017 The Committee for Education from the Chamber of deputies disagreed with this proposal. Therefore, while sexual health education may exist in different forms in Romania, it is not accessible to everyone and not taught in a consistent manner throughout the country. A national and uniform strategy is needed.

It is for this reason we wanted to explore what barriers exist, if any, to the implementation of a national sexual health education strategy in Romania to combat rates of teenage pregnancies. We also wanted to better gauge from professionals, supplemental solutions that can be used to address this problem.

While findings are preliminary, there are many things to learn from the interviews. Although our research, in conjunction with the literature, identified the disagreements between religious entities and more progressive NGOs and policy makers as the major

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

barrier; its identification will not be extremely useful for overcoming it. We found this problem is not likely to be resolved in its current state because there is not much room for compromise amongst key stakeholders. Both sides are strong-willed and unwilling to compromise. The church believes sexual health education, when comprehensive, exposes them to sexual content too early taking away a child's innocence. Whereas more progressive researchers and educators recognize the value in exposing youth to this information early so they fully grasp the complexities and consequences associated with engaging in sexual relations at a young age (Turcescu & Stan, 2005). Thus, it may be more effective for practitioners who are trying to address these high rates of teenage pregnancies, STI's, and HIV to work beyond trying to implement a national sexual health education strategy and instead focus on getting the public educated and invested in the importance of this issue.

Recommendations

Several of the interviews with stakeholders included a discussion on alternative solutions for decreasing Romania's high rates of teenage pregnancies and helping to propel forward and pass a national strategy. They included altered suggestions of programs that had been done in the past such as: public and explicit campaigns aimed at concerned parents and adolescents, a means of offering sexual health education to a different cohort than students, creating and broadening the entire health field to alleviate stress from under-resourced organizations, and valuing the impressive amounts of data so many organizations have but do little with.

Public campaigns

Well-organized religious groups who have been aggressively blocking any national sexual health education strategy have been successful because of their organization. Meanwhile, those who believe it needs to be implemented on a national scale are relying on facts and numbers alone to express the importance of such a strategy, not recognizing the important of organizing key players around their cause and garnering community support (Sexual and Reproductive Health Specialist, personal communication, January 23, 2017). To organize will require several efforts to engage parents and students who will then act as catalysts to put pressure on the national government to prioritize this issue. These could take the form of campaigns aimed at parents informing them of the serious statistics plaguing their children's generation emphasizing why safe sex is the most efficient preventative measure. This would hopefully either encourage a conversation within the family or increase a parent's interest in having their child exposed to sexual health education. A social media campaign could be adopted to empower youth and transmit why they deserve sexual health education in their schools to help prevent

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

diseases and pregnancies. A campaign where teenage mothers share their stories and experiences of having a child at a young age could influence both adolescents and parents to realize the gravity of this issue within Romanian society. I also recommend the national government use campaigns clearly to distribute information regarding any health strategy they choose to implement. This will keep the public informed and educated on different policies the government is working. Recommend these campaigns because their success could lead to the community-will needed to engage citizens and influence lawmakers in Romania.

Sex education for parents

A recommendation which could potentially have the support of both the anti and pro sexual health education sides would be offering a sexual health education strategy for just parents, or in the case of young people who have no parents present, for guardians or others who have responsibility for the children. Most schools have meetings throughout the year in which parents are expected to attend; those meetings instead could be turned into an opportunity for a health educator to discuss the importance of safe sexual relations and specifically how to disseminate the information productively to their children (Social Worker, personal communications, January 25, 2017).

This would allow the conversation of sex and sexual health to begin in the home and within the family, but the program would give out homework as ways for parents to practice the techniques in which they learned. While parents would not necessarily have incentives to complete the homework and attend the class, awareness raised through the campaigns mentioned above may be useful in helping parents realize the benefits of such a class. Social workers working with teenage mothers have also found many are looking for skills and classes to learn to become a better parent and this could be a perfect opportunity to offer such a service (Social Worker, personal communications, January 25, 2017).

Collect and analyze data

A third recommendation that would require compliance from NGOs, abortion clinics, pro-life clinics, social workers, and school medical inspectorates is a comprehensive database focused on sexual and reproductive health. Finding data in Romania surrounding this topic was extremely difficult and every stakeholder interviewed, except one, expressed concern over the lack of data available on this issue. Three different reputable organizations offer three different numbers for the number of teenage pregnancies in Romania, while they are all similar in showing Romania's alarming rates, the country's lack of fundamental data is concerning. Combining basic data on the number of pregnant teenagers, number of abortions by age groups, teenagers bringing their

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

child to term, as well as several other indicators could help create a pool of data that can be used to better understand the complexities of this problem and inform future programs and policies.

Health education field

A final recommendation based on work done to-date is to create, fund, and grow a cadre of health education professionals in Romania. A major component of spreading knowledge regarding sexual health is having someone who is trained in educating others on the topic. Currently a health education field does not exist within Romania, and students who are interested in the topic must leave the country to gain a substantive education in the field (Health Educator, personal communications, January 18, 2017.). While this will new field will take years to cultivate in Romania, the need for health educators will continue to grow alongside. This would be extremely beneficial to Romanian society because rather than relying on international aid to train educators as has been done in the past this will create the field of health education in Romania which will allow the country to train and sustain educators to accurately disseminate this type of information.

Future considerations

There is considerable room for future research on this topic. It could be useful to identify whether students perceive teenage pregnancy to be a problem and how they think it might be addressed. This requires interviewing adolescents, which entails a more rigorous IRB (International Review Board) review but would offer information researchers cannot gain from speaking to adult professionals. Hearing the adolescent narrative is the key to better understanding this problem fully. The importance of empowering and engaging the adolescents who are the targets of these campaigns was a common theme throughout the interviews we conducted, and taking recommendations from them on how better to engage their peers would be invaluable.

It would also be valuable to have more interviews with members of the church and those who oppose the implementation of a national sexual health education strategy. Many people we tried to get in contact with did not feel comfortable being interviewed and refused our request. Speaking to the pro-life clinic was one of the most interesting interviews that took place because it gave a glimpse of where those who oppose this type of education are coming from when they oppose it. This is monumental because it could be used to prepare and organize people trying to implement a national strategy and eventually help them break down the final barriers.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

References:

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FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

6.

The Engaged University in Central and Eastern Europe: Case Study of the Application of the American Model of University/ Community Engagement for Social and Economic Development at Babeș-Bolyai University and Cluj-Napoca City Hall

by Cristina M. Stănică

Introduction

University engagement represents an extension of research and teaching at academic institutions to broader external communities: business, industry, schools, governments, non-governmental organizations, associations, and the general public. Engaged research, teaching, and learning has the potential to produce knowledge outcomes that can be valuable both for academia and the community entities with which it interacts. Through an engaged university model, the role of higher education applied research and public service activity tends to move away from a remote producer and transmitter of knowledge, to an active participant in collaborative activities that can have various and immediate benefits to a variety of stakeholders.

Holland (2001) mentions that this happens through "direct interaction with external constituencies and communities through mutually beneficial exchange, exploration, and application of knowledge, expertize, and information. These interactions enrich and expand the learning and discovery functions of the academic institution while also enhancing community capacity" (Holland, 2001, p. 10). Furthermore, Summers (1986) points out that it is important to distinguish between development *of* community and development *in* the community. Development in the community includes instrumental activities such as job creation, workforce training initiatives, and business retention (Bridger & Alter, 2006). The engaged University can certainly be of assistance in the pursuit of those activities. The concept examined for the purposes of this paper involves development of community with involvement of and assistance from universities, which is a much broader process. This type of development takes place when local residents collaborate on various initiatives and projects and build relationships across multiple interest groups (Bridger & Alter, 2006). Scholars argue that community development is successful only under the following conditions: when it promotes equity

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

and social justice, it encourages the development of social capital, and it ensures that people have the resources to meet basic needs (Bridger *et al*., 2004). Apart from these conditions, Korten (1984) calls for another requirement of the engaged university model, and that is the creation of *enabling settings*.

> "The creation of enabling settings may require changes in the law, the restructuring of incentives, and the development of new capacities. It almost invariably requires fundamental reorientation in the purposes, structures, and operations of government bureaucracies- away from direct service delivery or resource management to local capacity building and support" (Korten, 1984, p. 303).

Working towards an engaged university model is a complex and durable process. Depending on the political culture of the working environment, and other economic and social conditions, the model can be adapted to various communities. The first step in adapting an engaged university model to a community is to understand, research, and evaluate the political culture and the value-base that drives collaboration practices between academics and practitioners. The paper addresses this aspect for the relationship between Babeș-Bolyai University and the city of Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Research topic

The present research study aims to assess what the literature on higher education and civic engagement has to offer with respect to the values, factors, and conditions that underlie a successful collaboration between the university as an advisor, and the city as a client/ consumer. In addition, the paper considers how the application of the American model of engagement might be adapted as needed for application in Romania, where the potential for such engagement is thought to be possible following the Revolution of 1989. It seeks in Romanian society an understanding of and willingness to adapt the American model. Research was conducted with various practitioners, faculty, experts, and stakeholders, in order to evaluate how the relationship between Babeș-Bolyai University and the Cluj-Napoca City Hall has evolved, where it stands today, and to what extent the evolution may be regarded as a trend for future opportunities. The ultimate goal of this work is to offer recommendations for improving the collaboration and creating a successful benchmark of practices that can better serve the needs of the community.

In his book "Not well advised: The city as client- An Illuminating Analysis of Urban Governments and Their Consultants", Peter Szanton (1981) provides an analysis of advisory services by academic organizations to city governments during the American "urban crisis" of the 1970s and '80s. Even though many of the engagement attempts are presented as being unsuccessful, Szanton (1981) describes various lessons learned

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

from multiple perspectives: of the academics as advisors, of the city government as a client, and also of third parties. Szanton (1981) identifies one of the greatest reasons for failure, the vastly different organizational cultures of universities and local governments. Additional problems that lead to incompatibilities in the way the two actors cooperate result from these cultural differences. These are related to scholars and politicians frequently communicating using their own technical jargon, the different time schedules employed by the actors (for academics the time schedule is the semester or the academic year, while civil servants talk about days or weeks, or months until a problem is thoroughly understood and an implementation strategy well underway, the latter being more than some academic structures are willing to accommodate). In order to get to a better understanding of what the two institutions' goals are, Table 1 briefly presents the variety of objectives of these two cultures:

Table 1: Differences in cultural attributes between academia and local public administration that can affect success in university engagement

Cultural attributes	University	Local Government
Ultimate object	Respect of academic peers for professional advancement	Approval of electorate for reelection
Time horizon	Long -this require some more discussion as with other parts of this table to flesh it out for better understanding	Short – defined by the election cycle or the budget cycle
Focus	Internal logic of the problem	External logic of the setting
Mode of thought	Inductive, generic	Deductive, particular
Mode of work	Solo	Collaborative
Most valued outcome	Original insight	Reliable solution
Mode of expression	Abstruse, qualified	Simple, absolute
Preferred form of conclusion	Multiple possibilities, depending on objective; uncertainties emphasized	One best solution, objectives unspecified, uncertainties submerged
Concern for feasibility	Small	Great
Stability of interest	Low	High

Source: Adapted from Szanton, P. (1981), p. 64.

Besides the inter-organizational cultural differences, Szanton (1981) draws attention to the intra-organizational differences. An academic from the field of sociology might have a different perspective than an academic from the engineering field with respect to the same problem. Similarly, civil servants at high political levels can also differ in their value-orientation when compared to lower level subordinates. However, Szanton (1981) summarizes a multitude of solutions that have been proposed or employed according to the experience reported by practitioners: changing incentives for collaboration, improving organization in universities, assuring funding, and carefully selecting the problems to be worked on by academics. Creating incentives for collaboration

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

coming from local and central governments also represent means of involving more stakeholders in applying the engaged university model. The idea exchange between the two actors is closely linked to the environment in which they function, the values that they promote, the convergence of these values, and the organizational culture.

Szanton (1981) argues that good ideas exist, it is the limited capacity and "weak incentives of local officials to seek, absorb, and attempt to apply these ideas in the face of the political, bureaucratic, and fiscal limitations that bind them" (p. 70). This can be linked to Korten's call for enabling settings in the government which aim to promote local capacity building and gain support. The main issues that the present study addresses are the capacity of local government to use the advice available and the role and responsibility of universities in acting as advisors.

Szanton (1981) moves further and provides a simple model of a successful collaboration between universities as consultants and local governments as clients. Table 2 presents this model together with the criteria that define the outcomes as being successful:

Table 2: A model of a successful collaboration between universities and local governments

Type of need/ Advice	Description	Success criteria
Identifying a problem	Separating symptom from problem, understanding the cause and degree of seriousness of the problem	Accuracy of the problem statement
Proposing the solution	Based on findings and alternatives, the advisor proposes solutions to the problem – these may include benchmarking opportunities	Feasibility of the solution
Getting there from here	Plan for implementing a proposal Direct assistance – remaining as an advisor/partner to assist with the implementation process	Change accomplishment Direct participation of the advisor in the implementation of change, which some academics find to be beyond their time and resource capacity. The presence of an incentive to effect change Value consistency between (advisor's) proposals and (client's) needs

Source: Adapted from Szanton, P. (1981), Not well advised: The city as Client- An Illuminating Analysis of Urban Governments and Their Consultants, Authors Choice Press.

As Table 2 presents, most collaboration attempts between the two institutions are linked to problem identification, proposing solutions, and implementation strategies. It is important to extend university's direct assistance from study to implementation to evaluation and performance monitoring. This type of need is oftentimes associated with problems in accountability mechanisms. However, the literature offers little assistance with monitoring outcomes. Questions of who should initiate such a strategy

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

for monitoring, who should be involved, and how frequently should this happen must be included in the collaboration strategy.

Findings

The research study has been conducted through the use of semi-structured interviews with five faculty members from Babeș-Bolyai University and five members of Cluj-Napoca City Hall. The interview guide was informed by the literature, particularly Szanton's work, and designed to assess each institution's perception towards the relationship between them in terms of engagement practices, value orientation, the civic purpose of such an involvement, the most important dimensions of the public interest as the main outcome of engagement strategies, and factors that are considered to be important in developing successful practices.

Cluj-Napoca City Hall

The analysis conducted with representatives of the Cluj-Napoca City Hall has revealed a strong perception towards the importance of maintaining such a relationship. It is important to mention that this collaboration has been continuously evolving in the past twelve years, and that most actors see beyond its institutional dimension. The inter-personal dimension is equally important, as part of the "traditional wisdom" of such a partnership, which actually has led to creating a network of stakeholders that are oriented towards the same values. The most important applied research project has been assisting the City with the development of Cluj-Napoca's strategic plan for socio-economic development. This is seen by one city government interviewee as "the most participative and innovative strategic planning process in Romania" (personal communication, January 22nd, 2016).

Besides this, there is also technical collaboration between the two institutions. One example is the project for building a parking garage in the student campus 'Hasdeu'. Additional engagement-type projects include partnerships with the private sector and Babeș-Bolyai University (Cluj Innovation City) and the internship component that determined the platform Cluj Business to evolve.

In terms of value orientation, the values that have been presented as representative of this interaction are: collaboration, participation, openness, transparency, and work ethic. Each of the representatives of the City Hall involved in this research has a similar understanding with respect to the civic purpose of engaging in a partnership with Babeș-Bolyai University (BBU). The civic purpose is mostly defined by offering students the opportunity to gain practical experience through internships, by the University offering the City Hall some strategic foresight and planning references, and the development

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

of multiple economic sectors (innovation, human resource, IT, creative industries). One element of the "traditional wisdom" from Cluj-Napoca's working environment is the well-trained human resource and expertize coming from academia, together with training students for the key development sectors in Cluj-Napoca.

Babeș-Bolyai University

Faculty members from Babeș-Bolyai University have identified additional engagement strategies between the two institutions. They referred to advisory work by faculty members in various areas, the preparation of policy papers by faculty members, internship programs offered for students, and support offered to faculty members in implementing various programs which require interaction with the City Hall. Projects have not been limited to national partners. International actors such as Michigan State University were equally relevant and important. Michigan State University was involved in teaching postgraduate programs for civil servants and in the development of Cluj-Napoca's socio-economic strategic plan.

Furthermore, training programs for leadership, local management, and police involved actors both from the City Hall and the University. This component brings up the role of universities in lifelong learning, which is a necessary step for progressing towards a knowledge-based administration (Stanica, 2012).

At the moment, the University plans to undertake an urban renewal/beautification project in the immediate vicinity of university settings. A common space has been defined. All who live and work in this space will be engaged in delivering services and conducting cultural and educational activities. This includes collaborating with locals, private companies, schools, private clinics, and stores. Such initiatives include using the common space for weekend activities organized by student clubs. Neighbors, city hall members, and faculty will be involved in reconstructing public green spaces. Private companies will identify and efficiently address social problems which exist in the area.

The most important values that define engagement strategies from the University's perspective converge with the ones proposed by the City Hall. The University has highlighted the importance of trust, community involvement and participation, collaboration, ethics. Additional values are commitment, responsibility, and inclusiveness. The faculty members agreed that trust is the most important value because of the inter-personal connectivity which characterize this network of actors. This has also been referred to as being critical in the success of this collaboration. The civic purpose of Babeș-Bolyai University is seen in terms of being socially responsible, being a good neighbor in the community where it is physically located, acting as the catalyst for change with regard to the involvement of universities in communities, and in bring-

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

ing the concept of engaged university on the public agenda through promoting and disseminating good practices. The public interest dimensions as the main outcome of engagement strategies have resulted in the pro-bono work for disadvantaged groups (the role of filling in the gap where services would not be provided otherwise), and creating access to high quality expertise provided by universities (which compensates for the lack of administrative capacity of local authorities).

Conclusions

Overall, while each institution will by definition have its own cultural attributes (see Table 1), when considering the concept of the engaged university, the mutually beneficial relationship between Babeș-Bolyai University and Cluj-Napoca City Hall is so far the best example that Romania provides. The evolution of this relationship has been good in recent years, and it has grown in complexity and scope. Babeș-Bolyai University has understood its role in community and is already set up as an example for other Romanian communities to follow. Of course, there is room for improvement and there is the need for creating a stronger institutional engagement framework which would become a benchmark for other communities. It is interesting to analyze the value convergence, because this partnership has been set up on the same values. Incorporating this important set of values in the organizational culture of both actors has been proven to be a crucial factor which determines the success of the collaboration. The importance of building trust in such a network has been confirmed not only by the literature in this field, but also by the faculty and practitioners' experience.

Other factors that were identified as creating a successful engagement network in Cluj-Napoca are related to the commitment on the behalf of the university to recognize it as valuable, funding (volunteering is important but funding has its own role, especially when considering the university funding the city), and offering time off from teaching for faculty who are engaged in applied research/public service projects. It has been noticed that some university departments are over-loaded with engagement projects, while others are not that involved. There is the need to create a balance between these aspects, and to expand an understanding of and incentives for engaged scholarship to all university departments.

Furthermore, the traditional wisdom in Cluj-Napoca points out the central role of the mayor, an important leader in the community, whose collaboration with other important figures at local and central level is highly important. Through being both an academic and a practitioner, the mayor has understood the importance of creating such engagement partnerships and sets the standard for the level of openness towards cooperation mechanisms and inclusiveness.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Recommendations

Accountability mechanisms

From the City Hall perspective, both institutions are required to work on enforcing accountability mechanisms. Accountability in a networked governance model differs slightly from the traditional top-down accountability. Sometimes this brings up challenges- for example, for the city's current strategic plan there are 27 working groups that need to be held accountable and report on their progress. While it is important for groups to have a certain degree of autonomy and the capacity for self-organization in implementing the measures for each dimension, the city hall leadership is required to initiate and build a monitoring inter-institutional structure inside the city hall. This monitoring group involves one representative of each working group to set up guidelines for monitoring and deliver monthly reports on progress made in implementing the plan. Furthermore, the reporting process can happen on an electronic platform designed specifically for this monitoring group. This planning and accountability tool can become the ideal space for discussions, and for keeping up with the deadlines. At the same time, it can ensure transparency and maintain the level of trust in this collaborative approach.

Creating a framework for engagement

The first step in building a broader framework for university engagement stands in formulating an institutional vision based on values such as participation, community involvement, transparency, trust, and social justice. This should enable faculty, staff, and students to be viewed as approachable collaborators. Additionally, this vision needs to be supported by grants for community-based projects. These projects usually include continuing education (studies) and lifelong learning, community-based research, participatory action research, service learning/ experiential learning, outreach, knowledge mobilization, health education, social advocacy, cultural development, economic/ business partnership and development, professional community service and technical assistance. Once this dimension is set up and included in an engagement strategy or framework, faculty automatically needs to expand its professional roles. This kind of work might become challenging, because faculty may realize that the time required for successful engagement is conflicting with the traditional criteria by which their work is valued. It is at this point that enabling settings should play an important role and incentives for engagement should be set up by the university or higher level institutions. In this respect, Babeș-Bolyai University has already created some incentives: faculty gets paid for community work and public service, but some departments are more active and engaged than others. The value of community and university engagement needs to be extended to all departments, and the public service component should be

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

required to all university faculty, staff, and students. Also, the concept of the engaged university needs to be integrated into what is regarded as the standard professional responsibility of faculty, not necessarily requiring additional pay. If applied research and public service are part of the job description, arrangements need to be made to adjust work responsibilities to have sufficient time to engage in these activities, all within the existing salary. Perhaps salaries need to be increased more generally, and that may be an objective for the future. Moving further, the expanded faculty professional roles calls for higher expectations for valuing the scholarship of engagement or the public scholarship. To have an engaged University means that the University is fully committed to the concept, which means that it values engagement activities such as applied research and public service, and credits those activities in performance reviews as being just as important as research and teaching. Romania needs a national policy to support community engagement and engaged scholarship across its higher education sector. The creation of national standards for engagement involved in achieving good practice can be of use. These national standards might be applied for planning, assessment, monitoring, evaluation, and the creation of ground rules.

Institutional policies in this regard can help build a reward structure that encourages a more inclusive and diverse view of scholarship. Valuing activities defined as engaged scholarship should become a criterion for assessing the success and merits of faculty, staff, and students through giving additional credit to those who conduct engaged scholarship. This additional credit would produce positive change for community members and enhance the reputation of the university within its community. It is also crucial to reward these endeavors in promotion and tenure reviews in order to sustain public good work in the long term. Evaluation on tenure and promotion should take into consideration the following indicators for quality and significance:

- Publications in journal or presentations at interdisciplinary or disciplinary meetings that advance the scholarship of community outreach;
- Honors, awards, and other forms of special recognition received for community outreach;
- Adoption of the faculty member's models for problem resolution, intervention programs, instruments, or processes by others who seek solutions to similar problems;
- Substantial contributions to public policy or influence upon professional practice;
- Models that enrich the cultural and artistic life of the community;
- Evaluative statements from clients and peers regarding the quality and significance of documents, or reports produced by the faculty member. (Adapted from Portland State University policy on tenure and promotion)

It is recommended that Romania creates a university civic engagement network at national level. The goals of this network can be related to identifying engaged scholarship dimensions, to encourage community engaged scholarship, and to connect this

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

scholarship to the priorities and standards of universities. It should focus on research, instruction, and public service that is applicable to all disciplines and fields. The network must set up a vision in becoming a national inclusive leader for discussion and development of university/ community engagement. This means:

- Raising awareness and disseminating best practices in university/ community engagement;
- Facilitating collaborative research in university/ community engagement between the networks' members and their communities;
- Promoting the integration of engagement into curriculum and the student experience;
- Promoting the recognition of the public scholarship
- Developing resources that support engagement practices at national level.

With a strong emphasis on community impacts, performance outcomes, and the creation of social value, this network bring academics into the public space. The importance of public scholarship stands in addressing important civic issues, but at the same time meeting high academic standards. Figure 1 (Appendix A) presents the logic of this community engagement framework and the possible institutional responses to it.

Engaging students

Creating better strategies for students to get involved is also equally relevant, and building up mixed groups of academics, students, and practitioners to help communities in the region might be a dimension to be considered. Moreover, some time and space limitations have been identified by a member of the City Hall in terms of offering students the proper working environment to keep them motivated. This is closely related to the management, planning, and resource allocation component. A new institutional structure for students can be created (Center for Policy Research and Governance). Students can be supervised by both faculty and members of public institutions, and evaluated based on specific criteria and outcome measures. The current curriculum requires students to do a two-week practical internship in public institutions. However, this has proven to be inefficient due to the short-time frame and practitioners' low availability. A good strategy is to engage all students in a two or three-month paid summer internship, based on appropriate selection criteria, and actually employ students as an organizational resource to increase their work experience and exposure to the job market.

Also, as in the case of faculty members, students' engagement work needs to be documented and promoted. Each student can have a portfolio (online or paperback) in which they document their public and community-based work. Students need to be able to self-assess and reflect on their work. This portfolio should be subject to scholarly and

FOREWORD
Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY
Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE
Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM
Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course
Appendix 2.
Course Calendar
Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary
Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings
Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics
Appendix 6.
Student Papers
- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas
CONTENTS

job market evaluation. Documents included in the portfolio can take the form of policy reports, site plans, multimedia and curricular materials, individual and co-authored publications, participant interviews, workshops, and planning and assessment tools. Furthermore, the University and the City Hall can organize disciplinary and inter-disciplinary events in which this work is presented.

Support can be given to graduate students and junior faculty who choose academic public engagement. This might be incorporated into the University tenure and promotion policies. The goal is to create a next-generation future-faculty program for early career public scholars that can be adapted on any university campus. This involves the use of multiple mentors, and networks of various institutions that provide a realistic sense of a future career.

Maintaining a sustainable partnership between Babeș-Bolyai University and the City Hall

Planning for the future is an important component of a successful adaptation of the engaged university model in Romania. Findings of this report have proven the importance of the leadership component, coming both from the City Hall and from the University. However, the University-City Hall relationship must be well organized for policy change. Some tools that can be useful in this respect are:

- The use of a common online dialogue platforms for common engagement and development projects on various public domains; this would ensure transparency, openness, and increase the level of trust inside the network;
- Creating a long-term engagement strategy through which all working groups are informed on the vision, mission and priorities of the collaboration, and link it to the overall mission of serving the public interest;
- Promoting and maintaining the common values defined by this partnership through social media, events, workshops, conferences;
- Promoting the importance of administration and university leadership to act as *facilitators* in the creation of value, public service delivery, and co-production; this would increase the level of innovation in designing and implementing policies at local level;
- Encourage project-based academic work through sustained public management and leadership; for example, when students and faculty evaluate their work they should focus on the general criteria of the quality and significance of their work rather than on categorizing;
- Set up some principles of excellence for the production of public scholarship (clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique);
- Using external reviewers to evaluate faculty and student work (from public institutions); they can be a mix of policy practitioners and possible employers.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Building and maintaining this collaboration based on financial incentives is a key factor to the positive development of this network of development and public interest orientation. The lack of incentives for collaboration from central and local governments has been highlighted in the study's findings, even if members wish to continue building strategies from the bottom-up. This becomes one of the enabling settings for building national and local support. However, the City Hall cannot allocate direct funds for university engagement. Only NGO's, the private sector, and more recently, the 'for benefit' sector are able to provide financial resources for community-based projects. A successful example is the management and organization of Cluj-Napoca's Untold Music Festival. Moreover, starting with 2017 the University allocates extra-funding to faculty based on outreach criteria. Some departments also offer grants to faculty who conduct community-based projects. Other departments are linked to faculty associations which conduct endowment programs. Furthermore, private scholarships are given to students that are engaged in these kinds of projects. There is still the need for creating an institutionalized, coherent, and sustainable formal mechanism for the city to allocate funds to the University, through a third party organization (NGO created specifically for this purpose with fundraising attributions and activities).

Suggestions for future study

This study represents a small piece of the emerging network theory and practice as part of a democratic effort in Romanian academic and policy environment. More work is needed to establish what workable provisions for accountability, co-production, public service delivery, and incentive mechanisms in Romania. Future exploration of other systems, such as those found in the United State might explore questions of what types of changes occur when campuses connect to their communities, how these changes reshape institutional practices and purposes, and what do they mean for the potential of higher education to take on the issues and problems of our time. A relevant future study might represent the possibility of Babeș-Bolyai University to provide a critical analysis of the City Hall. Public scholarship can be enriched through an analysis of the administration of Babeș-Bolyai University and of the City Hall in maintaining its independence and political discretion.

Switching the view from the hierarchical top-down approach that has governed public policy and administration orientation in the last years to a flatter, networked, and bottom-up governance is very important in defining successful practices. Given the fast changing working environment, the multi-level governance specific to European countries, and overall- society's evolution (due to various challenges), requires a public administration that is flexible, inclusive, legitimate, and oriented towards the public interest and building trust (not only in government, but also inter-personal trust). Cre-

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

ating incentives for collaboration is the major capstone in this respect. Considering the cultural context and the value orientation is also crucial for the applying the concept of engaged university in Central and Eastern European countries. Cluj-Napoca's collaboration mechanisms show that the value convergence and the cultural factors have the most important role in determining the success of engagement and community involvement.

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FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Appendix A

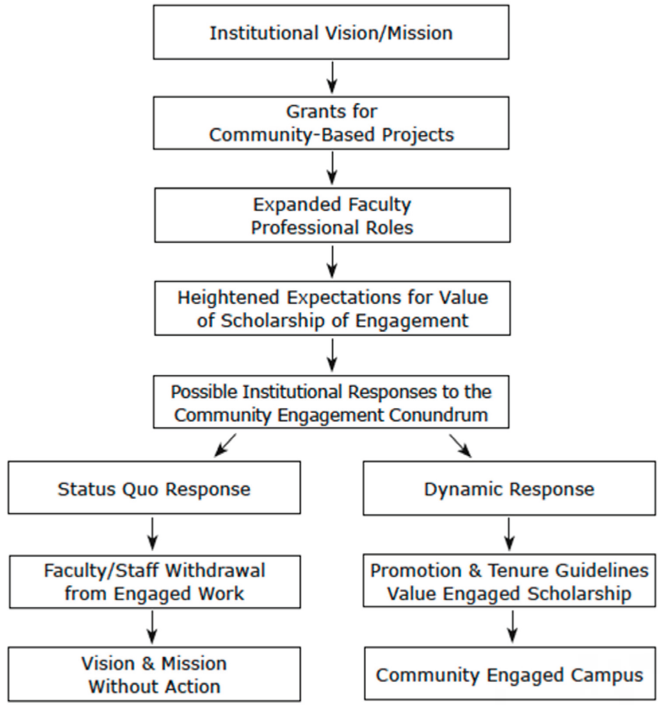

Figure 1: Framework of Community Engagemet Conundrum for Higher Education

Source: Nicotera, N., Cutforth, N., Fretz, E., and Summers Thompson, S. (2012). A Higher Education Conundrum?, Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship, 4(1), 37-49.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

7.
What is Poverty?
Perceptions and Definitions Dilemma

by John M. Wambui, Alina Pavela, Atanda O. Oluwaseye, George Vlas

Introduction

While reducing poverty in general is a global concern (UNESCO, 2016), there is no universal consensus or even understanding of (1) what poverty is, (2) what its characteristics are, (3) how it is operationalized, (4) how it is measured, and, perhaps most importantly (5) how the condition of poverty is interpreted by those who are affected by it. As will be explained more fully in this report, our findings conclude that poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon, meaning that the condition is not constant. It evolves from one household to another, from one place to another, and from one time frame to another. The present standardized definitions of poverty used by global agencies such as UN Habitat, United Nations, World Bank etc. would do well to fully capture these characteristics of poverty.

Within the policy discourse, it is a normal phenomenon for scholars, journalists, and policy makers to use standardized definitions such as those established by global organizations such as World Bank, United Nations, UN Habitat, UNESCO etc. to define and measure various social "dilemmas" such as poverty. Diverse social policies and poverty alleviation programs have tried to use these definitions to implement poverty alleviation strategies. Unfortunately, standardized definitions of poverty assume that human experiences are similar across the board, but poverty is place and context specific. The way poor households perceive poverty may differ from the prevailing public, political, and even academic institutions' perception of poverty. Such gaps in perceptions can and do have both epistemological as well as policy implications.

There exists an extensive body of research (Davis, 2006; Dupont, 2016; UN Habitat, 2003; United Nations, 2014; United Nations, 2016) that has examined the conditions of poverty, particularly in urban areas. Much of the discussion has revolved around dissecting its causes and measuring it rather than understanding it within the context in which it occurs and is experienced. This paper asserts that success in poverty intervention is more likely if the condition of poverty is understood.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

Different people perceive and define poverty differently based on their experiences with it (Jones, 1999). For example, while poverty in Guatemala is defined by the poor as lacking enough food and housing, in Togo, the poor equate poverty with unemployment and malnourishment and in Ukraine, poverty is equated to hunger and the health effects of malnutrition (Narayan *et al.*, 1999). Research exists that examines how poor people perceive and define poverty based on their experiences (Dovey, 2012; Jones, 1999; Narayan *et al.*, 1999; Roy, 2011; Yiftachel, 2009). However, there is limited comparative research examining the differences in perception of poverty between those affected by it and those who seek to address it.

Recognizing this gap in knowledge, our study attempts first to examine and compare perceptions and definitions of poverty, which we hope will contribute to existing knowledge and open the doors for further research comparing the institutional perceptions to those of the community. In this paper, we report our findings from our investigative work on perceptions of poverty in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. We start by offering our data collection methodology, then proceed to our findings and conclude with discussions and recommendations.

Methodology

Research approach

Our research used structured interviews with local institutions (NGOs, government, and academics) in Cluj and a review of relevant professional literature identified in this paper.

The format of the interview involved thematic open ended questions examining the interviewees perception and definition of poverty based on their personal as well as professional experiences. The interview also sought to understand how the interviewees perceived or thought the policy process should be like when addressing issues related to poverty. We used a purposive sample of interviewees pre-selected based on their availability, relevance of their work to our research, and their engagement with the local communities.

Data analysis

We used a standardized interview guide with both structured and unstructured questions for all our interviews. Our goal was to try to ask the same questions of each of our interviewees. We recorded the interviews using a mobile device for later analysis. In total, we had five (5) interviews resulting in audio recordings. Each recording was a little over 1 hour in length. While the initial idea was to transcribe each audio in its entirety and to later analyze the transcripts to draw the relevant themes in all the

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

interviews based on the interviewees responses to each question, we realized that it was more efficient to listen to each audio and to draw the major points from each interviewee's response to specific questions to identify and note the key points from the respondents' comments or statements.

To ensure comprehensive analysis of the audios, we decided that each researcher should listen to each audio individually, identify and note the critical points raised by the interviewee on each question, and then identify the emerging themes in the interviewees' responses to similar questions. After listening to each audio individually and noting the key points and the emerging themes across the interviewees, we then met as a group to compare our notes and observations and create a preliminary report combining our personal observations. For the document analysis, we used a thematic analysis technique to draw the major themes about poverty as presented by the reviewed literature. In the following section, we report our findings.

Findings

Our findings from both interviews and professional literature supported the argument that poverty is place and context specific. While the human experiences of poverty to some extent may be generalized across the board, the perceptions and definitions differ based on the context in which poverty is produced and reproduced (Jones, 1999; Narayan *et al*., 1999; Roy, 2011; UN Habitat, 2003). Our analysis of both the interviews and the existing body of research on poverty leads to three broad characteristics of poverty: (1) Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon, (2) Poverty is not static. (3) Poverty can be psychological in nature. Our findings are grouped based on these three characteristics.

Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon

Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon. *"The persistence of poverty is linked to its interlocking multidimensionality; it is a gendered, dynamic, complex, institutionally embedded, and location-specific phenomenon. The patterns and shape of poverty varies by social group, season, location, and country"* (Narayan *et al*., 1999). For example, while poverty in Guatemala was equated to lack of enough food and housing, in Togo, it was equated to unemployment and malnourishment and in Ukraine to hunger and the health effects of malnutrition (Narayan *et al*., 1999). In Romania and particularly in Cluj-Napoca, our interactions with different institutions revealed contrasting perceptions and definitions. Academics with whom we spoke explained that the definition and perception of poverty is constantly being shaped and reshaped by the emerging social infrastructure, and thus is better informed by the experiences of those victimized by it. We found this

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

assertion to be true after interviewing two NGO members who were residents of Pata Rat, considered one of the poorest communities in Cluj-Napoca. One of the interviewee said the following:

> *"The real problems are happening in the community. We the people who are living in the community know the issues, the problems, all the needs."*

In amplifying this message, the second person we interviewed in Pata Rat argued that contrary to the general belief by the Municipality that education should solve the existing poverty in Pata Rat, the real issue is housing, not education. He went on to say:

> *"If you have house, you have access to everything in the city. You have access to education. If you don't have house, you don't have water, electric, and you cannot go to school."*

His colleague amplified this message by asserting the following:

> *"Housing first then everything else comes with the house. You give people a house you give them everything, because they become responsible. But if you don't have a house, then how can you afford to go to school? With a house, you can wash and go to school and not smell and have others laugh at you."*

Within the NGOs, there was a general agreement that poverty has three dimensions: (1) social, (2) psychological, and (3) material. The social dimension was described as the diverse social relationships and connections within a community; the psychological dimension of poverty was equated to the personal emotions that result from lack of connections with the social world; and lack of physical possessions denotes the material dimension of poverty. Some of the researchers we interviewed equated personal values such as social and family relationships and ties (social dimension) and the quality of happiness, respect, and literacy level (psychological dimension) as the critical determinants of poverty. For them, lack of these values means that one is poor. In amplifying this assertion, one of the interviewees from an NGO noted that while he has a well-paying job and lives in a good home (material dimension), he might not be as happy as the (poor) "Roma families" he sees on his way to work who may not have good houses and jobs, but they have time to dance and to be happy with each other in the street. What this means is that to one person, a house might mean the difference between being rich and being poor while to another, the ability to be happy might make that difference.

> *"It is how you perceive poverty - - the richest in the Pata Rat community is poor from my perspective, but he is perceived as rich by the others."*

The multidimensionality characteristic of poverty was well reflected by the contrasting views offered by our interviewees in Pata Rat. Given the material deprivation faced by Pata Rat community which is predominantly Roma in ethnicity, it has become normal for the mainstream society to associate Pata Rat as a geographic place and as

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

a community with poverty as one of the interviewees from an NGO in Cluj Napoca noted. However, upon interviewing two individuals from Pata Rat as well as an NGO representative in one of the local agency, there was a common agreement that as a geographic location, Pata Rat does not represent the Roma community per-se, rather it represents a "poverty gap", which symbolizes two spectrums: the quality of life residents of Pata Rat can afford by living there, and "the quality of life they[1] cannot afford" in comparison to the main stream society. This point is elaborated upon below.

When asked about their thoughts about Pata Rat, there was an agreement between interviewees from academia and those from NGOs that Pata Rat may be understood first as a physical place that symbolizes policy failures, poor resource management, social discrimination, marginalization, and lack of political will to address social problems, and secondly as a social institution that symbolizes human ingenuity to survive and to prosper in the most unfavorable conditions. This amplifies what Anil Gupta says in his presentation in TED Talks that "the minds on the margin are not marginal minds" (TED Talks, 2009). In other words, underscoring the creativity and innovation found within the Roma Community in Pata Rat, it was clear that poor places do not necessary translate into poor people and vice versa. Indeed, the very places of metropolitan degradation can be the epicenter where metropolitan innovation emerges (Holston & Caldeira, 2008).

Our findings affirmed prior research that poverty has many facets (Jones, 1999; Narayan *et al*., 1999; Roy, 2011) . Therefore, social research should be guided by human experiences.

Poverty as a constantly evolving phenomenon

The second characteristic of poverty emerging from our research is that poverty is not static, it is constantly evolving (Jones, 1999; Narayan *et al*., 1999). This means that the definition of poverty is routinely being defined and redefined based on the prevailing needs of each individual, each household, and each community. For example, one of the interviewees, a resident of Pata Rat working for an NGO, asserted that a person may be poor because s/he don't have a house, but once s/he gets a house, that person may then be poor because s/he cannot afford food, education, or water to wash. The evolution of poverty was perhaps better captured by the contrasting views observed between the institutions that we interviewed. Each institution seemed to adopt a definition that either reflected their mission or guiding principles.

For example, we interviewed one government institution whose role is to support and coordinate projects and initiatives geared towards the development of the county on

1 "*They*" refers to the residents of Pata Rat.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

various levels. The agency acts as a bridge connecting financial programs with different projects and initiatives in the community. In our observations and analysis of the interviewee's responses, it was clear that the idea of poverty from a government perspective was more linked to a legal argument than from a social argument presented by both the academic and NGOs institutions that we interviewed. For instance, when asked about the most important basic necessity for one to have in order not to be considered poor, the interviewee from the government agency asserted that the first one is legal documents such as IDs. Lack of IDs is only happening in roma communities. Other poor communities outside this minority do not have this problem. On the other hand, the interviewees from both academia and NGOs seemed to equate poverty with social and psychological related needs such as happiness, good health, family relationships and social connections as well as respect.

When we asked the NGO representatives living in Pata Rat what they thought was the most critical basic necessity to have based on their personal experiences in Pata Rat, for them, the house was the most critical basic necessity to have. The house signified a personal space, a place that provide both safety and consolation as well as the opportunity for one to synthesize his or her experiences with the outside world. As one interviewee asserted:

> *"If you don't have a house, then how can you go to school? With a house, you can wash and go to school and not smell. With a house, you can wash and be clean and not have other people judge you because you are dirty. When you have a house, you have everything."*

This was particularly interesting because it affirmed prior research that have linked homes, houses, and shelters with the formation of individual identity (Anton & Lawrence, 2014; Blokland, 2008; Bourdieu, 1984; Wise, 2000; Wood & Robert, 1994). Home as an appropriated space is an expression of one's self as well as one's psyche (Wood & Robert, 1994). It is a place where, through the establishment and adherence to rules, identities are formed and reproduced (Imrie, 2004). As one interviewee confirmed,

> *"It is only at home where we can teach our children how to love and not to judge others. At school, our children are bullied and marginalized because of their Roma ethnicity and because they come from poor places like Pata Rat. But at home, we teach them to love and not to judge."*

Our findings further revealed that while the definition and the perception of poverty can differ between different groups at different times, it can also differ within the same group experiencing poverty at the same timeframe. For example, our two interviewees from Pata Rat who were representing a local NGO noted that even within the Roma community living in Pata Rat, there are sub-groups which have established their own enclaves and within those enclaves, there are different needs. For one enclave, housing

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

might be an issue while in another, employment, education, or the quality of social relationships might be the most important indicators of poverty. Worth repeating is the assertion of an interviewee quoted above that those in the community best understand its needs.

What makes this point worth repeating is because during the Habitat III, the United Nations argued that to fulfil the Millennial Develop Goals (MDGs) and to attain sustainable development, poverty must be addressed in all its forms and shapes (United Nations, 2016). To achieve such a noble goal will require a critical understanding of the forms and shapes that poverty assumes in different contexts. Our findings confirm that there is no "one size-fits-all" definition of poverty. Each individual, household, and community define and perceive poverty based on their most critical needs. Therefore, as our interviewees from the academic institutions argued, the definition and perception of poverty is better informed by the experiences of those victimized by it.

While of course there was a recognition of the difficult task of accommodating every individual, household, and community's experiences in defining what poverty is and how to address it, the task can be achieved by allowing the community to define their needs collectively rather than having the policymakers and politicians define them from their golden towers. As our two interviewees from Pata Rat noted;

> "*Ask us what we need, don't decide for us. You cannot speak of poverty if you have never been poor or be in touch with the poor. They* [referring to the policy makers] *need to understand the community by creating dialogue, restorative practices, and engaging with others through various activities so that others can learn about the community and the people who live there. They need to give us a voice so that we can be heard and our needs can be known*."

To achieve the MDGs and to attain the sustainable development goals set during Habitat III, there is a need to engage the communities in identifying and defining the most urgent needs from the community's perspectives. This process should guide the policy process and poverty eradication strategies as per the community's perception and definition of poverty not the perception and definition of the elites in the United Nations office in New York.

Poverty as a psychological phenomenon

A good body of literature has emphasized the psychological dimension of poverty resulting from constant marginalization, exploitation, and humiliation (Boo, 2012; Dovey, 2012; Holston & Caldeira, 2008; Narayan *et al.*, 1999; Roy, 2011). Among some of our interviewees on the institutions' level, there was a general recognition that poverty has a psychological dimension. These interviewees in general agreed that the constant discrimination, marginalization, and humiliation of the Roma Community for exam-

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

ple has to some extent led to what we termed as psychological poverty. For example, when asked to indicate the top five (5) most important basic necessities for one not to be considered poor, some interviewees indicated happiness, respect, health, and social relationships as the critical determinant of how poor or wealthy a person is. Some of our interviewees and especially the two interviewees from the Roma Community in Pata Rat as well as from an NGO and research departments equated being poor with being unhappy, powerless, voiceless, and feeling disrespected. One of the interviewee from Pata Rat asserted:

> "*We need our voices heard. We need a voice because without a voice, no one knows we exist. That is why we are using social media like Facebook to make ourselves heard. If people know we exist, they cannot ignore us anymore.*"

When talking about psychological poverty, consider Mother Teresa's message that "*loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible poverty.*" Traditionally, poverty, be it material or social has been implicated to causing psychological problems such as depression and other mood disorders and health related problems. But rarely has poverty been considered psychological in nature. In our study, there was a general agreement across the board that apart from the material dimension of poverty, being unhappy, being depressed, feeling disrespected, feeling isolated and marginalized, feeling distrusted etc. are as critical as lack of material possession such as housing because they inhibit one's potential to fully enjoy life. As one interviewee who is a Professor conducting research in the field of sociology explained, there are wealthy people who have everything but because they are not happy, they are psychologically deprived and therefore, they are indeed poor because they cannot enjoy life. On the other hand, she noted, there are poor people who have no material possessions but they are happy, healthy, and well-connected. Therefore, by this definition they are "rich" because they can fully enjoy their life. This was reinforced by two interviewees who, when asked what would be the most critical necessity to have in order not to be considered poor, they said "happiness" and "respect" consecutively. When asked to expound on their responses, these interviewees confirmed one interesting assertion made by another interviewee we had interviewed in Pata Rat who indicated that for him, being respected and being valued as a person is very important. That is why a house is very important because we can shower and be clean so when we go to the city, we look like everyone else and people don't have to judge us because of our ethnicity or the places we come from, he noted.

> "*Here* [referring to Pata Rat] *live normal people, but just poor. We have to know who people are before we judge them*" he said.

While the psychological aspect of poverty is not as visually prevalent and profound as the material poverty, our study indicates that it is an aspect that requires critical attention and investigation. In our study, we found a common shared theme from all

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

our interviewees that in addition to material deprivation, psychological deprivation is a great inhibitor to successful poverty alleviation policies because it leads to self-marginalization. Self-marginalization, as one interviewee noted, is not just a defensive mechanism that marginalized people adopt when they are isolated from the mainstream society, it is a coping strategy against the psychological poverty resulting from the feelings of helplessness, shame, embarrassment, isolation, or the feelings of being devalued. This perception of poverty as being psychological in nature speaks volumes to our study because it deconstructs the traditional definitions of poverty which have focused on the material aspects of poverty than social relations aspects that are critical to psychological well-being of individuals. It also brings forth an understudied area of poverty which is psychological in nature that is experienced at a personal level. And lastly, it amplifies what some of our interviewees asserted that poverty is both a personal and interpersonal experience that is better informed by human experiences and not by standardized formulae based on monetary calculations.

Discussions

In general, our study's finding highlight the urgent needs to revisit the poverty discourse. Our findings confirm that it is a norm for discussions about poverty to revolve around the elites who decide and define what poverty looks like, what form and shape it takes and what strategies are best fit to address it using some standardized formulae. The concerns presented by our interviewees regarding the nature and the definition of poverty only emphasize the need to understand poverty as a multidimensional social phenomenon that is experienced both at a personal and interpersonal level. This understanding can best be achieved through open dialogue between the communities experiencing poverty and the various institutions seeking to address it. While indeed the experts' insights are necessary in framing the policy approach towards poverty alleviation, the communities' insights of what poverty is should inform the policy approaches. Our study found that there are five critical pillars through which such engagement can occur:

1. The community

First, there is the community where the actual things are happening. The search for solutions to social problems such as poverty should be based on accurate representation of the realities of each community. This has been well reflected by our interviewees from Pata Rat who emphasized the importance of community involvement in framing the community's problems and informing the policymakers about the best policy approach to such problems. Therefore, there is a need to assess problems and poverty from the community's perspective.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

2. Academia

As one of our interviewees asserted, the role of academia is to provide a space that is usually seen as more neutral. Academia has a role in shaping not only our opinions about social dilemmas, but also our understanding of those dilemmas. As a neutral ground where knowledge about social problems is sometimes generated and transmitted through research, academia has a role not only in engaging with the community, but also in engaging the community through research that is informed by human experiences. One of the arguments posed by some of our interviewees is lack of reciprocity between the academic institutions and the communities that they work with. As argued by these interviewees, and reinforced in the professional literature (Szanton, 1981), there is a tendency within the academic institutions to do research in certain communities such as Pata Rat and then disappear afterwards without sharing their findings with such communities or helping to implement recommendations. In connecting our research to the academia, we argue that there is a need for the academia to be more involved with the community in all phases of knowledge creation and dissemination. We also argue that social research within the academia should be informed by the facts as presented by the realities in the community and such facts should guide the policy advocacy framework.

3. The government

The government should provide a legal framework and resources as recommended by fact-based research. This means that both the policy creation and implementation process should be based on the needs as expressed by the community not by the policy makers' ideas of poverty. Our research found a gap between the government perception of poverty and the community perception. While the government perception and definition was more based on the legality of the individual as symbolized by possession of IDs, within the community, it was more equated to other material and social factors such as housing and social relationships. To bridge such a gap, the government will need to be more engaged with the community in defining what poverty is. This can be achieved by;

1. Having community representatives meaningfully involved in the decision-making process.
2. Allowing the community to define what is critical to them based on their needs.
3. Collaborating with other local institutions involved in addressing the local needs to
4. get a holistic view of the community's needs and capacity to address them.
5. Collaborating with research institutions such as the universities in formulating and implementing fact-based policies informed by research.

4. The NGOs

The fourth pillar is the NGO institution, which we believe should act as a constructive intermediary between the community, academia, and government in executing policies based on the needs as identified by the people. The NGOs have a better position of addressing poverty because they are constantly engaged with the community, the government, and the academic institutions in addressing social dilemmas. Therefore, they have insights on how diverse institutions and communities perceive and define their needs. However, faced by the scarcity of means and resources to address the different facets of poverty, many NGOs are often forced to employ a narrow definition of poverty in order to meet their goals. While this approach can be economically viable for such institutions, it is imperative to allow the community define what poverty means to them because in the end, the ultimate goal is about meeting the institutions goals, which should be about meeting the community's needs.

5. The mass media

There was a common agreement among our interviewees that social media plays a critical role in the construction of social perceptions particularly about social dilemmas. For example, one of our interviewee from Pata Rat noted that to overcome the negative perception associated with Pata Rat, the community is trying to use social media such as Facebook to create a positive image of the Roma community that lives there. In another interview, a Sociology Professor strongly affirmed that media, if used well could be an important tool to transform the negative perceptions associated with places like Pata Rat. Recently, one of the most popular events taking place in Cluj during the summer, Jazz in the Park, was held also in Pata Rat. The event received tremendous favorable coverage in social media, thus increasing positive perceptions about this space among the rest of the residents. Based on our interviewees' assertions about the role of social media in creating perceptions about certain social issues, we consider mass media as the fifth pillar of sustainable development. We argue that mass media, if well informed by fact-based research, can transform the mainstream society's perception of a place and community like Pata Rat through proper media representation as well as through bringing awareness about factors contributing to poverty such as social exclusion and marginalization, discrimination, and poor policies and resource management.

To address poverty, there is a need for a holistic, integrative, and collaborative framework that is informed by the human experiences. To be effective, these five pillars, as per our conclusion, needs to work together with open communication channels.

FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

CONTENTS

Conclusion

Our study began with a simple premise which was to understand how poverty is perceived and defined by different institutions that attempt to address it. However, in the course of our study, we uncovered a much broader issues than just perceptions. We uncovered the five pillars of sustainable social development that are critical not only in shaping our perception of poverty but also in shaping the ways in which poverty as a social dilemma is addressed. Therefore, while further study is still required in the area of perception of poverty particularly where the individual, households, and community's perceptions are investigated parallel to the institutions perceptions, we also, perhaps even more importantly, recommend an investigation of how these five pillars of sustainable social development can interact with each to create a holistic, integrative, and collaborative sustainable development framework to alleviate poverty in general. We hope our study here is the first step to a much broader study assessing not only the perceptions of poverty but more-so the linkages between and among these five pillars of sustainable social development.

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FOREWORD

Section 1
A SUCCESS STORY

Section 2
IMPORTANCE
OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Section 3
IMPORTANT TEMPLATES
FOR DOCUMENTS
USED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM

Appendix 1.
Syllabus for the joint course

Appendix 2.
Course Calendar

Appendix 3.
Field Trip Itinerary

Appendix 4.
Student Run Seminar. Main Questions and Summary of Findings

Appendix 5.
Press Conference: Report of Rapporteur and Selected Student Topics

Appendix 6.
Student Papers

- Y. Brel
- B. Chun, C. Hadadea, H. Thies
- K. Edmond, A. Stoica, A. Zolde
- J. Jiao, L. Antal, A. Odobleja
- M. Smith
- C.M. Stănică
- J.M. Wambui, A. Pavela, A.O. Oluwaseye, G. Vlas

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CONTENTS