



GRASP

Global Romanian Society of Young Professionals

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Project Romania 2020: Because We Care. The Role of Civic Involvement in Romania's development

**18-20 November
Amsterdam, the Netherlands**

GRASP (Global Romanian Society of Young Professionals)

Established in 2008 as GRSP Society, GRASP is the initiative of a group of Romanian students studying in Budapest. GRASP is a global, non-governmental, non-profit and non-political and works on a voluntary basis. It is an open network composed of students, young professionals and organizations who share the mission of GRASP to contribute actively to Romania's change through civic involvement, improving public policies, knowledge transfer and know-how, encouraging dialogue and public debate and support entrepreneurship. We work in partnership with over 40 organizations from Romania and the Diaspora. The main areas in which we have activities and projects are public policy, civic involvement and education.

GRASP members dedicated, energetic and driven to make a difference in Romania by getting involved in a wide range of projects and implementing them with professionalism. We embrace innovation and we are always prepared to develop new projects and partnerships no matter our geographical location.

Short description of GRASP Annual Conference

The volunteering rate in Romania is on an ascending line, but still low compared to the European average. 2011 GRASP Annual Conference meets one of the four strategic objectives of the organization, civic involvement, and aims to identify solutions and practices to encourage civic involvement among the various entities of the civil society. Thus we join the European Year of Volunteering in order to promote, by connecting ourselves to the international environment, dialogue and best practices in this area. In Amsterdam, we intend to debate how civic involvement can contribute to Romania's development regardless of the geographical location of its citizens.

The **purpose** of the conference is to set a new trend in volunteering and civic involvement in Romania having as a starting point the GRASP model.

Sub-themes of the conference:

- The GRASP model – A community of young professionals who interact remotely via Skype and e-mail and who are located in different parts of the world. Challenges and opportunities.
- Best practices in CSR - How can young professional be engaged in civic involvement activities even after they have a table work place?
- Community building and organizing.

Participants

The conference will be the meeting point for 100 young professionals, masters and PhD students who want to actively be part of setting a new trend in civic involvement in Romania. The participants will be selected based on their CV and idea of a project on how they contribute to Romania's development.



Guest speakers

The conference aims to gather representants of all major sector of the society: NGOs, private companies, media and public institutions in order to define several paths that civic involvement in Romania should follow. As we learn best from examples and best practices, we plan to invite representants from other countries as well. A good example of a potential guest speaker is Marshal Ganz, lecturer in public policy at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, credited with devising the successful grassroots organizing model and training for Barack Obama's winning 2008 presidential campaign.

Amsterdam Local Chapter

Amsterdam Local Chapter was founded in May 2010 by two business students within the University of Amsterdam. Currently, the team has seven active members who are also the core organizing team of GRASP Annual Conference. Besides preparing the conference, Amsterdam Local Chapter organizes a periodic event, Meet the PROs, with the purpose to facilitate the interaction and transfer knowledge of young professionals and MA and PhD students.

Follow-up event in Bucharest

Every year GRASP Annual Conference takes place in a different location as we want to involve and create more Romanian communities in the Diaspora. Nonetheless, a follow-up event will also take place in Bucharest in order to present the main conclusions of the conference and also to gather potential partners in promoting the concept of volunteering and also the results.

Media partners

GRASP is currently supported by Adevarul Holding, Radio France International Romania, Radio Romania International, Romania Pozitiva, Strada32, StiriONG.

By the end of September, we expect to have at least 5 more media partnerships settled: Foreign Policy, Radio Romania Actualitati, Realitatea Catavencu, National Romanian Television, Hotnews and Campus News, and Euractiv.