



ASHOKA

ASHOKA ROMANIA

Impact Report



2021

Contents

I. WHO IS ASHOKA?	4
II. ASHOKA IN ROMANIA – our strategy in Romania	5
III. OUR YEAR HIGHLIGHT - Impact in 2021	6
a. Electing 8 more fellows	10
b. Impact Academy	11
c. Social Finance Month	12
d. Embracing Complexity – Towards a shared understanding of funding systems change	13
e. Bridge for Billions Program	14
f. Sports Changemakers	15
g. Reports – Barometers of Changemaking, Pandemic Report	16
h. Plug-in to international opportunities	18
i. She Says	19
ASHOKA IN 2021 – how did Ashoka help our Fellows	20
I. UNLONELY PLANET	21
II. INVITE FELLOWS INTO A LIFELONG COMMUNITY	22
III. OFFER FELLOWS THOUGHT PARTNERSHIP	25
IV. ASHOKA'S METHODOLOGIES FOR ACHIEVING SYSTEMS CHANGE	26
V. ASHOKA IMPACT – 5 years since founded – What do we want people to know about us?	32
CALL TO ACTION	33

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank everyone who supported us throughout the year, starting with the strategic partners Romanian American Foundation and NN, for their trust and involvement.

Our immense gratitude goes to everyone we have collaborate with, from volunteers to Ashoka Fellows, and to everyone who brought their expertise and their hearts into the work that we are doing.

We look forward to more opportunities that will bring people, networks and ideas together.

I. Who is Ashoka?

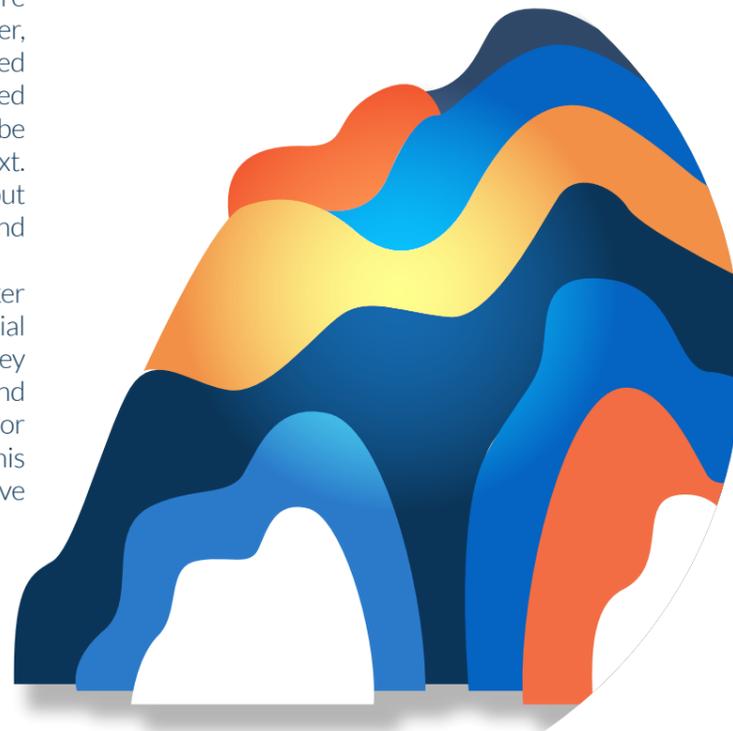
Ashoka is the largest global network of social entrepreneurs in the world, founded in 1980 by Bill Drayton, a 20th-century visionary leader and pioneer. Ashoka is a worldwide organization that has been supporting within its flagship program - "The Ashoka Fellowship" - more than 3,800 leading social entrepreneurs originating from more than 93 countries. We create networks of social innovators to tackle the world's most pressing problems.

Ashoka's work is to identify and support those social entrepreneurs around the world who work to achieve systems change - develop ideas and ventures that address the root cause of a problem rather than its symptoms. This is achieved through altering, shifting, and transforming structures, customs, mindsets, power dynamics and rules that the sectors and ultimately the societal structures have been based on, despite their inefficiencies to serve everyone. A system change leader fosters collaborations across a diverse set of actors, with the intent to trigger lasting improvements in pressing issues.

Building an everyone a changemaker world

Complex social challenges require complex solution, driven and led by self-empowered citizens, able to take responsibility, lead their communities, and collaborate with others for the good of all. We call these people changemakers. Changemakers are people, who no matter their age, profession, gender, faith, race or other identity part, feel empowered to bring change around them. Changemakers need continuous learning, re-skilling, and creativity to be resilient, namely, to adapt to this changing context. Their new leadership cannot be authoritarian but inclusive, embedded with personal credibility and ethical fiber.

Our mission is to build an "Everyone a Changemaker (EACH) World." This will empower not only crucial members of local communities but all citizens; they can all have the freedom, skills, confidence and societal support to address whatever problems or challenges they identify and to drive change. In this way, everyone can unleash their potential to solve systemic problems.



II. Ashoka in Romania – our strategy in Romania

Since our inception as a Romanian office in 2017, we have been in constant remodelling of our strategy so that we ensure we align with the international vision and are able to plug-in the best international opportunities and expertise to the local ecosystem. We also take into account the local environment, we discuss with our peers and try to position ourselves as close as possible to the local community of changemakers and social entrepreneurs.

Our mission at Ashoka is to identify the world's leading social entrepreneurs, learn from the patterns in their innovations, and mobilize a global community that embraces these new frameworks to build an "everyone a changemaker world." In Romania we have been present since 2017, electing thus far 8 Ashoka Fellows. Our work locally leverages our international experience and aims to be a key player in elevating the voices of social entrepreneurs and changemakers and nurturing the ecosystem together with our partners.

Our strategy lies on the following 4 pillars:

PEOPLE: Identifying the cutting-edge social entrepreneurs to become part of our Ashoka Fellows network, support them in their lifelong journey and leverage their stories to uplift the ecosystem and bring these role models to light.

KNOWLEDGE: We know that there isn't enough data about social entrepreneurship in Romania. Likewise, we do not have enough recognition for social entrepreneurs or established network dynamics. We don't know exactly which are all the initiatives that are happening nationally or the people behind them. This hinders collaboration, hardens benchmarking of existing solutions, creates a bubble of action, and essentially constraints us to assess the health check on our Romanian changemakers. We want to participate in enriching the available data on the sector and bring best practices, tools and reports that will inform all stakeholders involved in the system.

VALUES: In our work with Ashoka Fellows, we recognised the skills to be nurtured from an early age in order to shape the next generations of changemakers - we call them changemaker skills and they entail empathy, changemaking, co-creative teamwork, new leadership and working in open, fluid teams of teams. We are committed to finding the right partners and with Ashoka Fellows to identify the best ways to grow these skills among young people.

CONNECTED ECOSYSTEM: An overarching pillar for us which leads us to create neutral spaces for people to connect, come together and solve systemic issues in a collaborative way. It entails connections with Ashoka Fellows from the international network, or bring different actors to the same table for collective impact.

Social entrepreneurship and Ashoka Fellows as the most accelerated way to produce systemic sustainable societal change for the good of all.

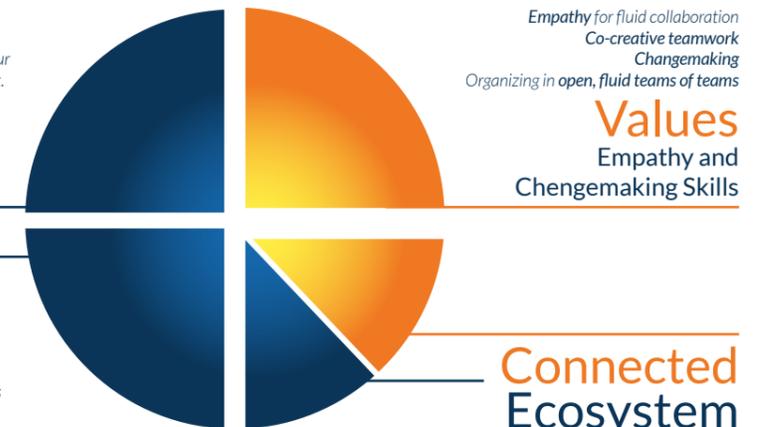
Changemaking as the most accelerated way to reduce social inequalities, with a special focus on children & youth for an everyone a changemaker world.

Ensure sustainability of the process of identifying and selecting Ashoka Fellows in Romania and of our commitment for life-time support to the network.

People
Ashoka Fellows

Knowledge
More Sectorial Insights

Enrich the data about the sector, collect and disseminate best practices, know-how and trends to enable social entrepreneurs to grow.



Play the part in ensuring the young generation develops the necessary skills to become a changemaker.

Empathy for fluid collaboration
Co-creative teamwork
Changemaking
Organizing in open, fluid teams of teams

Values
Empathy and
Changemaking Skills

Create connections bridges for collaboration between Ashoka Fellows and local organizations. Increase Social Entrepreneurs visibility and access to opportunities, to a strong finance ecosystem and to enable their capacity to collaborate on system changing ideas.

III. Our year Highlight – Impact in 2021

a. electing 8 more Fellows

In 2021, eight more Romanians joined our international network, reaching 8 Romanian Fellows elected since Ashoka Romania was founded in 2017.

EUGEN VAIDA

Growing up and living in the Transylvania countryside, Eugen experienced the feeling of lost identity that leads people to ignore their heritage, dismiss their history and migrate to the city or other countries. Eugen is using monuments to build a social movement to rekindle an authentic rural identity and bring people back to their roots.

Eugen is driving an increase in dignity and pride, as well as deep awareness about the Romanian identity and its contribution to social, economic, cultural, and environmental sustainability. Eugen has identified a neutral point of connection, often hidden in plain sight, around which he can rally people across all lines of difference to forge a more inclusive rural identity. The rallying points for Eugen are local monuments like churches, mills, and traditional houses. The breakthrough innovation lies in Eugen's invitation for rural citizens to step up into a new people-powered process of safeguarding monuments. In so doing, he rekindles the local rural identity of people and brings them closer to their customs, disrupting the current pattern of feeling one has to embrace abroad and city-bred practices and mentalities, and disregarding the potential of communal growth based on local heritage, culture, and crafts.

Eugen is working at the core tensions of humanity divides, rural vs. urban, capitalism vs. communalism, tradition vs. "modernity", even the tension between wood windows vs. glazed glass panes. He manages to "un-antagonize" these relationships and frameworks, by creating a respectful fusion of old and new, treating both with the respect, kindness, and candour they deserve. Every community, ever, has had to grapple with outside influences and the need – or opportunity – to change, even remote Romanian villages. Eugen not only surfaces the lost and devalued pride and identity that was crushed by communism, modernity and now, globalization but re-surfaces rural communities' rich traditions of cultural diversity, working together, and embracing change.



IARINA TABAN

Romania has one of the largest institutional care systems in the Central and Eastern Europe region and still has outdated orphanages in operation. In this context, Iarina realized that the most essential factor for children in state care to get out of the poverty and trauma cycles is to build trust and form healthy bonds with significant adults as they come to age. Knowing that this doesn't happen everywhere with employees of state care institutions, Iarina, who experienced herself the power of long-term volunteering, built a national citizens' team of teams who get involved for at least 8-12 months of their life to effectively create the missing human bonds with these children. Iarina has struck on a systems-changing solution that not only addresses the crisis of care that children in these institutions face but embraces and shifts the culture of these institutions to ensure this new approach flourishes.

When it comes to the children, Iarina saw that those in state care are not being set up to live a peaceful and decent life but rather experience more trauma inside the institutions, low rates of educational attainment, and a lack of integration in social contexts outside the institutions. The general public and the employees of the state care centres see their responsibility in physical care and education of children but no responsibility for their emotional wellbeing or happiness. Iarina is trying to change the system by changing the minds and hearts of the people who work in the system while engaging citizens as engines of this process.

Romanians have a long history of not volunteering and seeing it at most as a very short-term engagement, especially for public or community matters. Iarina managed to harness the growing interest of citizens to support institutionalized children and got them to volunteer, some for their very first time. In doing so, Iarina forges the critical long-lasting bonds between volunteers, the adult figures, and children. To the landscape of care, she's added a much-needed new role in the life of children: a life mentor. Together with psychologists and other professionals, life mentors are supported and trained in how to build trust and create long-term bonds that last even when children get out of state care. Life mentors become the changemakers that shift the focus of institutions from the immediate needs of children (e.g.: food, shelter) to the deeper underlying needs for their development (e.g.: mentors, emotional bonds, personalised learning).



III. Our year Highlight – Impact in 2021

a. electing 8 more Fellows

PAUL RADU

Paul Radu started his career as an investigative journalist, looking into corruption and organized crime in Romania. Although he was very successful in exposing illegalities and inequalities in the system, he decided that acting locally was not impacting enough, and that a global network of journalists could be much more efficient in the fight against organized crime. “It takes a network to fight a network”. Thus, in 2006, Paul and his partner Drew Sullivan started the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, a worldwide network of journalists, collaborating transnationally in order to expose big criminal organizations.



FLORIN STOICAN

Florin is one of Romania’s leading ecologists and biodiversity advocates at a European level. His work in Buila-Vanturarita Park and Vacaresti Natural Reserve has been instrumental in changing the way in which Romanians interact with nature and take care of it, as Romania has the largest biodiversity in Europe. By connecting urban and rural communities through nature, he is creating incentive structures for businesses and individuals to unlock and exchange resources, showing how they can gain benefits from conservation.



DORICA DAN

Dorica is an established international leader in the field of rare diseases, she revolutionises the healthcare field for patients with rare diseases, transitioning from an inflexible system to a more collaborative approach. She is working towards a world in which all patients have equal and free access to diagnostics and treatments. Dorica and her association seeks to give patients with rare diseases or rare cancers access to a tailored set of integrated services and therapies to increase their quality of life.



ELENA CALISTRU

Elena Calistru is the founder Funky Citizens, whose aim is to build a new generation of “civically fit” Romanian citizens. She founded Funky Citizens to use modern tools such as social media and non-formal education in order to make traditionally hard to find public information easily accessible. With a fresh tone of voice and unmatched energy, she has is continually looking to engage citizens and improve public participation.



III. Our year Highlight – Impact in 2021

a. electing 8 more Fellows

IOANA BAUER

Ioana identifies new roles that the social actors can play in stopping the human trafficking business. She then leads a multi stakeholder process of designing creative, cutting-edge tools that empower them to increase safety. Once armed with knowledge and skills the key social actors can benefit from system solutions that Ioana creates which give them more formal authority to act.



CARMEN GHEORGHE

Long after Roma slavery ended, Roma women across Europe still face structural inequalities (social, cultural, economic), which prevent them from taking active societal roles. In this context, Carmen empowers Roma women to own their unique voice, become changemakers in their communities. Her goal is to build a new narrative with Roma women about Roma women. She boldly weaves together different layers of intervention such as empowering Roma women to become bottom-up change agents and uses their insights to reshape legal and societal frameworks. All of this, while creating knowledge pieces that can capture the story told by Roma women about Roma women.



b. Impact Academy

The largest focused **communication initiative** aimed to promote the social entrepreneurship through the Ashoka lens was the strategic partnership with the Civil Society Gala 2021 (GSC 2021). We started the collaboration for the 19th edition, the largest annual competition dedicated to the associative sector and the civil society, that took place between April and September. For the first time in the history of GSC, we offered the Social Impact Prize. In addition, all GSC winners had access to the Impact Academy, a masterclass to all the winning organizations. We teamed up with CSR BootIQ to deliver high quality sessions, though in the online environment.

Impact Academy (IA) aims to achieve collective impact with the help of civil society representatives. IA emphasizes the importance of moving from hero-preneurship / heroic entrepreneurship to collective action by developing relationships and trying to find solutions to the causes of social problems rather than their manifestations, starting from the way we look at and measure impact. Thus, IA aims at enhancing the existing skills of civil society representatives and their ability to be social entrepreneurs.

NUMBERS

– 28 participants; 4 sessions, Systems Change, Impact Chain, Impact Measurement; Cross-Sector Collaboration

OUTCOME

– We partnered with a key player in increasing the visibility of social entrepreneurs and changemakers to change the narrative on impact for systems change. Leading organisations from civil society receive the tools to engage in strategic repositioning and explore new impact management practices for systems change. The experience came at a favourable time for the participants, as many organisation leaders and their teams have started different discussions and exercises for strategic repositioning.

Qualitative assessment:

“I better understand how I should perceive a system I belong to and that it can be defined according to my vision, not standardized.”

“The system mapping process seems very valuable to me to do those activities that really matter and ensure the sustainability of the projects”

III. Our year Highlight - Impact in 2021

c. Social Finance Month

We ended 2020 with key inputs on the main needs and challenges for building a strong social finance ecosystem in Romania, with the great contribution of our Fellows Dennis Karpes and Tristram Stuart, the Founder and CEO of Fase, Markus Freiburg, Social Finance lead in Ashoka Mark Cheng and Rares Pamfil from Impact Agora. We also made a promise: to accelerate and scale the impact of social entrepreneurs, Ashoka Fellows and changemakers in order to achieve systemic and sustainable change in Romanian society.

That is why in the next 3 years we want to further consolidate the ecosystem and bring together the most relevant actors able to drive change in the social finance landscape in Romania.

In October we organized Social Finance Month, a 9-session month-long event that brought together relevant actors in the social finance market with the following objectives:

- Bring international expertise on the topic closer to the relevant Romanian stakeholders.
- Provide a space for all local experts to engage with each other in order to gain perspectives on the gap towards a developed social finance ecosystem.
- Gather insights to launch the biggest Social Finance Market Study of the Romanian ecosystem in the most collaborative way.
- Identify the most important stakeholders and people with a passion for social finance to elevate their collective voices to accelerate the ecosystem starting 2022.
- Create awareness and a desire for system change, empowering people to support changemaking for the good of society.

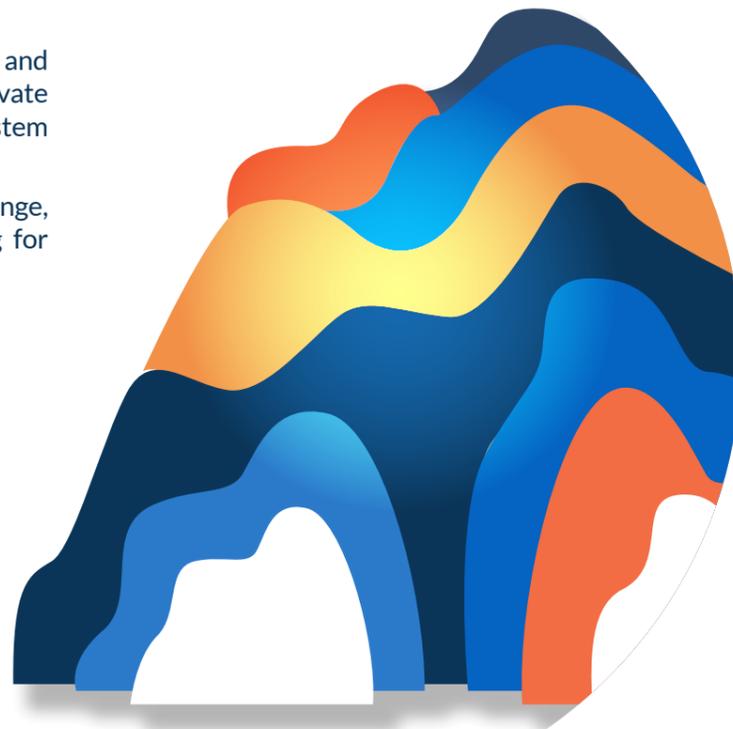
OUTPUT

- 26 key speakers took the lead into these 9 roundtable events of around 20 people, with over 157 participants passing our doors and interacting with our platform.

OUTCOME

- We surfaced the challenges of the ecosystem, from stiff, incomplete legislation to the availability of financial instruments, lack of human resources, the funder-grantee relationship, but also the opportunities lying ahead – emerging discussions on impact, a donors’ forum, or wellbeing as a new topic in the sector. All these insights are currently integrated in what will be an extensive market study to be launched early 2022. It will be the basis of designing the social finance initiatives we have lined up for the year.

We engaged key stakeholders in the topic of social finance and raised awareness on the need to take action with regards to the financing opportunities we offer to social entrepreneurs.



d. Embracing Complexity - Towards a shared understanding of funding systems change

As part of our efforts to consolidate the social finance ecosystem in Romania, this year we launched the Romanian translation of the Ashoka & McKinsey report on funding systems change. The report lays out the main principles for enhancing the collaboration between funders and social entrepreneurs in order to unlock the potential for systems change in their work.

- Embrace a systems mindset by being clear about the systems you want to change, incorporating systems change into your DNA, and actively looking for funding opportunities
- Support evolving paths to systems change by funding systems leaders with transformative visions of improved systems rather than projects, investing in learning and capability building and encouraging collaboration among systems change leaders

- Work in true partnership by acknowledging and working against power dynamics, providing support that fits systems change leaders’ needs, and being mindful of their limited resources
- Prepare for long-term engagement by being realistic about the time it takes to achieve systems change, acknowledging that the path of the initiatives will change along the way and encouraging realistic ambitions
- Collaborate with other stakeholders by aligning with other funders, building networks for systems change leaders, and leaving the leading role to systems change leaders.

OUTPUT

- The report was disseminated to over 350+ contacts (the contacts registered for Social Finance Month and most relevant players from the social finance ecosystem)

OUTCOME

- Contribute to enrich the availability of knowledge materials addressing the social entrepreneurship. A report is not enough to change the system of funding. While we acknowledge that a report is certainly not enough to change the system of funding by itself, it is a first step of a cooperation between funders, intermediaries, and systems change leaders.



III. Our year Highlight – Impact in 2021

e. Bridge for Billions Program

For 6 months we partnered with Ashoka Fellow Pablo Santaefemia and his organisation Bridge for Billions to deliver an investment readiness program to 20 local changemakers at different stages of maturity. Bridge for Billions is a successful business incubator with an international community of ventures and mentors from over 90 countries. Throughout these six months, changemakers were paired with two mentors, one from the Bridge for Billions Community and one from Romania (to bring value to the Romanian local context) and together approached the 8 business tools of the platform – from value proposition to business model and marketing, financial projection, and impact. The main aim of the program was to increase the investment readiness of these changemakers and to test out the potential of a platform such as Bridge for Billions in Romania.

OUTPUT

- 15 organisations graduated the Bridge for Billions Program; 15 international mentors; 13 Romanian mentors engaged

OUTCOME

• **POSITIVES:** the program provided some important AHA moments for the development of some projects, especially in areas where the business plan was missing some structure. Having 2 mentors helped a lot in having different perspectives. The tips from the Parrotbot and the visuals from the platform were also very helpful for the projects at the right stage and with the right model. Bridge for Billions is now also exploring ways with some ex-participants to bring the model to Romania and continue the experience with more entrepreneurs in different iterations. Moreover, some mentors are still engaged with the entrepreneurs they have worked with.

• NEGATIVES/LEARNINGS:

the way the platform is built isn't flexible enough to be fully useful for projects without a for-profit model, or for entrepreneurs that are more advanced with their project. It is also not friendly for entrepreneurs with visual impairment. Communications could have been more thorough, especially at the beginning of the program. Finally, a stronger community cohesion could have been built.

f. Sports Changemakers

Inspired by social entrepreneurs in the Ashoka network who use sport to make systemic changes (e.g. Mel Young, founder of the Homeless World Cup, uses football as a chance for the homeless to change their lives) and the Decathlon mission to make the benefits and pleasure of sport accessible to as many people as possible, we have joined forces with them to lay the foundations of a local community of people who produce social and lasting change through sport. The first step was to map the people considered by their colleagues as creators of change in sports. Based on the perspectives discovered, we now want to take the second step, to bring together 15 people in a 6-month program to build the local community of creators of change through sport.

The development program is a 6-month process (February-July 2021), designed in collaboration with Ashoka partners, which combines hands-on workshops, case studies offered by Ashoka Fellows, community meetings and a pay it forward process to grow the community. The development program focused on two major pillars:

1. supporting change creators with tools, knowledge and inspiration to continue their work and expand their impact
2. hosting a space for connections and collaborations to support the development of a healthy community

OUTPUT

- 15 participants, 6 learning sessions, 6 community meetings, 3 international guests, including Ashoka Fellows, 1 group coach

OUTCOME

- A greater sense of identity: the community building process gave participants a great sense of worth and an identity, that of sports changemakers; Being at the intersection between sports and solving social issues, these people never felt they belong to one world or the other. Being in a safe space alongside peers made them realize that there is a field, a space for them – sport for social impact,
- Collaboration: having like minded people in the same process, made participants cross-pollinate with their ideas, build new projects, and help each other on existing initiatives,
- Learning from each other: the safe space created for and by the participants encouraged an exchange of experiences, which continued long after the official program ended,
- Awareness on the topic: the subject of sports being solutions for social problems starts to be present in the discourse of media outlets (e.g.: Eurosport), universities, among sport professionals, and in the civil society sector.

III. Our year Highlight - Impact in 2021

g. Reports - Barometers of Changemaking, Pandemic Report

We want to contribute to the social entrepreneurship ecosystem by providing valuable insights, case studies, and analyses that will consolidate the level of data, information and learning available for all stakeholders that are part of the ecosystem. We aim to share our experiences and insights in a way that could support other organisations in their processes as well.

In 2021 we launched the [Pandemic Report](#), which incorporates all that we have learnt from working with organisations that have been affected by the pandemic and all the challenges that came with it. Through countless conversations, webinars and two programs that came to support changemakers (Impact Academy and Unlonely Civil Society) we put in writing the challenges and opportunities that we saw arise through this once-in-a-century situation. The report showed that empathy, solidarity, decentralised leadership and cross-sector collaboration are key building pillars to achieve change in challenging times.

The report showed that empathy, solidarity, decentralised leadership and cross-sector collaboration are key building pillars to achieve change in challenging times.

Barometer for Changemaking

One year after the start of the pandemic, Romanians are regaining their optimism, with the values of self-assessment as an agent of change returning to values similar to those measured in 2018 - a neutral year compared to 2020 in terms of the COVID 19 situation, shows the latest barometer conducted by Ashoka Romania on the attitude and perception of Romanians about their role as "changemakers" in society.

The survey, conducted by Ashoka Romania together with the research agency IZI data, revealed a very optimistic attitude among Romanians, with 8 out of 10 people considering themselves to be changemakers. The outlook for the future is that 9 out of 10 Romanians believe they can become change makers themselves. Moreover, with a majority of 93%, Romanians want to provide such civic and active education to their children.

Ashoka Romania proposes that the barometer on Romanians' attitudes and perceptions of the role of changemakers in society should become recurrent, every six months, so that we can map both Romanians' attitudes towards social entrepreneurs and their perception on the importance of being change makers.

If a year ago people felt to a lesser extent that change was within their power, today, each of us is reaching the 90% maximum. The top of perceived changemakers is unchanged in recent years, with state institutions ranked second (32%) and NGOs third (24%), with no significant difference from the last wave. The church and politicians saw a drop in trust, each losing 2 percentage points in this top. Moreover, the share of positive and very positive self-assessment as changemakers returns to the level reached 3 years ago. One hypothesis testing this data is people's sense of powerlessness last summer, when the economic and social situation suffered as a result of the pandemic. Contributing factors to the attitude of being an agent of change remain the same, with self-education still in first place - 90%, followed by education received at home - 80%.

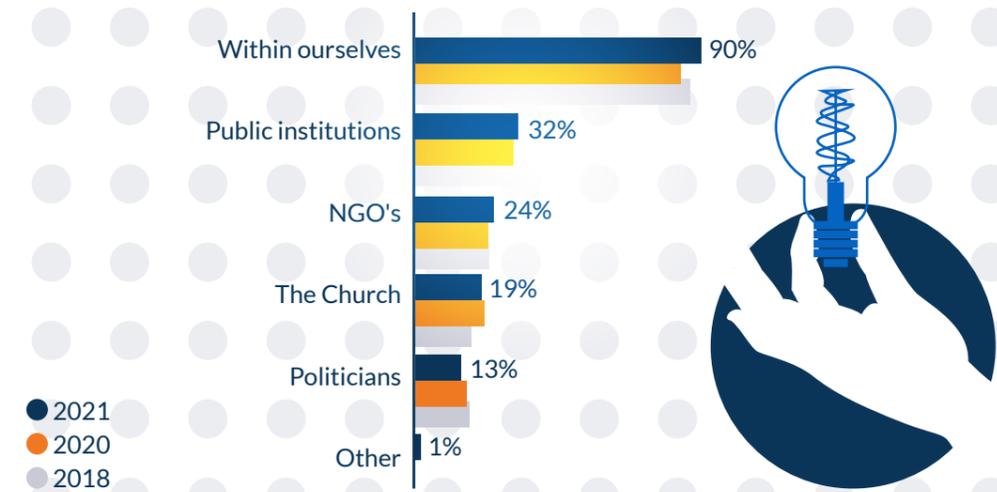
The study also sounds a wake-up call for the 15-24 age group, where around 2 in 10 young people have lost confidence that they can still become changemakers.



Romanians are regaining their optimism

Where are Romanians looking for changemakers?

Top places where Romanians are looking for changemakers



Who teaches us to be changemakers?

9 out of 10

Romanians want to teach their children to be changemakers.

9 out of 10

Romanians think that self-driven learning is the most important factor that can contribute to being a changemaker.

8 out of 10

Romanians think that education one's have from their family contributes to being a changemaker.



Percentage of those who answered Yes, Strongly Agree and Agree.

Year	Teach children to be changemakers	Self-driven learning is the most important factor	Education from family contributes to being a changemaker
2021	95%	90%	90%
2020	94%	86%	86%
2018	95%	97%	94%

III. Our year Highlight - Impact in 2021

h. Plug-in to international opportunities

CIVIC EUROPE: The Civic Europe Idea Challenge supports civil society organizations to strengthen active citizenship at the local level. They provide not only a funding opportunity, but more importantly the collaborative environment in which civil society actors can develop their idea into a sustainable solution to tackle local societal challenges and achieve long-term change. In 2021 there were 40 applicants from Romania, out of which one was selected among the 20 European winners.

THE ENERGY POVERTY ADVISORY HUB (EPAH)

Over 34 million people in European Union are experiencing energy poverty to various degrees, with the most vulnerable groups being also the most affected.

Started in January 2021, The Energy Poverty Advisory Hub (EPAH) is the leading EU initiative aiming to eradicate energy poverty and accelerate the just energy transition of European local governments. EPAH's mission over the next 4 years is to be the central platform of energy poverty expertise in Europe for local authorities and all stakeholders interested in taking action to combat energy poverty in Europe by providing direct support, online trainings, and research results and by building a collaborative network of stakeholders interested in taking action to combat energy poverty in Europe.

Building on the EU Energy Poverty Observatory legacy, EPAH adapts an action-based approach by creating a space for collaboration and exchange for local and regional authorities planning a variety of measures to tackle energy poverty in the pursuit of a just and fair transition.

Tackling energy poverty at the local level requires a wide range of expertise, so EPAH brings together five partner organisations from across Europe with the ambition to embrace the multi-sector dimension of energy. Over 2021, they collected over 200 inspirational cases and created an online interactive database, the EPAH ATLAS, "Tackling energy poverty through local actions - Inspiring cases from across Europe", available now online.

Ashoka Romania is one of the seven the local partners of the project (local antennas) and its role in the next phases is to disseminate at a local level the large amount of knowledge and expertise gathered in the project. During EPAH's launch event, held on November 22-23, 2021, we shared how local Ashoka Fellows empower vulnerable groups to figure out their own pathways to reduce and even eliminate energy poverty.

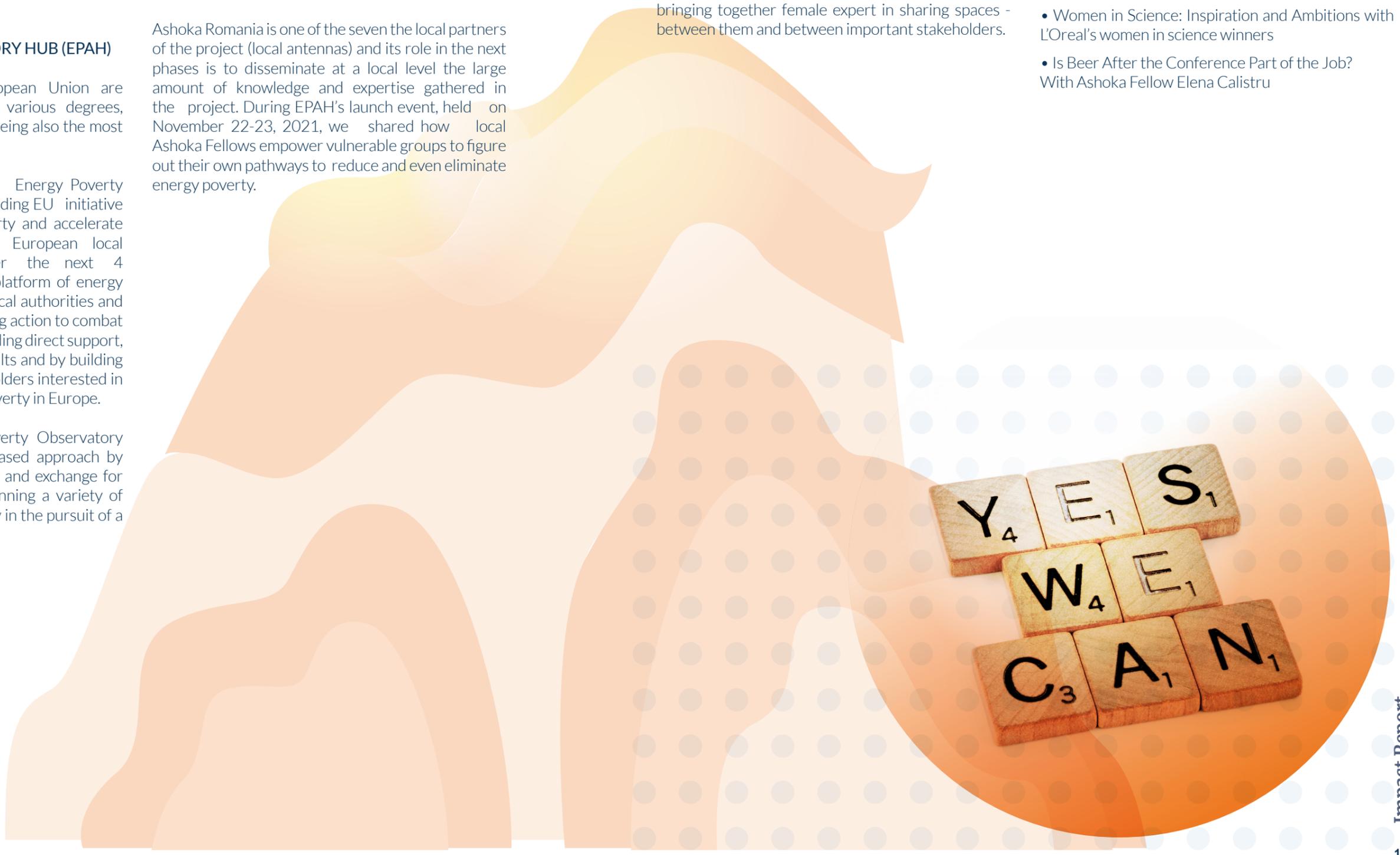
She Says

Ashoka with the support of Open Society Foundations seeks to create a bridge between high-level conference organizers and leading women social innovators and entrepreneurs in different fields with a gender sub-representation.

First, through a mapping of diverse conferences throughout Europe - a clear examination of women's representation - and now through a process of bringing together female expert in sharing spaces - between them and between important stakeholders.

In 2021, as part of the initiative, we held 4 spaces for conversations as part of the Get WISER Summit and brought Ashoka Fellows and speakers from Romania on the following subjects:

- She Can: WISE Women Stories, with Ashoka Fellow Ioana Bauer
- Reconnect and Reinvent Ourselves by Changing our Narratives with Ana Murray and Raluca Kisescu
- Women in Science: Inspiration and Ambitions with L'Oreal's women in science winners
- Is Beer After the Conference Part of the Job? With Ashoka Fellow Elena Calistru



Ashoka in 2021 – how did Ashoka help our Fellows

I. Unlonely Planet

By the late 1990s, we had built a critical mass of top social entrepreneurs—what we like to think of as the world’s best focus group—and we engaged these leaders to predict what was to come in the next 20 years. We developed an impact measurement framework for social entrepreneurship that focused not on direct service outputs but on progress in changing systems and mindsets to address the root causes of social problems. Year after year, the work of our Fellows has offered a deeper understanding about the world around us and where it was headed. Over time, our growing understanding has brought many insights, the most profound of which is the realization that human society has reached an historic inflection point. We are no longer living in a reality that is defined by repetition in search of greater efficiency, but rather, by our ability to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances, both natural and human made. To thrive, let alone survive, we must learn to lead change. This is exactly what Ashoka Fellows enable others to do.

Across a wide range of geographies and sectors, we have seen Fellows engage those around them, inviting them to contribute to their ideas and to build something new together. We have come to recognize that this inclusive approach has a profound effect on individuals’ worldviews. They begin to see the world through the lens of possibilities rather than

problems. They recognize their own capacity to bring about better realities and learn to lead change. These changes in mindset hasten the pace at which Fellows can shift whole systems and more importantly, are the lifeblood of societal transformation for the good of all. With these insights, we have shifted our focus beyond exclusively supporting leading social entrepreneurs in order to build a world in which everyone has the tools to thrive—where everyone is a changemaker. We have expanded our network and our efforts to include greater diversity in people, organizations, and partners. Only together can we create a world in which everyone is a giver, everyone is powerful, and everyone is a changemaker. This is Ashoka’s purpose, and it comes directly from what we have learned from Fellows’ impact.

At international level, Ashoka continues to measure its most important impact – on our Ashoka Fellows. This includes Fellows elected everywhere, as the Fellowship comes with a strong international component for all our members. Our report, Unlonely Planet, builds on our learnings from having surveyed 817 Ashoka Fellows elected 2010-2021 and 32 in-depth interviews. The key insights depicted delved into the key ways that Ashoka supports Fellows in strengthening their impact, while we also explored the key strategies Ashoka Fellows use in engaging for an Everyone a Changemaker World. The 11 strategies can be found [here](#).

PROVIDE FELLOWS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PURSUE THEIR IDEA FULL-TIME

The Ashoka Fellowship selection process is designed to be a transformative experience. Candidates share the systems change potential of their idea, explore how-tos, and reflect on their personal journey that has gotten them to this point. Once selected, Ashoka Fellows are provided a tailored stipend that allows them to make a full-time commitment to their idea, as evidenced by our survey results. For almost half of our sample, this stipend was their first significant source of funding.

80% of Fellows reported the stipend helped them focus on their idea full-time

47% of Fellows report that their stipend was their first significant source of funding

92% of Fellows report the selection process strengthened their idea

ASHOKA STRENGTHENS FELLOW'S IMPACT BY...



- Providing them the opportunity to pursue their idea full-time
- Inviting them into a lifelong community
- Offering them thought leadership

The Unlonely Planet 2022

How Ashoka Fellows Accelerate an Everyone a Changemaker™ World

How are Ashoka Fellows engaging individual as changemakers?
 What strategies do they use to build partnerships that inspire both changemakers and solutions?
 How are they changing systems to create a world in which everyone can contribute, and therefore, thrive?

Ashoka presents its global study of systems-changing social entrepreneurs. This study presents the 11 strategies Ashoka Fellows use to build a world of changemakers.



II. Invite Fellows Into a Lifelong Community

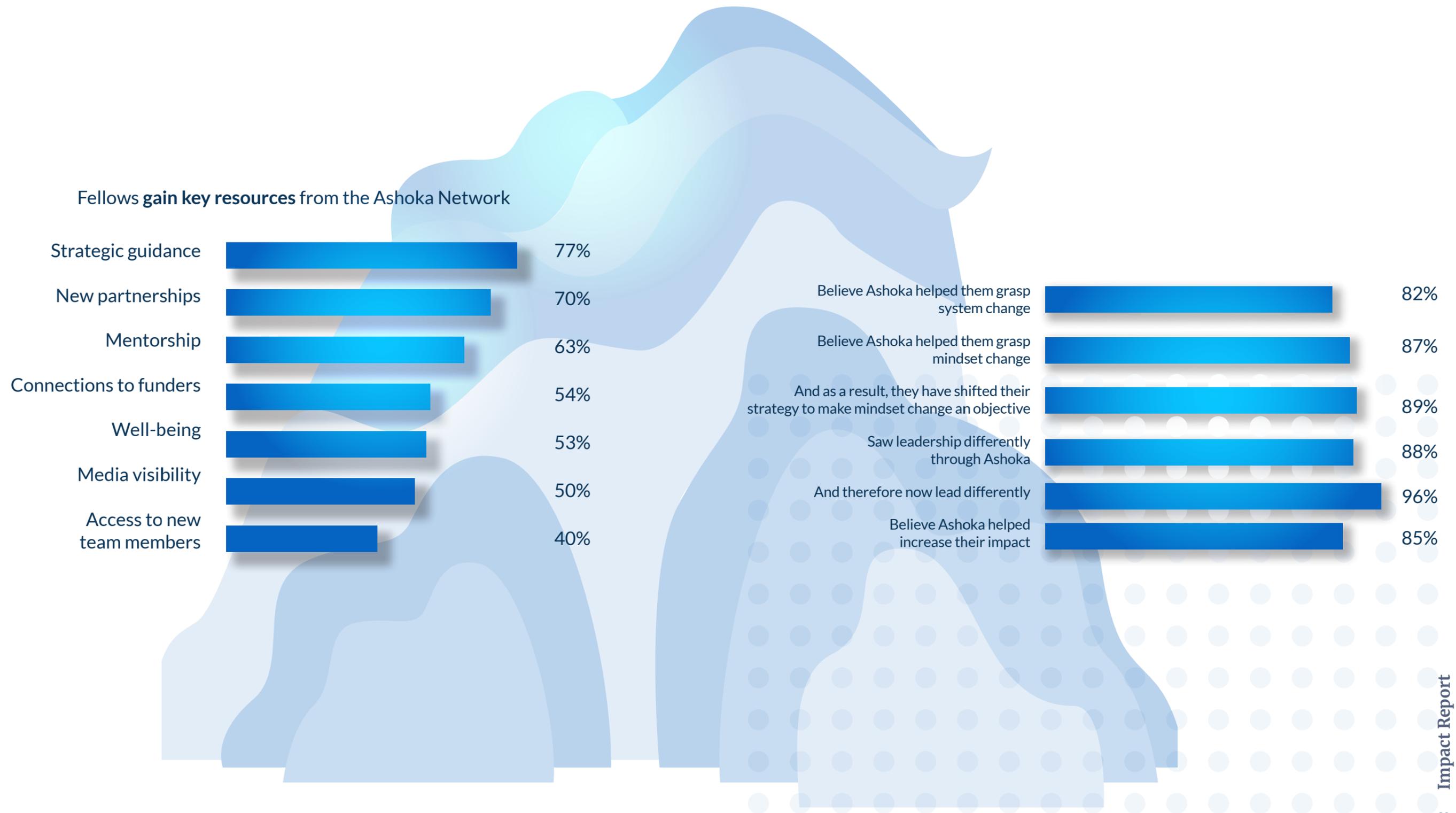
Committing one's life to developing individuals, forming collaborations, and disrupting unjust systems is as demanding as it is rewarding. Some even say it can be a lonely journey. Knowing this, Ashoka invites Fellows into a global network of social entrepreneurs

who can provide lifelong moral support and resources. Indeed, survey results show that Fellows gain access to key resources from this community, including strategic guidance, new partnerships, mentorship, and more.

III. Offer Fellows Thought Partnership

Survey results show that Ashoka also helps Fellows to see differently, so they can lead differently. Specifically, Ashoka helps Fellows to recognize the importance of shifting individual, community, and societal mindsets.

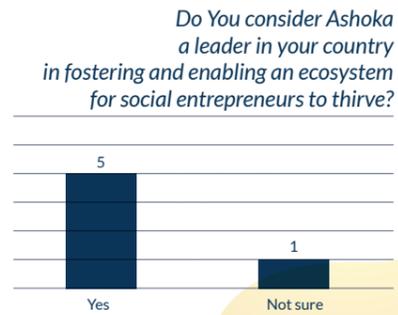
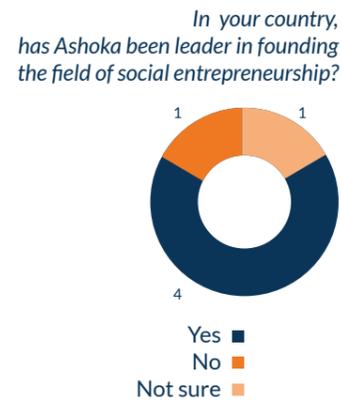
Fellows may not always visualize the path to systems change or mindset change at first and they come to see and value it as they go through the selection process and into the Fellowship.



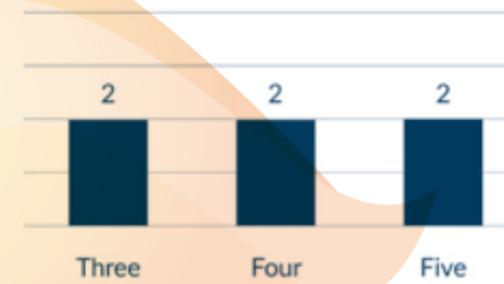
ASHOKA ROMANIA'S SUPPORT FOR LOCAL FELLOW

Concurrently, we extracted the data on our 6 Fellows. As Iarina and Eugen have just been elected, they were not captured in this assessment as the timeframe is too short to be able to answer the questions truthfully.

In terms of perceptions on our mission for social entrepreneurship, 4 out of 6 Fellows believe Ashoka has been a leader in founding the field of social entrepreneurship in Romania, while 5 of them believe that we are enabling the ecosystem so that social entrepreneurs have the necessary tools to thrive.

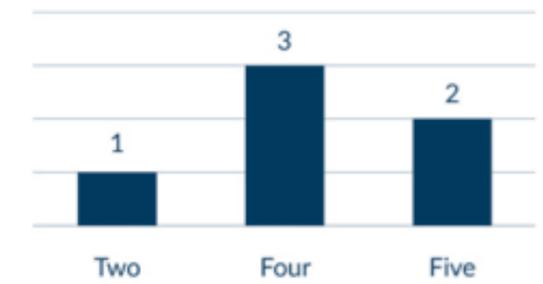


All things considered, to what extent has Ashoka helped You increase your impact?



1 represents the lowest help; 5 the greatest help.

Do You believe that Ashoka helped You understand how your work can contribute to generating a system change?

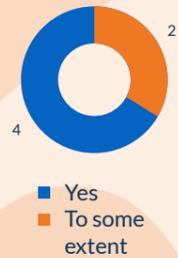


1 represents the lowest help; 5 the greatest help.

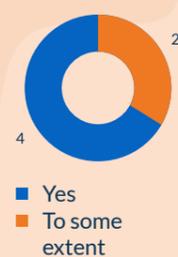
In terms of Ashoka's influence on the work of our Fellows, we looked at various dimensions that include changing perspectives, leadership and collective mindset, idea replication, impact, as well as Fellows' collaboration with other Fellows.

Firstly, all of our Fellows agree to some extent that Ashoka helped them see the importance of changing the mindset on the social issue they are trying to address. They all agree on the importance of finding the right allies in their work, including the importance of their idea being replicated by other organisations and institutions. We constantly seek to offer the space for their ideas to be more visible and connect them with the stakeholders that would get involved in taking up their model.

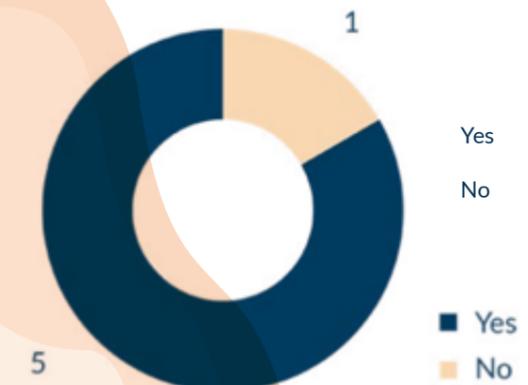
Has Ashoka helped You see the importance changing collective mindset on the social issue You are trying to address?



Has Ashoka helped You see the importance of other organisations / institutions independently replicating your idea?



Since becoming an Ashoka Fellow, has your idea been replicated by other groups or institutions?



All of our Fellows worked and collaborated with at least one Fellow since they joined the Fellowship, which contributes to our mission to create a well-connected network and bridge long-term collaboration to scale impact. This is also highlighted from the fact that 5 out of our 6 Fellows have had their idea replicated by other groups or institutions.

IV. Ashoka's methodologies for achieving Systems Change

Civil society organisations need to act on a well-developed theory of change and follow an impact-oriented approach in their activities. The sector by default already reaches relevant levels of impact, given their grassroots expertise, the value of the interventions they undergo and the gaps they fill with the services that they offer. However, having strong strategies for planning and measuring impact is a complex and ongoing process, as we all have to make strategic decisions based on that.

At Ashoka, we aim to build understanding and good practices on approaches that are focused on systemic change and long-term impact for the good of all in society. In our work with Ashoka Fellows, when we attempt to understand their models or support them in their strategic planning, we use an array of tools and methodologies from peer organisations or developed in-house. We incorporated them in our work as our value proposition to our Ashoka Fellows centres around **impact** and **systems change**. Thus, delivering such insights in our collaborations with partners, social entrepreneurs, Ashoka Fellows or changemakers has become part of our core work. We believe these methodologies will support increased engagement of social entrepreneurs with their ecosystem, from board assignments and involvement to cross-sector collaboration.

Below you can find a glossary of all tools and mechanisms we have expertise in, where we know we can participate to support organisations become more impact oriented and collaborate better within their initiatives to achieve true systems change in their work.

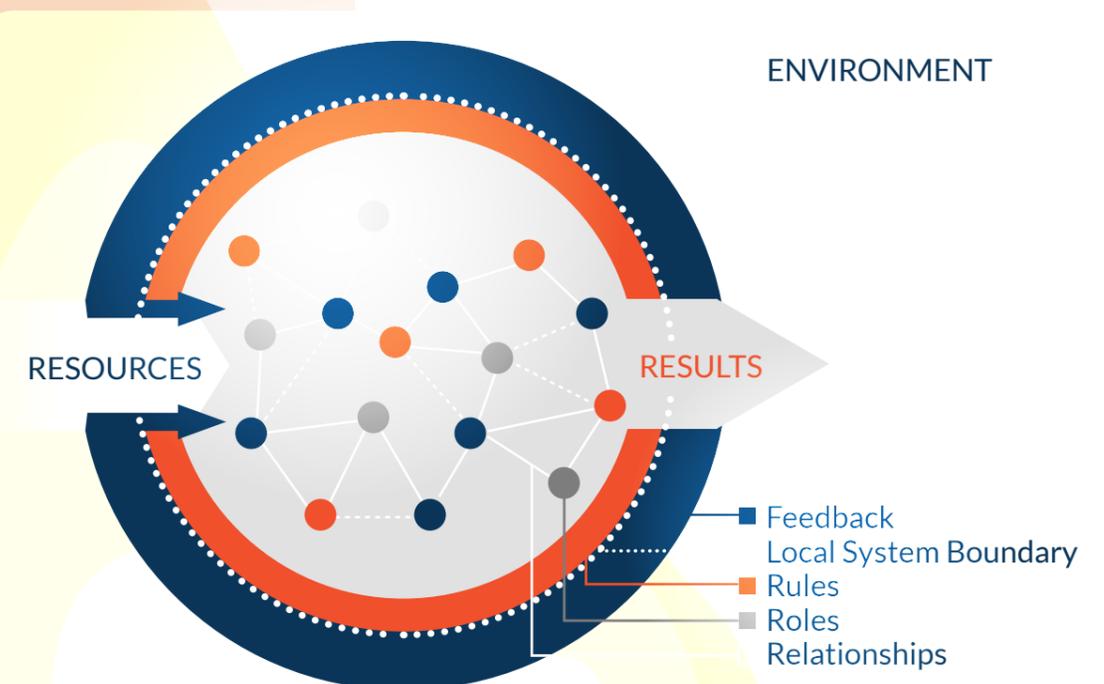
Systems Change

Analysing the environment and the system changing intervention

To make a longer-lasting difference and maximise the impact of available resources, social change must **ultimately address the root causes and systemic drivers that are producing a social problem**. By taking an indirect impact approach such as changing policies, industry norms, power structures, incentives, mindsets and more, social entrepreneurs can shift a system to produce better outcomes itself and as a result achieve a significantly greater and longer lasting change.

We focus on deep diving around the social problem the changemakers and Fellows we work with are solving and help them understand how their initiatives are or can produce change at systems level. The point from where the change is irreversible. One tool we use for this exercise is US Aid's 5R framework. It is a practical methodology for supporting sustainability

and local ownership in projects and activities through ongoing attention to local actors and local systems. The 5Rs Framework is intended as a simple and practical tool to promote good systems practice. The Framework highlights five key dimensions of systems: Results, Roles, Relationships, Rules and Resources. Collectively these 5Rs can serve as a lens for assessing local systems and a guide for identifying and monitoring interventions designed to strengthen them.



Impact Chain

Ensuring alignment between intended impact and the outputs of the organisation

After uncovering how solutions can change systems, we work with changemakers and Fellows on their impact chain (Input – Activities – Output – Outcome – Impact) so that they realise which parts of their work are essential and which not. This helps in identifying gaps where they need to work on, be it the resources used, the activities run, the partners engaged, the outcomes that can be expected and measuring tools for them.



Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

Co-creation for system change

One of the main reasons it is difficult to achieve systems change is the lack of collaboration with stakeholders that are involved in the problem, whether it brings a negative or a positive effect to what the social entrepreneurs want to change. It is urgent to tear down barriers between the business, the social and the public sectors by introducing new ways of collaboration. Everyone agrees that no single actor can identify and play out the solutions to today's complex challenges alone. The private and public sectors play a major role in the impact across sectors such as health, environment, economic inclusion, among others. At the same time, social innovators take on systems-changing approaches to tackle challenges in these areas, moving with agility and creativity, creating new paradigms and ways of working.

Driving deep social change most often requires us to work in collaboration with diverse stakeholders on shifting a system together. While such multi-stakeholder collaboration can have a transformational impact on a system, it also comes with its own challenges and requires a specific type of leadership and strategy to be effective.

We offer co-learning spaces for social entrepreneurs and change leaders from any sector who are either driving a multi-stakeholder collaborative initiative for systems change or are planning to do so. We support social entrepreneurs or funders and their grantees in a process that untangles the difficulties of collaboration and brings people together around a process, a roadmap for achieving a key common goal.

Collaborative Innovation Roadmap



Working with governments

Nurturing a better working relationship with governments

As a result of working alongside Ashoka Fellows for 40 years we observed and supported their strategies to approach public policies. These insights were gathered and built the foundation of our online course on Working with Governments to build the pathway to systems change by working alongside government bodies and public authorities. The module consists of 7 video modules with a total of 4-hour guidance and examples, 8 case studies of social entrepreneurs as well as one workbook with detailed exercises and a rich library of resources. We aim to equip local organisations with the framework and strategies we managed to unfold within a cohort of organisations from the social sector in Romania that we will support in a facilitated process to develop their strategies for engagement with the government to solve social issues. The principles applied in the fruitful collaborations we observed in our work with Fellows:

- Principle 1: Leverage the power of information by sharing and co-creating data.
- Principle 2: Build capabilities among civil servants and systems social entrepreneurs to enable mutual understanding and collaboration.
- Principle 3: Develop funding models that recognise the characteristics of systems social entrepreneurs.
- Principle 4: Promote collaboration between public sector organisations and between the public, private and social sectors.
- Principle 5: Foster institutionalisation by co-creating or adopting successful innovations.

These workshops and experiences are for you if you:

- Want to expand your range of choices for how to collaborate as a leader so that you can act with increased capacity, confidence and courage
- Want to gain new insights, strategies, processes and resources available to apply directly to your collaboration work
- Want to leave with tools and methodologies to measure impact and to facilitate multi-stakeholder collaborations with alignment, engagement & momentum
- Want to establish strong peer connections and exchange knowledge with other social entrepreneurs and change leaders – also beyond the course.
- Are willing to embark in an intensive learning journey focusing also on your inner work

Impact Academy

An example of how these instruments and methodologies come together in our activities is Impact Academy, a program that brings together civil society organisations and changemakers in an immersive experience around impact creation and measurement. Impact Academy aims to achieve collective impact with the help of civil society representatives. It emphasizes the importance of moving from hero-preneurship / heroic entrepreneurship to collective action by developing relationships and trying to find solutions to the causes of social problems rather than their manifestations, starting from the way we look at and measure impact. Thus, IA aims at enhancing the existing skills of civil society representatives and their ability to be social entrepreneurs.

Testimonials

I better understand how I should perceive a system I belong to and that it can be defined according to my vision, not standardized.

The system mapping process seems very valuable to me to do those activities that really matter and ensure the sustainability of the projects.

V. Ashoka Impact – 5 years since founded

WHAT DO WE WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT US?

a. OUR DESIRED OUTCOMES

In the past five years Ashoka Romania has been in a continuous process to strategise and assess how to balance the local characteristics and needs of the Romanian social entrepreneurship ecosystem with the strategy and value propositions that Ashoka engages with as international level. Thus, these 5 years represented a time for us to plug in different approaches to the local ecosystem, having these clear outcomes in mind, that we continue to strive for together with our partners and other organisations that support social entrepreneurs and changemakers.

- Social entrepreneurship and Ashoka Fellows as the most accelerated way to produce systemic sustainable change for the good of all
- The social entrepreneur identity is elevated and shaped through our Fellows and media partners – More people identify as social entrepreneurs and role models for social entrepreneurship gain more visibility

- Collaboration for collective impact is the norm, not a lacking mechanism in the ecosystem
- Changemaking as the most accelerated way to reduce social inequalities, with a focus on children and youth for an everyone a changemaker world)

b. OUR OUTPUTS

- 8 Ashoka Fellows elected
 - 10 Successful partnerships
 - 2500 + Changemakers Mapped x 3 Changemakers Maps
 - 25 + Ashoka Fellows connected to the local ecosystem
 - 10 programs working with civil society leaders
 - 250 + Media articles
 - 7 Knowledge materials (e.g.: Report on Social Entrepreneurship, Climate reports, Pandemic report)
1. Romanian changemaker map (2017)
 2. Climate changemaker map (2020)
 3. Sports Changemaker Map (2022)

FINANCIALS

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 (Expected)
REVENUES	€ 252.000	€ 273.000	€ 429.000	€ 208.889	€ 408.000	€ 300.000
EXPENSES	€ 193.806	€ 308.757	€ 304.000	€ 249.924	€ 392.000	€ 280.000

Ashoka Romania Financials



TEAM



ANA MURRAY • Country Director



TOMINA VODARICI • Partnerships Management Associate



OANA VASILIU • Communication Expert



OVIDIU CONDURACHE • Ashoka Fellows Scouter



RUXANDRA MOCANU • Senior Ecosystem Builder



MIHAELA VASILOI • Financial Manager

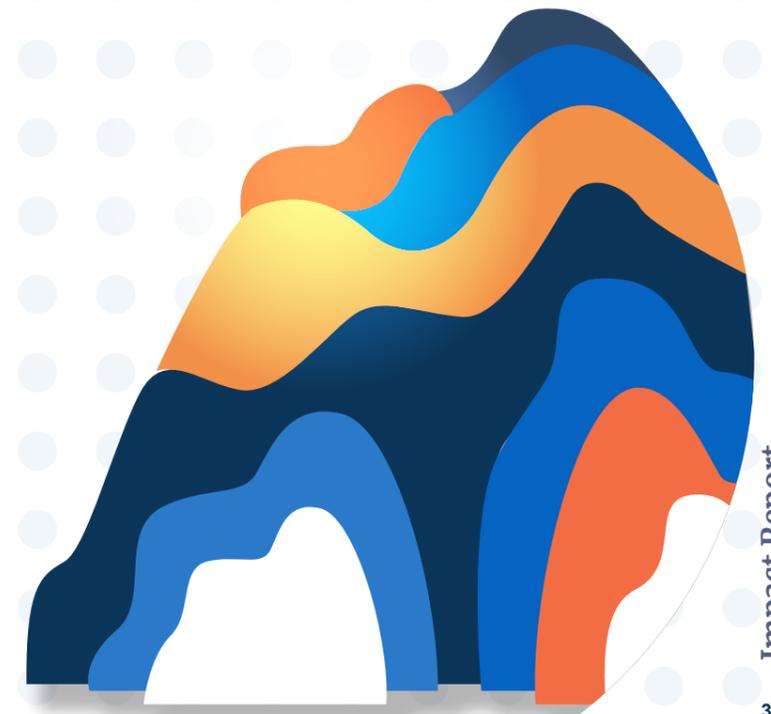
CALL TO ACTION

BECOME AN ALLY TO OUR JOURNEY

For 40 years, Ashoka has bet on the adventurous-on people with a fundamentally new vision of what is possible in the world. We coined the term social entrepreneur and have since grown a global network of 3.800 extraordinary changemakers who we celebrate as much for their empathy and authenticity as for their entrepreneurial skill. We have set the global standard for how to find local talent and how to nurture that talent via a vibrant peer network. Our support for early-stage innovators is leveraged many times over: in the form of organizational growth, policy change, independent replication and more. Ashoka Fellows have gone on to improve the lives of tens of millions. They have won Nobel Peace Prizes, facilitated the global spread of breakthrough innovations like rotational grazing and microfinance, made major inroads in ending child labour, established key aspects of the sharing economy, championed cross-national treaties to reduce overfishing, and more. We have been present in Romania since 2017 and have selected 6 Ashoka Fellow who are at the leading edge of the most significant social and economic issues of our time—human trafficking and modern slavery, lack

of collaborative approaches in treating patients with rare diseases, climate and environment degradation, civic education and engagement, international corruption and crime.

In Romania, in 3 years, we mapped around 2.500 changemakers around the country and have reached half a million people. From our interactions, a troubling pattern has surfaced: the energy and resources for social entrepreneurs have overwhelmingly concentrated in a handful of big cities and on topics which are popular. This contradicts what we know to true: that ideas emerge from everywhere, often from the people who have lived the problems they are trying to solve and from overlooked fields of work that constitute taboo subjects for our society. Combining this pattern with the COVID-19 pandemic, there is enough fuel to intensify mistrust, and division within the country, with too many Romanians feeling overlooked and voiceless to change the conditions that affect their lives. It also means a wealth of creative solutions go unnoticed and unfunded. We all lose out as a result, more likely to get stuck thinking the same way about old problems and failing to anticipate new ones.



AS AN ASHOKA ALLY YOU CAN BE AN ENGINE FOR CHANGE IN ROMANIA:

Deepening Impact

Support Romanian social innovators in investing the time to scale their operations and maximize impact,

Form Partnerships

Become a strategic partner to Ashoka to build an ecosystem prone to social innovation,

Improve Branding

Positioning as a thought leader committed to identifying and supporting the most impactful social entrepreneurs,

Peer-to-Peer Exchange

Engage with an ecosystem of entrepreneurs part of the Ashoka Fellow Network.

Join the Ashoka Support Network

Global community of 450+ successful and innovative professionals in 25 countries who invest in Ashoka and support Fellows

Become a Strategic Partner

Our Strategic partners are forward thinking and leading companies/ organisations who invest in Ashoka to increase our collective impact.

Become a Pro-bono Partner

Connect your services to the greatest network of social entrepreneurs to inspire your organisation and to contribute to systemic change

Become a Volunteer

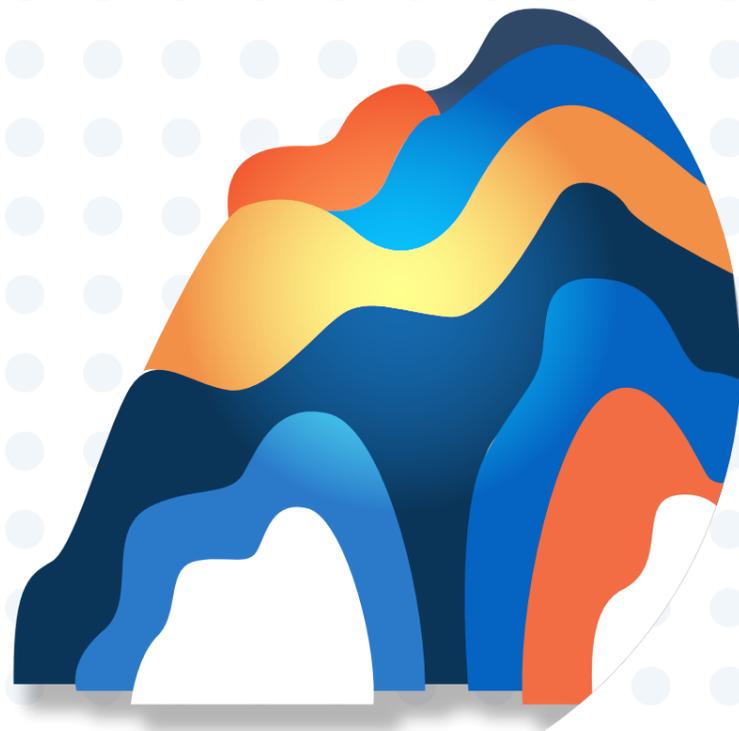
Support us in increasing our impact and reach our objectives in accelerating social entrepreneurship in Romania

WHAT YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW

Subscribe to our newsletter [here](#).

Become an Ashoka Fellow nominator and help us identify and elect a new Ashoka Fellow. Check our criteria and nominate an Ashoka Fellow [here](#).

Become an ambassador. Talk about us to your network, put us in contact with people or organisations that might be interested to find out more about us, and help us spread the word that everyone can become a changemaker.



Our Partners

Current Partners

Founding Partners

Romanian American Foundation



Strategic Corporate Partners

NN



Corporate Partners

Decathlon



Pro-bono Partners

Ratiu & Ratiu
Romanian Business Leaders



International Partners

EIT Climate-KIC
Open Society Foundations



Ashoka Support Network Members

Andrei Pogonaru
Ciprian Morar

Past Partners

Graffiti PR
Schneider Electric Foundation
Enel Romania
PwC
SHL
UniCredit Bank
Red Bull
Black Sea Trust





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ROMANIA**



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