



THE
DIASPORA
INITIATIVE

BRIEFING KIT

PORTFOLIO

2022

Our Story

The Diaspora Initiative started as an academic collaboration, a space of exchange, independent of hierarchies and organisational constraints. A space where we came up with all these ideas, step by step implementing them in the hope of forging a better, more informed understanding of diasporas, of reforming the institutional approach to diaspora engagement, and of generating opportunities for more impactful diaspora initiatives, through islands of good practice and cooperation to the benefit of all those living, working, and studying abroad.

All our work so far has been pro bono, conducted on a voluntary basis and in the spirit of giving back by contributing even if we are permanently settled abroad.

First and foremost, it was the absence of a systematically organised and accessible knowledge repository about our diaspora that motivated us to embark on this mission. Impassioned political speeches and party platforms, strategies and programmes, institutions ideally placed to implement them, all these without a fundamental understanding of what the diaspora is and represents.

A diaspora knowledge repository, anchored in research may prove transformative in the not-so-distant future.

How many Romanians live and work abroad, permanently, or temporarily? How do Romanians associate? How are their interests represented? What is the scope of their initiatives? How are diaspora associations financed? What is their digital presence and visibility? How can those abroad contribute towards development, through their vast economic, social and knowledge capital? And more importantly, is the Romanian diaspora truly relevant and impactful transnationally?

These are just a few of the questions we seek to provide an answer to, through the knowledge repository we are creating, and the initiatives we pursue. We firmly believe that mapping the diaspora becomes a necessary step towards more informed and transparent policies, policies that ought to mirror the interests and aspirations of those abroad.

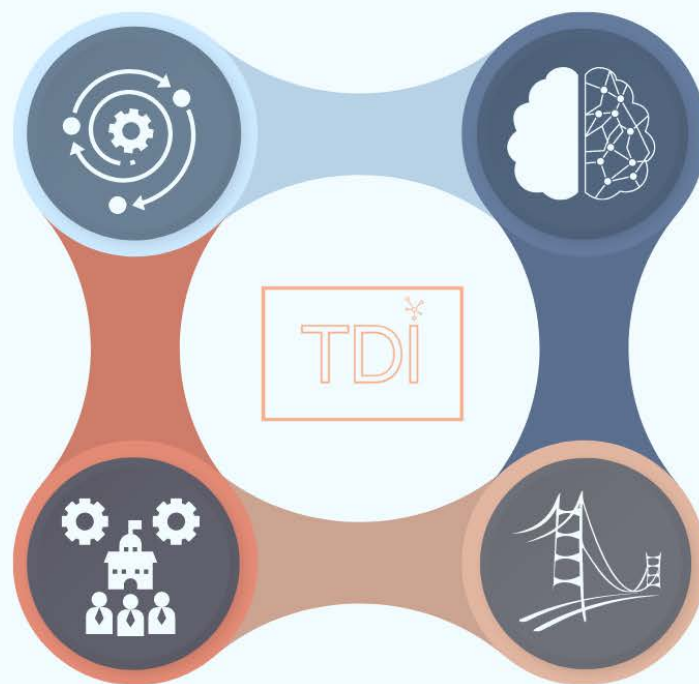
"Shaping good governance through an influential diaspora, at home and abroad."

Mission

"SHAPING **GOOD GOVERNANCE** THROUGH AN **INFLUENTIAL DIASPORA**, AT HOME AND ABROAD."

Our contributions are aimed at **maximising** the diaspora's **transnational impact**.

We are committed to **upholding** and **implementing** **good governance** norms and practices.



We **contribute knowledge** & expertise to shape an **informed understanding** of diasporas.

TDI bridges institutions and civil society by strategically developing a space of **mutual trust**.

Our Objectives

1

Academic Research

Conducting innovative academic research for an informed understanding of diasporas, a resource for both institutions & civil society.

- **Pioneering** a comprehensive, longitudinal and historical mapping and social network analysis of Romania's diaspora and its global interactions, a useful, **pragmatic resource** for both civil society and institutions.
- Developing an **interactive platform for all diaspora networks** (by countries of residence) which enhance data visualisation and user interactivity.
- Contributing towards the growth of migration research by developing **worldwide academic and expertise-based partnerships**.
- Expanding an **inter-disciplinary approach** & a conceptual model that can be applied to the study of other diasporas.
- Imparting knowledge and **improving public access to peer-reviewed academic research** by rendering all our analyses, publications and datasets open source.
- Continuously improving the scope of our research, as well as our rigorous methodology by **encouraging transparency and replicability within a well-defined ethical framework**.

Our Objectives

2

Policy Expertise & Strategic Liaison

Providing expertise for evidence-based policy-making in our home country and abroad.

- Providing **strategic expertise** for evidence-based decision-making with the aim of enhancing the outreach of (national) diaspora engagement policies and strategies (strategic review).
- Building **institutional partnerships** (liaison) at national levels, by policy sectors, at home and in the countries of residence.
- Bridging relations between institutions and civil society by harmonising work and communication practices for measurable, **impactful policy outcomes**.
- Maximising institutional and leadership capacities through **networked, transnational expertise**.
- Continuously assessing, gathering data, and providing **structured feedback** regarding institutional practices for process optimisation.
- Advancing / promoting national strategic interests through **high-level coalitions of support** across host countries.
- **Fostering strategic partnerships** with **international organisations** with a focus on migration and development.

Our Objectives

3

Civic Accelerator

Fostering transnational cooperation & maximising the impact of diaspora initiatives

- Providing support and expertise aimed at **maximising the organisational capacity** of diaspora organisations and initiatives.
- Actively encouraging **diaspora participation in the public sphere** of host countries, for enhanced visibility, relevance & representation of diaspora communities abroad.
- Maximising the global/national impact and visibility of diaspora initiatives by **encouraging transnational cooperation**.
- Providing liaison with national administrations at home and abroad (institutional relations) within a **unified communications framework**.
- Providing liaison with other diaspora communities and civil society in the countries of residence, for **knowledge sharing and good practices**.
- **Expanding the coalitions of support at home and abroad** through diverse, strategic partnerships on a broad spectrum: from academia, to institutions, media as well as the private sector.

Modus Operandi 1

Areas of Impact

Understanding Diasporas

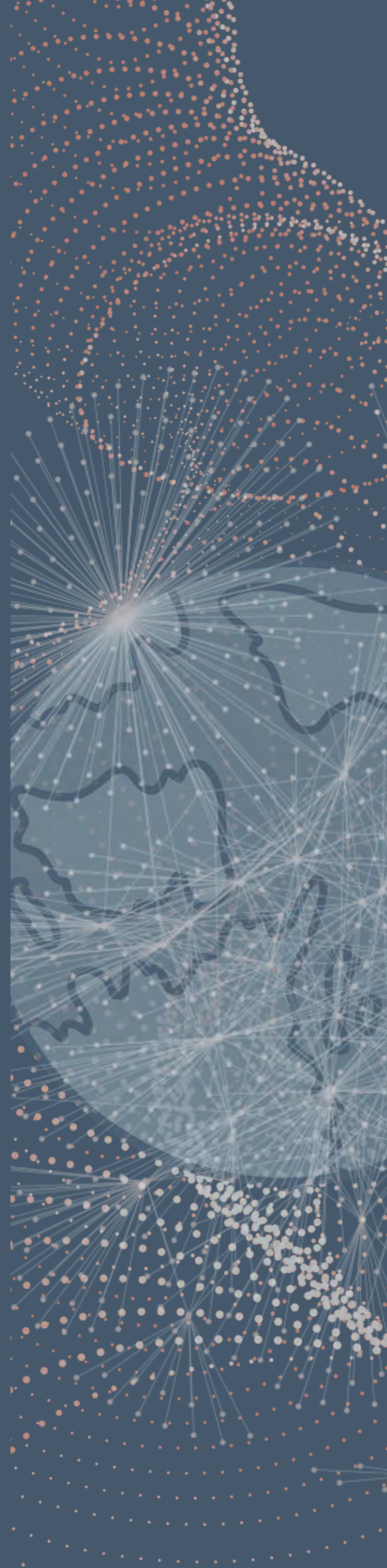
We developed an innovative way of understanding diasporas, testing the network algorithm for the first time in 2018. As ambitious as it may seem, our aim is to map Romanian communities globally, in each country of residence. More than that, our research goes beyond and can be successfully applied to understanding other diasporas.

Fair Representation

We believe in democratic accountability, in civic checks and balances, and an open society through deeper engagement of various stakeholders. Our initiatives are aimed towards policy-change.

Transnational Impact

We develop initiatives with a transnational impact. One of the issues we explored was diaspora mobilisation during the Covid-19 global pandemic. So far, we liaised with institutions and civil society to brainstorm a more effective response mechanism to the ensuing crisis.



Modus Operandi 2

As an integrated network that fuses research with policy & civil society, we constantly strive to contribute, so we seek like-minded partners to implement research, policy, and civic agendas. We collaborate with academia, institutions, and civil society partners in implementing long-term projects. Each initiative is based on a unique approach, with diverse partnerships.

UNDERSTANDING DIASPORAS

Understanding the
Diaspora [2019]

Understanding the
Romanian Diaspora
in the UK [2020]

Understanding the
British Diaspora
[2021]

Understanding the
Romanian Diaspora
in Switzerland
[2022]

FAIR REPRESENTATION

Voting Abroad: A
Transnational
Initiative for
Electoral Observers
[2019-2020]

Policy Change:
Mobilising for a
Unified Electoral
Code
[Ongoing]

TRANSNATIONAL IMPACT

Diaspora Resilience
During a Global
Pandemic
[Ongoing]

[INITIATIVES]

Bios

Co-Founders

Andra-Lucia Martinescu is pursuing a part-time doctorate in International Relations at University of Cambridge, focusing on the history of ideas and geopolitics. She previously worked for the British Army, specialising in operational research, and for think-tanks such as the Foreign Policy Centre (currently a Research Fellow), RUSI (Whitehall, London) and RAND Europe.

Since 2018, and in a bid to change the outlook, Andra has dedicated herself to researching diaspora, civil society, and good governance issues. She is particularly interested in social networks and their strategic capacity to effect change. She believes in societal transformation through civic participation and accountability. She also believes, quite strongly, in the civic identity and voluntary spirit of her fellow Romanians. Their astonishing capacity to mobilise for social justice truly inspired her to contribute. Together with Catalina her former high-school classmate, founded The Diaspora Initiative in 2018 after debating an idea.

Catalina Maria Moisesescu is affiliated with the University of Fribourg as a doctoral candidate in European studies and international relations, focusing on the role of national and international actors in conflict resolution. Since 2018, Catalina has dedicated herself to researching migration, civil society, and good governance issues.

She diligently conducts our over-arching strategy of engagement: with institutions, academia, international organisations, and civil society. Catalina previously led the Survey of International Organisations, as a teaching fellow within the American College Programme. Between 2012-2014 she was research coordinator with the Institute for International & European Studies in Luxembourg, overseeing the implementation of international projects and the organisation of high-level policy and academic conferences.

Catalina closely liaised with the Permanent Representation of the European Commission in Luxembourg as well as other diplomatic posts. Between 2009-2011 she coordinated the public relations department, at the Embassy of South Africa in Romania, promoting cultural and economic bilateral relations. In 2011 she was awarded the Government Excellence Scholarship by the Swiss Federal Government.

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We thank you for your
ongoing support

Andra & Catalina



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