



## VERONICA CRETU

### BACKGROUND

I was born in the southern part of the Republic of Moldova. Actually I was born in the USSR, in “the most powerful and the richest country of the world,” as we were taught at school; later, in 1991, I became a citizen of the Republic of Moldova, one of the former soviet countries, after it had obtained its independence. I grew up in a family in which children kept their parents busy almost all the time, as this was part of the former soviet working style: parents used to spend little time with their kids, while the ruling party was convinced that both schools and society must educate children.

In the 1990s, my parents moved to my native village where I graduated from secondary school and where I continued my studies in Romanian (which was quite difficult, as I was also studying in Russian, and I had learn by myself everything related to the Latin alphabet, to spelling and grammar rules). During my nine years of primary and secondary education, I changed schools five times (because of my father's job). Yet, when I think back about these changes, I think they were really great. I had new beginnings all the time, new people around me all the time; I had to adjust to new environments. I think these kind of experiences help children a lot; sometimes it is stressful, but, on the other hand, children learn more.

### EDUCATION

I went to secondary school in 1992. It was actually the first high school in Moldova, since during Soviet times, no high schools existed, just general school. It was my first experience of being away from home. I was thirteen. I studied languages and history as basic subjects and, because of my passion for languages, especially English, when I graduated I became a student at the Ion Creanga State Pedagogical University, Foreign Languages Department. I graduated from university in 2000 and became licensed in English philology.

While a first year student at the university, I got my first job as a Program Assistant within the Arts and Culture Department with the Soros Foundation Moldova. I was interested in issues related to culture and especially in how to promote culture and arts at the rural community level in a country in a transitional period. I worked in this position for almost three years. In my fourth year of studies, I won a contest that provided me with the opportunity to act as an English language trainer with the International Language Training Center based in Chisinau, the capital city of Moldova. Along with that, I acted as a translator and interpreter for the Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking Program, implemented by the ProDidactica Educational Center.

### WORK

After I graduated from university, I decided to start my own business, and I opened an English language school that operated until 2002. In April 2002, I reorganised the school with new areas of interest and registered it as a non-governmental organisation called the CMB Training Center. “CMB” stands for the Romanian *Cel Mai Bun*, which means, “The Best.” I wanted to do more than just provide high quality English language training programs; I was interested in social programs that would have as target beneficiaries youth, rural communities, women, and civil society organisations.

Thus, in 2003, I coordinated a US embassy supported project called, “Creating Job Opportunities for Young Women in Moldova.” In the years 2003-2006, I coordinated a “Developing Critical Thinking and Career Planning Skills” project supported by the Better JL World Institute. I spent 2004-2005 in a very interesting project, “Transforming the Moldovan Museum into a Cultural and Educational Center of the Rural Community,” supported by Moldova Soros Foundation. During 2005, I organised “Creating a Sustainable Informational Framework in the Field of Social Protection and Labor Rights.” Alongside these projects, I developed several training programs that

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Training Program organized for Trade Union representatives on HIV/AIDS policies at the work place held in March 2007. The photo captures a session focusing on the multistakeholder approach to policy development in this area. The game "Mine field" has several steps, but the key part is having several participants take turns to cross the field with eyes closed while being guided by someone else. While debriefing the game, the participants were asked "What can really help a person cross through this mine field?" Participants answered that proper guidance from someone who knows the situation and has experience would help, and that crossing the field with open eyes could help even more. Participants drew parallels to the multistakeholder approach to policy development and the importance of the 'guide' in the process.

allowed me learn more about project management, strategic and operational planning, public relations, critical thinking, efficient presentations, and communication techniques.

During 2002-2004, I also acted as a Romanian language trainer for the former US Ambassador to Moldova, Pamela Hyde Smith; for the International Monetary Fund Resident Representative, Edgardo Ruggiero; and for the OSCE mission to Moldova. In all these cases, I applied accelerated learning training methodology, so that my participants could make rapid progress in their language learning. These experiences with the diplomatic community raised my interest in diplomacy and, as a result, I discovered a post-graduate program in diplomacy delivered by DiploFoundation. I applied and in 2004 I received Diplo's Scholarship for the Post-graduate Diploma in Diplomacy.

#### TODAY

Well, I must say that the most important "projects" of my life are my 2 daughters Madeleine (7) and Pamela (2) and, of course, my husband. I am doing my best to spend as much time with them as possible. I really enjoy being a mummy. I became a mother at the age of 22 and I think it is great to be a young parent because this gives you energy for initiatives and ideas; the more time you spend with kids, the more creative you can become. And, in general, I adore kids and I am very proud to be a young mother! The biggest challenge for me is to be able to serve as a good model for my kids, as I think that a parent's model or example is the best education for children.

Professionally, I am involved in Internet governance matters at the moment. Here in Moldova, I coordinate a project called, "Youth Leaders for Community Development through Internet Governance," which is supported financially by the Global Knowledge Partnership Malaysia and implemented in collaboration with the DiploFoundation, Malta. DiploFoundation has provided learning materials and training support (IG Booklet and IG DVD which were both distributed for free to the Program participants. Besides, Diplo's Internet Governance Capacity Building Program Coordinator, Vladimir Radunovic, has been invited as an expert in this initiative). The most important aspect of this project is that it is a replication of the Diplo Internet Governance Capacity Building programme online, which we adjusted to local context and needs.

I was interested to adjust Diplo's Online Internet Governance Capacity Building Program to an off line Program, in which there would be both the main IG

program as well as the research phase. This Program ends in April 2008, but more details can be found on [www.cmb.md/igf](http://www.cmb.md/igf)

In May 2007, I was elected to the At Large Advisory Committee of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). This position also takes much of my time, but I am enjoying it very much. I am proud to be a member of this community, because here, everyone brings his or her local experience to bear in formulating proposals and recommendations at the international level. Not only that, but other interesting developments have taken place this year: I was invited by the Global Knowledge Partnership to be one of the jury members for the Young Social Entrepreneurs Competition. I was selected as one of the Internet Society Ambassadors for the Rio Program and I will be part of ICANN Los Angeles meetings, the Internet Governance Forum in Rio, and Global Knowledge meetings in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

#### MY E-TEACHING EXPERIENCE

In general, I like being with people in a face-to-face environment, so being tied to a computer I cannot apply things that I normally would in face-to-face training programs. The biggest challenge for me in online teaching was to apply as many techniques as possible, adjusting them from face-to-face training, testing them to see what worked best, what did not work well.

I had to use all possible means of getting people to participate actively in the programme. How should I guide their learning? What learning style does a person have? Is it part of his or her culture or not? - these were the questions for which I looked to find answers. It was up to me to try to break the routine and make every day a new one both for me and for the participants. Moderating group activities and online sessions required much time and imagination. I tried many different things: online meetings with role plays, organising mock court cases, round table discussions, expert roles. All these have certainly helped me improve my facilitation skills both for online meetings as well as for other program activities.

I still want and need to find some time to write a guidebook on efficient facilitation of online meetings so that anyone interested in online facilitation techniques of Internet governance programmes can learn from my good practices and lessons learned.

#### EFFECTS OF THE INTERNET GOVERNANCE CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

To discuss the effects that the Internet Capacity Building programme have had on me, I must start with the effects

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of Diplo in my life and career. Overall, my involvement within Diplo activities has been quite gratifying during the last three years. This is related to the fact that with Diplo I have been working in a multicultural and multilingual team of people from all over the world, which has been a great experience. This experience has, in turn, opened new perspectives on issues like tolerance, multiculturalism, diversity, and openness.

I became involved with Diplo right after I completed the diplomacy program in 2004. Diplo provided me with the opportunity to work on the Internet governance portal first. This online portal provides anyone interested in Internet governance issues the opportunity to learn more about initiatives, institutions, frameworks, and legal aspects. I focused on education and mass-media aspects. When Diplo launched its Internet Governance Capacity Building programme, I stayed as a tutor, happy to keep my

participants active and interested in the issues discussed during the program. Their feedback has always been positive on the learning methodology, tutor techniques, online meetings, and the interesting learning environment. Diplo has contributed to three important aspects of my development:

- I gained an enormous amount of new knowledge related to various aspects of Internet governance.
- I developed and improved skills while working with Diplo. These skills are related to interactive facilitation of online meetings; online coordination of activities with participants of different backgrounds; efficient online communication with other program tutors and supervisors; application and testing of new online techniques; elaboration of program support materials; dissemination of good practices.
- I changed many attitudes as a result of my collaboration with Diplo.