

Name

[Ariel Pontes](#)

Organization name

What is the name of your organization (if applicable)?

Please leave this field empty unless you are applying on behalf of a legal entity.

Reminder: Writing “N/A” or similar creates manual work on our end and can delay the processing of your application.

Email address

pontes.ariel@gmail.com

Additional email addresses

Please specify any additional email addresses you would like to include in the correspondence about this grant. Please separate multiple email addresses with a comma. Leave empty if you do not want to add anyone.

carmenionita30@gmail.com, lish@filantro.ro

Project information

Short description

How would you describe your project in one sentence (max. 120 characters)?

Please be as concrete as possible; e.g., ‘6-month salary to set up a new org providing career advice for social impact to uni students through online content’ rather than ‘Working towards a future where more people pursue careers for the greater good’.

[6-month salary to create an NGO and promote EA in Romania with a focus on tech outreach.](#)

Summary

Please provide a brief summary of your project (max. 1000 characters).

We will use this summary to pre-screen your application, so please make sure to include the key reasons in favor of your project here.

If you have already talked to a particular fund manager, please mention their name here so we can be sure to get their input.

The project consists in creating an NGO in order to promote the EA philosophy in the country with a particular focus on tech outreach. Although community building and value change in general are important and can have a large multiplier effect in most regions, there might be a comparative advantage in focusing on tech outreach in Romania. As a developer, I am well connected in the tech sector and it would be relatively easy for me to attract human capital to EA tech projects and research. At EAG London I talked to multiple people in the tech sector and they told me that although there are many developers in EA, they still have trouble filling many roles. Romania is a popular offshoring/nearshoring destination for North American and Western European tech companies who are attracted by the lower costs and high quality of Romanian developers. As long as Romania is isolated from the EA movement, we will be wasting this valuable human resource.

Project goals

What specific actions or steps might your project involve? What impact will this have on the world? What is your project's goal, how will you know if you've achieved it, and what is the path to impact? How does this relate to the goals of the fund(s) you are applying to?

Goals (first 6 months):

- Increase the number of highly engaged members, particularly in the tech sector, according to measurable criteria. The list of criteria will be defined using references such as the virtual program application forms, EAG/EAGx application forms, EA Forum profile editing form, and EA Survey.
- Recruit additional volunteers with a tech background. Currently we are 5 volunteers and I'm the only one with a tech background. All volunteers must complete the introductory program in order to join the team.
- Increase social media presence and engagement (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.).

Impact:

- Enable local EAs to make effective career decisions.

- Enable local students to make effective academic decisions.
- Enable local social entrepreneurs to initiate high-impact projects.
- Increase the sustainability and resilience of the local community .

Path to impact:

- Monthly meetups focusing on outreach to adjacent communities (vegans, environmentalists, etc.), students, and IT professionals.
- Occasional one-time events (e.g. documentary screenings, debates, etc.)
- 1 on 1 meetings with members of the community, focusing on students and professionals in the tech sector (following the “Guide to Successful Community 1-1s” on the EA Forum).
- Creation of a database with information about members obtained via 1 on 1s.
- Inviting everybody who completes the EA introductory program to join our team of volunteers.
- Monthly volunteer meetings to discuss previous activities and plan future ones.
- Creating a basic website.
- Sharing EA content on social media.
- Registering an NGO.

We believe these goals and strategies are sufficiently “SMART” and well aligned with the mission of the EAIF, but we are of course happy to make adjustments in response to feedback. I haven’t assigned many specific numbers to our goals because, this being the first EA project in Romania, it will inevitably be experimental. The plan is to try different activities in order to learn what works best.

The focus on tech outreach is partly due to my tech background, and partly due to the fact that there seems to be an unmet need for developers in EA projects. As I’ve mentioned, at EAG London I talked to people in the tech sector (Ari Kagan, Sebastian Becker, and Fabio Kuhn), and they told me that although there are many developers in EA, they still have trouble filling many roles. Romania could help fill this IT talent gap. In the long run, we also hope that attracting Romanian tech talent to EA will lead to new project ideas and a larger pool of candidates for AI safety positions.

Track record

What is your track record for running projects of this kind?

Please give us an outline of previous successes and failures that would help us understand your (or your organization's) ability to execute this specific project. For example, campaigns you've implemented, products you've built, research you've published, or relevant professional and volunteering experience.

Alternatively, what other kind of evidence do you have that the organization or project will succeed? If you are applying for a project that is related to a previous EA Funds grant, please elaborate on how your previous grant/project went.

I think it would be most useful to use this section to discuss some of the weaknesses in my previous application and how I plan to address them. I first applied for funding in March and I now realize my application was premature. My contact with the EA community at that point had been minimal. I had failed to attend two conferences in 2021 due to COVID-related reasons, and I had only just finished the EA Introductory Program. I have a bachelor's in computer engineering and a master's in philosophy and I had read a few books by EA authors and I thought that made me knowledgeable enough for community building, but I now realize that those books were mostly introductory and that direct engagement with the community is very important for getting a sense of how things work from the inside.

After talking to many people at EAG London, EAGx Prague, and online, I have now realized that, although my level of knowledge has improved (I have recently finished the in-depth program), it is still not as high as would be ideal for a community builder. In the medium to long term, I plan to address this by continuously engaging with EA content and by volunteering as a facilitator for virtual programs. I will also volunteer at EAGx Berlin, which might not be particularly helpful in terms of improving my theoretical knowledge, but I hope will help me develop other skills that are useful for community building. In the shorter term, my main strategy for dealing with this is simply to be transparent about my level of knowledge and to encourage members of the community to learn more on their own by following up on the recommended resources and especially by completing the virtual programs.

Another concern that was brought to my attention was my blog, which was considered to be too provocative and to present utilitarianism in an oversimplified manner. I understand that being a group organizer brings certain diplomacy and PR responsibilities, so I am perfectly willing to adjust the tone in my blog in the future to minimize the risk of pointless polemics. I have already modified a past article that had been emphasized as being particularly problematic. Regarding the simplicity of my articles, I should say that after reading many EA articles, I now realize that most of them target the EA community. My blog articles so far haven't targeted the EA community directly. They target the general public and to some extent the atheist/humanist community, where I have been active for over 10 years. This means that I will probably continue to write simplified articles, but if there are any particular ideas that seem dangerously oversimplified, I am willing to discuss them and potentially edit those articles as well. I also plan to share my future articles to the EA Forum or EA groups for writers (on Facebook, Slack, etc.) so that I get more feedback from EAs.

That said, I still think my activities as a philosophy blogger and secular humanist have given me skills that are useful for community building in EA. I have organized a monthly "ethics club" in Cluj where we discussed the ethics of different issues, and I have also organized a series of events in Bucharest where we invited speakers with different views on various issues (e.g. veganism, astrology, etc.) to have a public dialogue followed by a Q&A and group discussions. The purpose of these events was to expose different audiences to humanism and also to encourage dialogue rather than polarization. Therefore, I am well connected in Romanian civil society and I have developed skills that are useful for organizing structured meetups focusing on outreach.

Another source of concern might be the fact that I am not a native Romanian, but this shouldn't be a problem since I have lived in Romania for 8 years and I speak the language fluently. I have organized several humanist events held in Romanian where I participated as a speaker or moderator, and I am also applying for citizenship this year. Furthermore, all the other volunteers in the team are Romanian and willing to help me with anything I might need as a non-Romanian.

I think the best evidence in favor of the success of this project is what I have accomplished so far in spite of being new to EA and inexperienced in community building. I started the EA Romania group in September 2020. I couldn't do much in the first year because of the pandemic, but I have been more active lately, particularly in the

past 5 months since I took a break from work and have been able to focus on EA as a self-funded community organizer.

Here's what I have accomplished in the past year or so:

- 230 members in our Facebook group
- 230 likes on our Facebook page
- 66 followers on Instagram
- 10 meetups with 10-15 participants each
- 1 documentary screening + discussion about reducetarianism at a vegan fair in Bucharest.
- 1 presentation about EA at a rationalist conference in Bucharest.
- 15-20 active members (who come to the meetup regularly)
- 5 volunteers
- 5 introductory virtual program graduates
- 1 in-depth program graduate
- 2 admissions at EAGx Prague 2021 (postponed)
- 1 participant at EAG London 2022
- 4 participants at EAGx Prague 2022
- 5 applicants for EAGx Berlin 2022

Funding

Funding amount and breakdown

How much funding are you requesting, and how do you intend to spend it?

We suggest applying for a range of amounts, from the minimal amount necessary to successfully implement your project, to the largest amount such that no extra money would buy any additional happiness or productivity. Please ignore the fund's current balance: if a request exceeds our available funding, we will suggest a lower grant amount or fundraise from additional donors, rather than rejecting your application.

Please specify the currency your request is denominated in.

Please also provide a very rough breakdown of your budget (e.g., "45% on salary for me for 6 months, 35% for payroll insurance/tax, 10% for a contractor, 10% on software and other expenses"). If you prefer, you can provide a range of values or specify multiple scenarios. If you are applying as an individual and this grant is a primary source of income, please ensure you are applying for the full payroll cost including self-employment taxes ([more info](#)).

Please also let us know about the total budget size of your project, and if applicable, your organization.

9-15k USD (100% salary for me for 6 months)

Requested amount (USD)

How much funding are you requesting, in U.S. dollars?

Please specify the amount of funding required (if you specified multiple scenarios, please pick your mainline scenario), converted to U.S. dollars at the [current rate](#). If you are requesting a grant in a different currency, note that the grant will be paid out according to the exchange rate on the payout date, so may differ from this amount.

12000

Alternatives to funding

What would you likely do if we decided not to fund your project?

Are you seeking funding from other funders? If so, how likely do you think that funding is to come through? Would your project go ahead if we didn't fund it?

At present I am not seeking funding from other funders. If I don't get the EAIF grant, I will contact other EAs and ask about alternative sources of funding. If I cannot find any individual sponsor in the EA community, I might try crowdfunding. If that doesn't work, I will need to get a job, which will force me to adjust my goals and pursue a considerably less ambitious project.

Use for additional funding

What would you do if we gave you more money than you have requested?

I could pay for a colleague to help me part-time (or full-time) in my community building efforts.

Further information

Confidential information

If you would like to share any confidential information, please do so here.

Information shared here will only be visible to the fund managers, our official advisors, and a limited number of EA Funds management and operations staff. We may share information submitted elsewhere with informal advisors and other people we work with. (If you want to share even more selectively, please email us.)

If your entire grant application is confidential, please flag this at the beginning of the summary section and send us a separate email notice.

LinkedIn/CV

Please add a link to your LinkedIn profile or other relevant online CVs/résumés (e.g., GitHub, personal website etc). You can add multiple URLs (e.g., if there is more than one applicant).

- <https://www.linkedin.com/m/arielpontes/>
- <http://ghostlessmachine.com> (personal blog)

File upload

If you would like to share any files with us, please upload them here.

We prefer having documents linked directly in the responses, but feel free to upload them here if that seems more convenient.

[Choose a file](#)

Grant duration

For what duration is this grant?

If you are applying as an organization, please default to a 12-month duration unless there is a specific reason for deviating.

[6 months \(since we are a new organization\)](#)

Location

Which countries will you operate from, and in which countries will you implement projects?

Please specify 1) where the person/entity receiving funding is located, and 2) in which countries the project will be implemented, e.g.:

A project based in London, UK that influences policy in the UK, the US, and the EU.

Please keep your response brief; this is for due diligence purposes.

[Romania](#)

References

Do you have any references that could speak to your qualifications for this project? If so, what is their contact information?

References are entirely optional but can improve your chances of receiving funding in some cases. References by people who are directly involved in effective altruism and adjacent communities are particularly useful, especially if we are likely to be familiar with their work and thinking. (E.g., long-time members of the effective altruism community who have given you feedback or otherwise engaged with your work.)

References from people who themselves have a strong record of implementing the kind of project you are applying with may also be helpful.

If you prefer reaching out to references only at a later stage, please list the names of likely references but indicate clearly that you still need to check with them before we reach out. Note that you will have to check with them quickly once we ask.

- Terezie Kosíková <kosikova.terezie@gmail.com>, former EAIF grantee from CZE.
- Monica Belitoiu <monica.belitoiu@asur.ro>, Director at ASUR (Romanian Secular-Humanist Association).
- Manuel Allgaier <manuel.allgaier@effektiveraltruismus.de>, Director at EA Germany.

Organisational leadership

Who is managing and leading your organization (if applicable)?

Please list the names of the trustees (members of the board of directors) and the leadership of the organization.

The 2 volunteers who will be my co-founders are:

- Carmen Ioniță <carmenionita30@gmail.com>
- Alexandru Lișman <lish@filantro.ro>