

Introduction

The Ancora Salvării Foundation was founded in 2002 and aims to support families with a disabled or chronically ill family member in order for them to not have to be submitted into state care, and preventing other non-desirable situations to arise.

The Ancora Salvării Foundation is a Christian, non-profit organisation supporting those in need, irrespective of their race, religion, nationality, et cetera. Our care is specifically aimed at people with a disability or chronic disease.

Our goal is to develop projects fulfilling needs not (yet) met by the state or (state-related) institutes.

The City of Iași

Our first project was establishing a rehabilitation centre for children with a disability. At the request of local authorities, we put our focus on children with autism. When we first started out in 2003, there was no adequate care for this group in the province of Iași. Until August 2016, this day care centre offered behavioural therapy, play therapy, movement therapy, counselling, education, and activities stimulating integration into society. This way, we supported more than 150 children with autism and related disorders, often resulting in them being accepted into a kindergarten/school or one of the centres for adults we are cooperating with.

In the autumn of 2016, our centre was split into two individual, independent psychology practices in which the psychologists – formerly employed by the Foundation – continue their specialistic work for children with autism and their families. They have been doing their jobs wonderfully for over a year now, which makes us very happy.



Our own psychology practices in Iași

Enjoying the pool

A programme with volunteers from the USA

Project in the countryside: Strunga, Tg. Frumos, and Pașcani

The land in Strunga was acquired at the end of 2003. Because of its hilly character, we levelled and fenced it in 2004. In 2005 we added a playground (made in the Netherlands), an outdoor pool, and an army tent for activities. In the summer of 2007 we visited families in the community recommended to us by local social services. These visits were meant to get an idea of the social needs, especially the needs of people

with a disability. We started to build the Social Services Centre in 2008, and every year since then improvements have been made on the building and the playground.

In the summer of 2016 we started preparations for gaining a licence for our social services. Getting new satellite maps of our property took quite a while, hence we have only just recently been able to apply for a licence from the fire department. The new licence from the health inspection, on the other hand, which includes our rooms in the attic, has been approved since May 2017. In the summer of 2017, a greenhouse was built over our outdoor pool and a patio has been laid.

The team working on a permanent contract consists of a social worker, a concierge, and a cluster leader. Our occupational therapist and the board members of the Foundation all work on a voluntary basis, and the aforementioned psychologists who have their own practice in our centre in Iași are working are paid by the hour. Volunteers are also involved in several other activities.

Our clients are from the community of Strunga, but also from Pașcani, Costești, Tg. Frumos, Ion Nelculce, and Butea. The Foundation's wheelchair accessible minivan serves as their taxi.

This year we offered the following services:

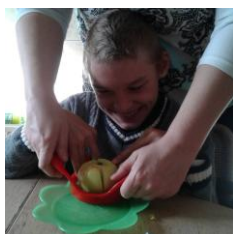
- a weekly therapy group for toddlers and pre-schoolers with a disability;
- a weekly after-school therapy group for primary school children with a disability;
- a weekly therapy group for teenagers and adults with a disability;
- a monthly support group for mothers of children with a disability;
- a monthly support group for siblings of children with a disability;
- integration activities for children from Strunga and neighbouring communities on Saturdays and during holidays.

Other services:

- offering humanitarian aid;
- repairing, customising, and donating orthopaedic aids;
- creating and/or customising aids made from cardboard and/or wood;
- offering medical and legal consultations with specialists.



Adapted activities of daily living



Home visits



Support groups



In Tg. Frumos, we teamed up with the local State Social Services Centre. Our clients are people with autism as well as their families. In 2016 we visited their homes for a first evaluation, we paid counselling visits to their schools, and we organised support groups and events to increase public knowledge of autism. In

2017, we organised the support groups again and also held a conference on autism with specialists from the Netherlands. In November we received a temporary licence for the counselling centre in Tg. Frumos for children with an ASD and their parents.

Therapy and counselling sessions were held at our centre in Strunga because of the space and resources we have there (incl. an extensive playground). Moreover, this location is always available: during weekends, in the evening, and even on public holidays.

Several school classes from the Special School Trinitas in Tg. Frumos paid weekly visits for a programme preparing the children for tailored daytime activities.

We have been working together with the Special School in *Pașcani* for many years now. We have been offering advice and meetings on the topic of educating children with ASD or related disorders.

Ancora's subsidiary foundation in Moldova

In 2014, the Romanian Foundation established a Moldovan Foundation with its own executive director and accountant. With help from our specialists from Romania, the Netherlands, and Great Britain, this foundation offers:

- courses, workshops, and conferences on ASD and special education;
- counselling for parents of children with a disability;
- integration activities for children with a disability.

These services are provided in cooperation with state institutions, parent organisations, and local churches.



Stimulating integration



World Autism Day in Bălți



Consults at school

Translation work

In previous years, we translated a lot of literature on autism and special education from Dutch into Romanian. In 2017, we focused on making Russian translations of Colette de Bruin's *Auti-Communicatie* (Auti Communication, on communication with people with autism) and *Prikkels in de groep* (Stimuli in groups, on sensory integration). These books have already been translated into Romanian.



Literature translated into Romanian or Russian by our Foundation:

- June 2017: Russian translation of *Prikkels in de groep*. Authors: Robert de Hoog, Sandra Stultiens-Houben, and Ingrid van der Heijden. Originally published by Garant Uitgevers, Antwerpen/Apeldoorn
- February 2017: Russian translation of *Auti-Communicatie*. Author: Colette de Bruin. Originally published by Graviant Publishers, Doetinchem
- April 2016: reprint of the Romanian translation of *Geef me de 5* (generally known in English as *The Essential 5*. In Romanian: *Dați-mi o mână de ajutor - pedagogie modernă pentru lucrul cu persoane din spectrul autist*). Author: Colette de Bruin. Originally published by Graviant Publishers, Doetinchem
- October 2015: Romanian translation of *Prikkels in de groep* (in Romanian: *Stimulii din jurul nostru*). Authors: Robert de Hoog, Sandra Stultiens-Houben, and Ingrid van der Heijden. Originally published by Garant Uitgevers, Antwerpen/Apeldoorn
- March 2014: Romanian translation of *Auti-Communicatie* (in Romanian: *Auti-comunicare*). Author: Colette de Bruin. Originally published by Graviant Publishers, Doetinchem
- May 2012: publishing “Suport didactic pentru elevii cu CES” (didactic materials in Romanian). Authors: CED-groep, editura PIM
- February 2011: Russian translation of *Geef me de 5*. Author: Colette de Bruin. Originally published by Graviant Publishers, Doetinchem
- September 2010: Romanian translation of *Denk en Doe* (in Romanian: *Gândește și Aplică*). Author: Steven Degrieck. Published by Fides, Iași
- September 2008: Romanian translation of *Geef me de 5* (generally known in English as *The Essential 5*. In Romanian: *Dați-mi o mână de ajutor - pedagogie modernă pentru lucrul cu persoane din spectrul autist*). Author: Colette de Bruin. Published by Fides, Iași
- 2007-2011: Romanian translations of two courses. 1) “Professionally Specialising in Autism” and 2) “Mentoring and Coaching People with Autism”. In cooperation with the ZZG Foundation and Hogeschool Fontys OSO (the Netherlands). The courses were given in Iași
- 2006: publishing *Autismul – sexualitate ciudată, controlabilă*. Authors: Tudor Mitasov and Inge José Smelik. Published by Stef, Iași
- 2005: publishing the brochure “Elemente de intervenție în Autism”. Authors: Tudor Mitasov and Inge José Smelik. Published by Stef, Iași

Special events in 2017

- In March we offered a course on suicide prevention in Iași with a Dutch psychiatrist. We also translated and distributed brochures on this subject.
- This same psychiatrist gave a workshop in Bălți on the differences and similarities between ASS and psychoses (schizophrenia).
- Various activities for personnel of the Special School Moldova in Tg. Frumos and students with a visual impairment, and the school for blind and visually impaired students in Bălți to exchange experiences with a blind teacher from the Netherlands.

- In April we organised conferences in Tg. Frumos and Bălți because of World Autism Day. Speakers: a physician specialised in people with a disability and a Dutch speech therapist.
- Celebrating Easter and Christmas in Strunga and Bălți, including continuing the tradition of making home visits to bedridden people to sing Christmas carols.
- Celebrating International Children's Day (1 June) in Strunga and Bălți
- Building a greenhouse over our outdoor pool and laying a patio in our park in Strunga, enabling us to expand our programme.
- Summer camp days in the 'Park of Joy' in Strunga for children and teenagers from the province of Iași, supervised by volunteers from various churches.
- Setting up the project 'Cooperation makes intervention in autism more efficient' in Bălți, northern Moldova.



Electronic braille reader



Workshop



Medical and legal consults



Difficulties in 2017

- The process to get the necessary legal documents is tedious and the requirements sometimes suddenly change;
- too little time to customise aids.

Goals for 2018

- Obtain licences for all social services in Strunga, in the province of Iași;
- use our camper van (which we received earlier this year and registered in Romania in May 2017) more optimally. With this van, we want to offer our services to isolated areas in Romania and Moldova;
- develop our activities in Moldova, expand our knowledge sharing opportunities, offer personal and professional help in specific cases;
- translate Olga Bogdashina's latest book, on her request, from English into Romanian.



Our partners

In Romania

- The local authorities of Iași and Tg. Frumos, and the community of Strunga
- Special schools in the province of Iași
- FONSS, the federation of social NGOs (of which we are a member), co-members, and other NGOs operating in the same area as Ancora
- The Dutch Embassy in Bucharest
- Local churches
- Alexandra's and Cătălina's psychology practices in Iași
- Theodora's legal firm
- The Association of Christian Medical Doctors in Romania

In Moldova

- The Alecu Russo State University of Bălți
- The department of special and integrative education at the School Inspection of Bălți
- The Centre for Adult Education for medical staff in Bălți
- NGOs operating in the same field as Ancora
- The Dutch Consulate in Chișinău
- Local churches

In Belgium

- Stichting VzW Vrienden voor vrienden (Friends for Friends Foundation, *Prieteni pentru Prieteni* in Romanian), Antwerp

In the United Kingdom

- Olga Bogdashina, a recognised expert on autism

In the Netherlands

- Support Foundation Ancora Salvării, Gouda
- Stichting Sarfath, Capelle aan den IJssel
- Mytyl schools (schools for children with disabilities) in Rotterdam and Utrecht
- Churches in Nieuwerkerk aan den IJssel, Gouda, The Hague, and Spakenburg
- Private sponsors



Orthopaedic aids from the Netherlands find their way to those who need them



Romanian volunteers organising a programme for children from the local community -
Dutch volunteers painting the playground equipment in the Park of Joy in Strunga and laying a patio.



Christmas activities: making decorations, singing Christmas carols together,
and spending time with those from the Special School Trinitas in Tg. Frumos