

Introduction

Since its establishment, the Ancora Salvării Foundation has developed projects and services for vulnerable people, in particular people with a disability or chronic illness, as well as their families.

Because we want to meet the needs which other institutes don't meet, our activities are reviewed and adjusted annually, in order to continue to help our clients as good as we can. This way, we hope to have a lasting and positive influence on the communities in which we work.

Current projects

Counselling centre in Tg. Frumos, province of Iași

Families with a child with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) receive counselling, either individually, or in a family or group setting. In addition, the children are offered weekly activities to stimulate their personal development. This officially licensed project is based on the experience we've accumulated over the thirteen years (2003-2016) we had our day centre Ancora in Iași.

Currently, our former employees have two psychology practices of their own in Iași, thus continuing the specialised therapies in this city. They are cooperating with our foundation's projects on a contract basis. In July, they administered psychological tests to six children with ASD who were enrolled in our project at the end of 2018 and early 2019. In the last few months of 2019, thirteen families enrolled. In addition, we're teaching local special schools about ASDs and treatment methods by organising meetings.

The counselling centre is part of the Social Services Centre, which is managed by the city council of Tg. Frumos. This contract runs until 2020.



Social centre Park of Joy in Strunga, province of Iași

Families with a child with a disability receive counselling, either individually, or in a family or group setting. The children themselves take part in weekly activities to stimulate their personal development. Two of our clients are adults now. At the end of 2019, eight families were enrolled. We are working on getting an official license for this project.

On a regular basis, children from various special schools join our activities, and using the facilities in our centre: a kitchen, photocopier, laminator, toy library, and the playground on our project's grounds.

During the Summer holidays, families from the counselling centre join those in the Park of Joy in Strunga to take part in our Summer programme, which involves using the playground and the pool.

Children with social needs from six nearby villages are offered a recreational programme during weekends and school holidays (mainly the Summer holidays). These activities are led by volunteers.

In addition, we offer special consults to families with a child with a disability from other regions in the country. We provide information and – if needed – orthopaedic and other specialised/adapted aids. This is how our project "Adapted we can do it too" came into being.



New projects in 2019

Toy library

With financial support of Kaufland Romania (via the StartONG platform), we were able to set up a toy library in our Park of Joy (May). It contains new toys and games, as well as toys from the Netherlands. Our clients have been using the toys every week, but we've also regularly brought games to the special school in Paşcani, and Trinitas (cluster 3) and Moldova (cluster 1) in Tg. Frumos.



In addition, teachers from these schools came to our centre in Strunga to attend two workshops on making didactic equipment of free materials, based on TEACCH principles.

Although the financial support has come to an end, we will continue to use the toy library for our activities and our partner schools.

Project "Adapted we can do it too"

This project started in August when we bought new aids for occupational therapy, made possible by financial support of Kaufland (again via StartONG). These aids are offered to people with motor disabilities; they try out these aids, while we also examine their independence.



These aids, supplemented with orthopaedic aids from the Netherlands, are stored in our 'occupational therapy library'. With this library we can supply people with motor disabilities the aids they need.

33 people with motor or multiple disabilities are participating in this project. They are from Strunga, Tg. Frumos, Paşcani, Suceava, Dorohoi, and Iaşi. Our vocational rehabilitation therapist and a Dutch physical therapist for children examined our clients.

We also organised several workshops on the benefits of aids in the rehabilitation process of people with motor disabilities:



- in Tg. Frumos, at Special School Trinitas
- in Pașcani, at the special school
- in Iași, at christian centre La Răscruce (workshop open to everyone)
- in Suceava, at the Ștefan cel Mare university

Even though funding has stopped, we will continue with this 'occupational therapy library'. We will also continue to answer requests for help and, if necessary, provide orthopaedic aids. We will keep organising events to inform people about adaptations to the rehabilitation process. Handing out or selling our book *Cu suport pot s-o face și eu* (With help I can do it too) is part of this. The book is a guide on raising and educating children with motor disabilities caused by brain damage.

Translations

We're currently working on translating various specialised books and guides into Romanian:



- *Dit is autisme* (This is autism) by Colette de Bruin. In this book, autism is explained by describing how the brains of people with ASD work. A mother of a child with ASD is helping us with the translation.
- The CED-Groep Rotterdam's *ZML Leerlijnen* (learning trajectories), which is a student information system for children with mental (and multiple) disabilities. We would like to offer it in a digital format, making it easier to keep track of the children's progress. Two teachers of the Special School in Pașcani are helping us with this project. When it is finished, we will offer it to partner schools, with the school inspection as intermediary.
- C-BiLLT (Computer-Based instrument for Low Motor Language Testing), a test to determine the level of understanding of spoken language of children with severe cerebral palsy who are unable to participate in general tests because of their severe physical disabilities and their inability to speak.
- We hope to publish this test in Romanian with help of the University of Suceava (Psychology and Educational Sciences faculties).



Events in 2019

Workshop on rehabilitation and children with severe multiple disabilities

In May, a youth physical therapist from the Netherlands, who has years of experience with these children, gave this workshop in Iași. More than sixty specialists attended. The basics were presented with help of case-based pictures and movie clips. Special attention was given to the importance of therapy for children with a disability who are familiar with epilepsy, and how they can best be supported.

In addition, we presented *Cu suport pot s-o făc și eu* (With help I can do it too), a guide on raising and educating children with motor disabilities caused by brain damage.

Dutch volunteers in Strunga

In June, seven volunteers from the Netherlands came over to help with maintenance of the playground, and in particular to paint the playground equipment. They also played with the children, especially in the swimming pool.

Medical check-ups in Strunga



Fifteen volunteers with a medical background joined us in June. They were members of the Iași department of the Society of Christian Doctors in Romania (Asociația Medicilor Creștini România). They offered free consults to the local people, forty of which used this opportunity to talk to a specialist. This activity was approved by the health inspection. In addition, 45 children got dental hygiene instructions, after which they received a tooth brush and tooth paste.



Course on trauma

In October, a psychiatrist and a clinical psychologist from the Netherlands came to Iași to give a two-day course on trauma, how to recognise it and how to treat its effects. Fifty specialists have taken the course with great interest. In 2020, eight of them will hold quarterly peer support sessions with Dutch specialists.



Sharing experiences with the University of Suceava, Romania

January. During the closing event of a European project on the importance of collaboration between families of children with a disability and educational institutions, the chair of Ancora presented several of the foundation’s activities. Ancora’s contribution to the project consisted of filling out questionnaires with parents of our clients.

July. Ancora’s chair participated in a conference for the Romanian diaspora, explaining the Dutch educational system. He talked about the ways it’s organised, the central ideas and how those ideas are applied in our foundation.



October. Together with Dutch specialists, a psychiatrist and a clinical psychologist, we visited the Psychology and Educational Sciences faculties of the University of Suceava to exchange information on mental health care.

November. As part of the project “Adapted we can do it too”, we gave a presentation at the Physical Therapy, Psychology and Educational Sciences Faculties of the University of Suceava on the treatment of children with severe and multiple disabilities. Our youth physical therapist, the work therapist and our chair were presenting.



Events on international days

Together with our partners we organised events in Paşcani and Tg. Frumos surrounding World Autism Day (1 April), Children’s Day (1 June) and the International Day for People with a Disability (3 December).

Holidays

In Romania we celebrated Easter and Christmas with a concert in the house of culture in the city of Tg. Frumos, and in Moldova with a programme in the city library of Bălţi. In both countries visits have been paid to those who were unable to come to these events because of their disabilities or illness.



In addition, we organised a Christmas fair in Iaşi where we sold arts and crafts made by our clients.

Transports from the Netherlands



In 2019, the Sarfath Foundation sent three transports with relief supplies to Romania. The supplies have been donated to institutions (e.g. school desks to schools, medical supplies to doctors) or to families in need (food, clothes). Other materials have been put to use in our foundation, for example the toy library and the ‘occupational therapy library’.

Ancora’s subsidiary foundation in Moldova

Together with parent association Pro Vita, we organised a monthly recreational programme for our clients. We also visited children and youngsters who are unable to leave their homes because of their disabilities.

At the end of April, youth physical therapist Hester visited us. We evaluated more than forty people with motor or multiple disabilities, and we supplied clients with orthopaedic aids like orthoses we received from the Netherlands. Early November Hester visited Bălți for two days in order to evaluate several clients a second time and to help them, for instance by doing rehabilitation exercises with them.



We celebrated Easter on 3 May, Children’s Day on 2 June and the International Day for People with a Disability on 15 December in the city library of Bălți. We also visited bedridden people.

During the Summer, volunteers from England helped renovate the lodge we use for our camps in Sadovoe. We visited our clients as well as projects from our partners: nursing home Tabita and Socium, a day centre for adults with a disability. We organised programmes with games, music and sketches. In addition, we visited churches in the countryside as well as ill people living in those areas.



In collaboration with the GAIN Nederland Foundation we organised several campaigns to help people who can barely survive. We offered them relief aid, and a number of houses and institutions underwent renovations. On Children’s Day and Christmas we gave away shoe boxes with presents (celebrated on 5 January 2020, orthodox calendar, but the boxes were already there in December).

Partners

In Romania

- FONSS (the federation of social services NGOs)
- Local authorities of Tg. Frumos and Strunga
- Special School Trinitas Tg. Frumos, cluster 3
- Special School Moldova Tg. Frumos, cluster 1
- Special School Pașcani, cluster 3
- Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava
- The Kaufland Foundation, via platform StartONG and the Act for Tomorrow Foundation
- The Dutch Embassy in Romania



In Moldova

- Parent association Pro Vita in Bălți
- Baptist church Vifania in Bălți, with their camp in Sadovoe
- The Socium Centre in Bălți
- Nursing home Tabita in Iabloana
- Dutch Consulate in Chișinău



In the United Kingdom

- Mission Direct, a Christian charity
- Olga Bogdashina



In the Netherlands

- ✓ Support foundation Ancora Salvării
- ✓ The Sarfath Foundation
- ✓ The GAIN Foundation (exclusively for Moldova)
- ✓ Local churches
- ✓ Individual sponsors
- ✓ Youth physical therapist Hester
- ✓ Educational institutions (De Brug, Rotterdam; Ariane de Ranitz, Utrecht; VUmc, child rehabilitation department, Amsterdam; Fontys Hogeschool, Eindhoven)
- ✓ Mental health institutes (Autimaat, Doetinchem; G-Kracht, Delft)



Plans for 2020

Our main goal is to continue and develop our current project. This means:

- Continuing the process of getting the correct papers for the Park of Joy in Strunga (Romania);
- Analysing how we can best continue our counselling centre to support parents and children with ASD in Tg. Frumos (Romania), because our current contract is nearly over;
- Developing our new project in Sadovoe, Mun. Bălți (Moldova);
- Finishing the aforementioned translation project and publishing those translations in Romania;
- Inviting international specialists to share their knowledge and experience;
- Expanding and updating our knowledge of several specific needs for personal treatment of people with specific diagnoses and conditions.

