

History

The Ancora Salvării Foundation was founded in 2002. Our first project was establishing a rehabilitation centre for children with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). From 2003 until 2016, we focused on special education for these children and educating specialists. This resulted in a shift of focus, so now our centre in Iași has two individual, independent psychology practices in which the psychologists – formerly employed by the Foundation – continue their specialistic work and are now our partners.

The Park of Joy in the community of Strunga

In 2003 we bought a piece of land in Strunga. Since then, we've realised a two-storey building, a playground, a terrace, a covered pool, and a barn. We are in the fortunate position of having a bus with which we are able to bring people from the surrounding villages to our park and take them back home again.

In our park, we offer activities so stimulate social integration and personal growth of children and teenagers with special and/or social needs, as well as support to their families. In addition, we are cooperating with schools to offer their students special learning activities, often related to work.

Counselling centre for children with ASD and their parents in Târgu Frumos

In 2015, the local authorities of Tg. Frumos lent us three rooms in their multifunctional social centre for a period of five years. We use these rooms to support families with an autistic child who live in the city or surrounding villages. We offer individual counselling, in a family or group setting, as well as activities to stimulate personal growth. There are weekly activities for children with ASD to help them get used to different everyday life situations. We offer parent counselling, as well as monthly support groups for parents and siblings of children with ASD.

Cooperation with special schools in the province of Iași

Special School Trinitas Tg. Frumos

Classes from this school often came to visit our Park of Joy in Strunga for special learning activities. On special days (e.g. holidays) we organised activities at school. In October, we had a workshop with Maaske, a Dutch speech therapist specialised in eating difficulties in children with a disability.





Special School Moldova Tg. Frumos

This school managed to get their children with multiple disabilities to the Park of Joy in Strunga several times this year. In December, we organised a Christmas-themed arts and crafts activity at school. In addition, we had the opportunity to meet with Thea, a blind teacher from the Netherlands with years of experience in educating blind and visually impaired students.

Special School Pașcani

Every other week we paid consultation visits to this school, or we held a workshop for teachers and/or parents. In October, we organised a programme for two special groups, in joint cooperation with the Park of Joy. The first group consisted of five families with a child with ASD and the second group were five children with cerebral palsy (CP) and their families. Both groups stayed with us for three days of evaluation and counselling.



Ancora's subsidiary foundation in Moldova

Since 2008, we've been working with Pro Vita, a parents' association for parents of children with a disability. Since 2014, there is a Moldovan department of our foundation and we've organised several projects to educate specialists, teachers, doctors, and parents on how to handle autism. We taught them about commonly used international methods concerning special education.

This year we also bought a house located next to Vifania, a church in Bălți. Together with the church, we want to create a special time for people with a disability or chronic illness and their families, by offering them special activities as well as support. This support can consist of offering and adapting orthopaedic aids, or giving them tips on how to make taking care of and raising their children a little easier. We also serve as intermediary between families and local organisations aiming to help these families.



Events in 2018

26 February – 4 March: Hester, a Dutch physical therapist for children, held consultations for children with physical disabilities and their parents. We gave these children orthopaedic aids, which were given to us by people from the Netherlands. These aids include standing tables, orthoses, semi-orthopaedic shoes, and shower chairs. We visited Bucharest, Brăila, Iași, and Bălți.

2 – 9 March: meetings for mothers of our participants in Strunga, Tg. Frumos, Pașcani, and Bălți.

29 March – 4 April: World Autism Day and Easter. We were involved in a project organised by the Special School in Pașcani: a workshop and an exhibition of arts and crafts made by the students. We also held an Easter concert in the Park of Joy in Strunga.

30 May – 5 June: International Children's Day. We organised several meetings on our playground for children from Tg. Frumos and Pașcani as well as our clients. We paid home visits to children with severe disabilities to lighten their day, even though they were unable to come to the playground.

18 - 30 June: a group of Dutch volunteers helped build and paint the fences in the Park of Joy in Strunga. They also organised several activities for our clients.

9 - 16 July: summer camp in Bălți. The chair of the foundation was involved in a camp for people with auditory disabilities. We also bought the house next to the church, so we can expand our work there.

6 - 18 August: our camper van was used in the surrounding villages for a summer programme for children, organised by local volunteers.

6 - 8 September: open days at the Park of Joy in Strunga. There was an exhibition of arts and crafts made by our clients as well as photos of our park through the years, a tour of the centre and the park, and games.

19 - 26 September: together with Thea (a blind teacher from the Netherlands with years of experience in educating blind and visually impaired students), we organised several activities for children of the de Special School Moldova in Tg. Frumos, as well as a workshop for teachers to exchange experiences.

10 - 14 October: a visit from Maaske, a Dutch speech therapist specialised in eating difficulties in children with a disability. We organised a workshop for parents and teachers from the Special School Trinitas in Tg. Frumos. As a speech therapy teacher at the Fontys Hogescholen (a college in the Netherlands), she helped us prepare for the internships of several Dutch students





10 - 28 October: two Dutch students of speech and physical therapy visited our counselling programme for two groups of the Special School in Pașcani.



17 - 19 October: a multi-disciplinary team, interns, psychology students from Iași, and two Dutch students organised a programme of consultation and counselling for five children with ASD and their families. It was a cooperation of 1) our foundation, who took care of the organisation of the programme and the counselling sessions, 2) Cătălina Coșuță's psychology practice (consultations and psychological tests), and 3) the Special School in Pașcani, which selected the children and whose therapist helped out during the programme. Each family received a psychological evaluation. They also filled out a questionnaire on communication and self-sufficiency. This helped the team to give the families clear and attainable goals, as well as relevant material to work with. It is important to keep in touch with these families, something which we have already put on our to-do-list for 2019.



22 - 24 October: a multi-disciplinary team, interns, psychology students from Iași, and two Dutch students organised a programme of consultation and counselling for five children with a mental and physical disability and their families. It was a cooperation of 1) our foundation, who took care of the organisation of the programme and the counselling sessions, 2) Cătălina Coșuță's psychology practice (consultations and psychological tests), and 3) the Special School in Pașcani, which selected the children and whose therapist helped out during the programme. Each family received a psychological evaluation. They also filled out a questionnaire on communication and self-sufficiency. This helped the team to give the families clear and attainable goals, as well as relevant material to work with and orthopaedic aids. Through the school, we will continue to support these families in raising their children and – if necessary – offer new aids.



20 October + 17 November: three dental students gave interactive presentations for children from the primary schools in the communities of Lungani and Vascani-Ruginoasă, in the province of Iași. They used our camper van.



28 October - 2 November: Olga Bogdashina, a renowned specialist in the field of autism, presented her book to the faculties in Iași, Suceava (Romania) and Chișinău, Comrat (school inspection) (Moldova). The book is entitled *A Reconstruction of the Sensory World of Autism* and has been translated by our foundation.



6 - 8 November: Simone, a representative of a British organisation occupied with projects for hands-on volunteering during the summer, visited Bălți (Moldova) to go over the details for a joint project in the summer of 2019 to renovate our camp house and to have the British volunteers organise activities for our clients.



30 November - 3 December: Christmas market at the Christian Centre La Răscruce in Iași, at which we sold new aids as well as arts and crafts made by our clients. All proceeds go to our activities in Strunga.



5 December: International Day for People with a Disability. To celebrate this day we organised a Saint Nicholas-themed arts and crafts activity at the Special School Trinitas in Tg. Frumos.

12 December: Christmas-themed arts and crafts at the Special School Moldova uit Tg. Frumos.



21 December: a Christmas concert in the House of Culture in Tg. Frumos.

26 December: singing Christmas carols at the homes of bedridden clients in Strunga.

28 December: a Christmas programme for our clients in Bălți. First, we sang Christmas carols at the home of bedridden clients. The afternoon was filled with activities like a youth choir, arts and crafts, and games in the local library.



Results in 2018

- ✓ Getting our licence for the Counselling Centre in Târgu Frumos for children with ASD and their parents.
- ✓ Successfully organising two series of three-day evaluation and information sessions for ten families in total. The first series was for children with autism and the second for children with physical disabilities. Students and interns from Iași as well as the Netherlands were involved in the project. It turned out to be very special days, with results the families could work with (examining the current situation of the child as well as establishing attainable goals). The atmosphere was good: our playground often helps to take the time to get to know each other and to relax. With a few minor changes, this programme will encourage our other clients and help to develop their abilities.
- ✓ Open days in Strunga





- ✓ Workshops with Dutch specialists: Thea (working with students with a visual and mental disability) and Maaske (eating difficulties in children with a disability)

- ✓ Conferences with Olga Bogdashina at psychology faculties in various cities; translating her book



Difficulties in 2018

- Stagnation of the process to get licences for our Park of Joy in Strunga, because we don't have a licence from the fire department. We started that process in January 2018, but have not received a definitive answer yet. Our lawyer will help us break the deadlock.



A year of transition

Our foundation continually tries to meet the needs not (entirely) met by other people or organisations/institutes, either private or public. In 2018, we focused on deepening the relations with existing partners, while also trying to make new connections. In addition, we made a new analysis of the problems people in need and their families face, leading us to new ideas which have to be worked out and integrated into our programmes. With God's help, we will continue to bring new information and specialised literature.



Plans for 2019

Finishing the application for a licence for the Park of Joy in Strunga

Organising several series of three-day evaluation and information sessions in Strunga

Renovating the house in Sadovoe, in the province of Bălți

Introducing new courses on caring for, raising, and educating people with a disability or chronic illness. We want to integrate this into our information and counselling activities in both countries.



Our partners

In Romania

- FONSS, the federation of social NGOs (of which we are a member)
- The school inspection of the province of Iași
- The local authorities of Târgu Frumos
- The local authorities of Iași
- Social services in the province of Iași
- Child protection services in the province of Iași
- Baptist church Emanuel in Ruginoasa (a village between Pașcani and Tg. Frumos)
- Christian Centre La Răscruce in Iași



In Moldova

- Parent association Pro Vita in Bălți
- Baptist church Vifania in Bălți
- The local authorities of Bălți
- The Alecu Russo State University of Bălți



In the Netherlands

- Stichting Sarfath
- Support Foundation Ancora Salvării
- Fontys Hogescholen Eindhoven

Other

- International Autism Institute, Russia
- Olga Bogdashina, United Kingdom
- Stichting VzW Vrienden voor vrienden (Friends for Friends Foundation), Belgium

