

2019



ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

Romania Without Orphans Alliance

www.romaniafaraorfani.ro

ROMANIA
WITHOUT
ORPHANS ALLIANCE
a family for every child





The greatest dream of
every child is a family

CELEBRATION 2019

The most significant discovery of 2019 was that each child's greatest dream is a family. Our mission, together with over 100 NGOs, over 100 dedicated churches, hundreds of volunteers and a national team, has become to transform this dream into a reality. Here is 2019 in numbers:

55,76,35

Therapeutic camp for 55 adoptive families and 76 children; 35 involved volunteers

20 000

Over 20,000 people exposed to the message of adoption through organized events

1 028

people trained to care for children that have suffered from trauma

380

active persons in the national prayer chain

350

Over 350 participants at ARFO Summit "A family, to-go"

250

people who promoted adoption at sporting events

34

34 videos with over 107,700 views produced containing information about the adoption process and the need for children to have a family

20

Over 20 appearances at the local and national television and radio stations

3

3 trainings for supporting vulnerable biological families

1

Launching Moldova Without Orphans Alliance

1

Translation and distribution of the book "Everyone Can Do Something"

We estimate that a few hundred children were adopted into loving families because of these numbers, some of their stories are on the following pages!

Thank you to all of our volunteers, sponsors, and partners. Without your contribution, this wouldn't have been possible!

In 2020, we want to hit the target we set two years ago: doubling the number of adoptions in Romania, providing training and support for those that work with vulnerable children in at least half of the counties in the country, holding therapeutic camps for at least 100 adoptive families and their children, and many other things. I invite you to join in this extraordinary adventure, and in 2021 we can celebrate together!

Alex Ilie
Executive Director ARFO





ROMANIA WITHOUT ORPHANS ALIANCE
a family for every child

Romania Without Orphans Alliance (ALIANȚA ROMÂNIA FĂRĂ ORFANI - ARFO) unites non-governmental organizations, churches, businesses, and public and private persons with a single goal: the child. ARFO is part of working groups in the Parliament, offering advisory support for modifying and improving laws 272 and 273/2004. We are also active members of CAFO (Christian Alliance For Orphans) and WWO (World Without Orphans).

OUR VISION

Every child in Romania will grow up in a safe, stable and nurturing permanent family.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to mobilize the whole society because every child can benefit from love, support, and the security of belonging to a family.



OUR VALUES



Jesus Christ

Our motivation, passion, purpose, and approach is based on His love for people, especially for children in difficult situations. God adopted us, and He said that He is the Father of the orphans.



The family

A healthy family is the best context in which a child can develop and flourish. The biological family is the first option. However, when children lose their biological family, the solution is still found in another family.



The child

Each child has intrinsic value and deserves the unconditional right of a holistic development.



The church

The Christian community, which reflects the sacrificial love of God, has the mandate to care for the orphan written in its DNA.



The movement

We believe that reaching our goal can only come through collaborating and uniting all who share these values.



Excellency

We don't believe in just getting by with the bare minimum. Our purpose merits our best efforts and our children deserve our best care.



■ OUR STRATEGY ■

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN TO SEE A ROMANIA WITHOUT ORPHANS?

PREVENTION ■

We strongly believe that, in most cases, the best place for a child is their biological family. However, many families abandon these children because of material motivations, finances, or major difficulties. We often find that the local community can intervene and help prevent the abandonment of the children.

ADOPTION PROMOTION ■

In the instances where children lose their biological families, the answer is to find each of them a healthy family. We want to see many more families open their arms to children without parents.

TRAINING & SUPPORT ■

A child that experienced trauma, even just the separation from his or her family, needs special attention. We want to help educate those who care for these children, in families or in transition towards a family, to do their best.

LOBBY & ADVOCACY ■

We believe the government should be a support for families that want to adopt. Because of this, we support the reduction of bureaucracy of the adoption process and ensure a smooth transition from abandonment to reintegration or adoption.



PREVENTION IN 2019

The program **Families count** is a tool for keeping families together or restoring vulnerable families. It offers a platform to serve parents that have children in social protection or are at risk of losing them. The program provides tools to address particularly vulnerable families in their communities. The purpose of the families that go through this program is to care for, mentor, and help other families in difficult situations meet the minimum living conditions and offer a safe, favorable place for their children.

We organized courses in three cities in 2019, and in 2020 we expect at least 10 initiatives to launch this program in their communities.

“The fact that such a program has been implemented in the cases of these real families with big problems and yet, it worked, shows us that there is hope. When you see families with problems, you are tempted to think that there doesn’t exist any real hope for their case. This helps a lot to hear real stories where the program worked.”



“Families count” Program in Pitești, Arad & Iași

ADOPTION PROMOTION

In 2019, we took the message of adoption to over 20,000 people, participating in a variety of events.

We continued to encourage and assist the development of local networks for promoting adoption and assisting vulnerable families, reaching 8 local networks: Braşov, Bucureşti, Iaşi, Oradea, Piteşti, Sibiu, Timişoara, Târgovişte, and Sibiu. Other networks are in the process of being formed.

We facilitated the promotion of the adoption message in over 100 churches and Christian communities. For the first weekend of every month, we organized a prayer chain for Romania's orphans. This meant that in 2019 we had 380 prayer commitments for the orphans of Romania.

We produced 34 videos that contain information about the needs of children to have a family and about the adoption process, which had over 107,700 views. We also had over 20 appearances at local radio and television stations.

In addition to this, hundreds of families were counseled about adoption.

Also, ARFO provided information about adoption at 3 sporting events where 250 people ran on behalf of ARFO. In the spring, there were 2 events where families, children, and adults ran to shine a light on the situation of children in the system with the message: "Lost in the system- 7.5 years", and in the fall we came with a new message "A family, to go".

June 2nd

National Day of Adoption was celebrated in 5 cities (Bucureşti, Braşov, Sibiu, Târgovişte, and Arad) with events that brought together over 2,000 people. There were activities for children and adults with balloons and flyers distributed containing information about the situation of children in the system and a challenge to take steps of action. There were families that shared their adoption experiences, people that asked questions about the needs, adoption process, and how to get involved.



Marathon - Bucharest April 7



June 2nd - Târgoviște



June 2nd - Brașov



ICCT Course - Târgoviște



ARFO at Speranța TV

TRAINING

In 2019, we provided the Trauma Competent Care training in Iași, Tulcea, Lugoj, and Târgoviște.

We organized two informative events looking at aspects of legislation, procedures, psychology, and family management in București and Târgoviște.

We organized 40 workshops at the ARFO Summit and the Summit of Moldova Without Orphans with a total of 300 participants.

We facilitated 2 webinars with a total of 97 participants.

With the support of 35 volunteers, we held a therapeutic camp Refresh, where 55 families and 76 children participated.

In 2019, we had a total of over 1,300 people participate in our equipping and training events.

“This is the second year that we participated in Refresh and we feel “refreshed” this year also, Our children have memories come to mind of different moments, both the rules of the camp, and the “magic mustache” and they tell us different games. The fact that they were involved in different activities than us offered them a bit of pride that they could tell us things that we didn’t know about. I saw how this contributed to the development of trust.

I was challenged as a family through the sessions that you all prepared for us. Each time we realized that we have so many things to improve in relation to us as a couple and as a family.”

(Refresh camp participant)

“I congratulate you on encouraging the hearts of the “big” people to open up for the “little people” who need care and love.” (Refresh camp participant)



Refresh Camp



ICCT Course - Tulcea

"I came to this course thinking that I would stay in a session and after that I'd leave, but after the first session, I realized that I should come back and bring my colleagues too." (iCCT Course participant)



ICCT Course - Moldova



ICCT Course - Iași

The most important thing is that a child should be treated as a subject, not an object! (Training participant)



Training the Trainers - Bucharest

"In One of the best camps (Refresh in the town of Panicel) that I've ever participated though only I and the children came, I managed to learn how to socialize with other adoptive families, which I did not do all year. Volunteers, from all over the country, offered to take care of our children (76 total) so that we as parents could raise our morale. It's an extremely difficult task to commit yourself to a whole week of caring for the little ones and to help them enjoy sensory activities and to get past the inconveniences (the crying, tiredness, headaches, irritation, etc)" (Refresh Camp participant)

LOBBY & ADVOCACY

We have been working together with partners from NGOs, deputies, senators, and their cabinets since 2017. Our hard work has started to pay off in 2019 as we witnessed big steps forward with facilitating adoptions and raising the standards of orphan care. In January 2019, the minimum quality standards were issued for family-type social services for children in special protection. In April 2019, ARFO was recognized with an award at the Public Participation Gala for our efforts in lobbying and advocacy in the field of child protection rights.

ARFO continued to support arguments in favor of modifying legislation both on national television, public and private radio stations, as well as at press conferences and debates within the Chamber of Deputies.

Over the course of 2019, ARFO was actively consulted for amendments submitted to Law 273/2004 which looks at the legal regime of adoption in the Chamber of Deputies and at Law 272/2004 which looks at the protection of children's rights in parliamentary committees of the Senate.



ARFO 2019

A FAMILY TO-GO

7 - 9 NOVEMBER | CRYSTAL PALACE BALLROOMS BUCHAREST

ALIANȚA
ROMÂNIA
FĂRĂ ORFANI
și alături găsim întotdeauna
un copil care are nevoie de noi

ARFO SUMMIT 2019

The ARFO Summit is the primary annual event in the adoption realm. It brings together people from different domains, geographical zones, and professional backgrounds with the purpose of encouraging, training, and connecting to see progress in the number of adopted children and growth of the quality of services offered to vulnerable children in Romania.

At the Summit, there were:

- Over 350 participants
- 64 people from the Department of Child Protection Services from 12 counties
- 49 local representatives
- 30 county representatives
- 7 countries represented (Romania, USA, Ukraine, New Zealand, Canada, Czech Republic, and the Republic of Moldova)
- 40 workshops

Preconference “Case Management of Social Services for the Protection of the Child and the Support of His/Her Family” had 71 participants, while the Preconference “Trauma Competent Care” had 54 participants.





From the ARFO Summit, I left convinced that children need a permanent family and I would like to get involved in this dream for a child or why not, more than one. (Summit participant)

“To be a help and support for families that have children in foster care or those that adopted. To organize activities for the parents and their children.” (Summit participant)





“The reason I chose to volunteer at the ARFO conference was because I believe strongly in the vision of this organization. The thought that children have a chance to not just be in an institution that invests in him/her, but in the strongest institution: family. It gave me energy to be a part of this project. Thank you for this opportunity!” (Summit volunteer)



“Before the Summit I adopted one child, but after coming here, I decided to adopt another.” (Summit participant)

PASSION LED US HERE

ANOTHER PROJECT

A house for home

A Romanian couple, “I” and “A”, sought to be true believers and to offer an example of how to live purposefully for their little boy. After volunteering at a center for abandoned or disabled children, they met several children who would become part of their family. They decided at first to welcome one child into their family, a 7 year old girl who they were told had few chances of being adopted. Later they met “F”, a boy who was deaf and mute. Even after surgery, he didn’t speak because he had learned to manage without it. Because they knew that without intervention he would have a tough life, I and A decided to also adopt F into their family.

After taking these two children into their care, they needed to move to a new location. They were currently living in a house of only 36 square meters that had been terribly run down by the wind. Together with two churches, we organized a renovation project and extension to their home, hoping to help them raise their three children in better conditions.

Today, these children have a loving family and a welcoming home. We are happy for how life now looks for the V family, and we hope to see more beautiful stories like this in the near future.



Clothes distribution from Prețuri Pentru Tine (“Prices for You”)

One of the most practical projects this year was the distribution of clothes we received from Prețuri Pentru Tine (“Prices for You”). They donated at least 4 truckloads of clothes, shoes, and cleaning products. Our 3-10 person team who usually works in a small office was a bit overwhelmed with this large of a donation! We had nowhere to store the clothes and it

would have been difficult to distribute them alone. However, since ARFO is an alliance, we were able to distribute the clothes through several of our partner organizations, reaching a broader area of the country. The clothes ended up in Vaslui, Tulcea, Pitești, București and Constanța. Many families are now getting through winter better and many more children throughout these regions now have clothes for school and home.





IN 2020 ARFO AIMS FOR:

- 20 trainings on Trauma Competent Care
- 20 webinars about the impact of trauma and efficient ways of care
- Creating over 15 adoption resources including:
 - Translating at least one book
 - Translating 10 brochures about parenting
 - Developing pre-adoption and post-adoption guides
 - Developing a working manual for support groups for adoptive families
- Organizing 3 therapeutic Refresh camps for over 100 families and their children
- Adding 2 new trainings for specialists and adoptive families to the curriculum:
 - “Adolescents and Psychological Trauma”
 - “Sensory integration for children that have suffered psychological trauma”
- At least 10 churches that start the prevention program Families count
- Strengthening and increasing the number of local networks to 20 counties
- Increasing the number of people exposed to the message of adoption

The most important goal for this year is to have 2020 children adopted in 2020.

MOLDOVA



In the last 3 years, we invested together with the leaders of the NGOs of Moldova to create a national team that promotes the dream that moves us: Moldova Without Orphans. We had the chance to see this project come together, May 21st-May 23rd, together with CERI to teach

different workshops for 200 adoptive parents and foster parents in the conference “The calling to be a parent”. Also, from November 22nd-23rd the first Summit of the Christian Moldova Without Orphans was held.



STORIES THAT INSPIRE US



C is from Constanța. He is married to A, and they have a little boy P. C was at the Summit, and he decided together with his wife to adopt. They were matched with a little girl A from Călărași, who is 3 years old, from the “hard to

adopt” list. She is diagnosed with spina bifida and other medical complications, but this hasn’t scared them. “A is our daughter and we want her to enjoy the warmth of our home.”



S. is from Iași. She is not married yet, but after she heard the extraordinary stories of friends from ARFO, she decided to adopt a little girl.

On June 11th she told us, “Today I am officially a mother. M. is my treasure.”



A and S are from Bucharest, and they have always wanted children. They thought about adoption because “God is the Father of the orphans. He has a heart full of compassion for the orphans; it’s extraordinary that we can imitate Him. More than this, we have experienced this. It is absolutely natural for a Christian to think about adoption. Our

first thought was to adopt 1 child, but God had another plan. We said that we wanted 2 children and in the end, we found 3 on the list. On October 15th, they became our children. It’s strange to all of a sudden hear “mommy, mommy” throughout the house but it is “Absolutely beautiful.”

PARTNERS



Romanian Without Orphans Alliance (ARFO) is affiliate to World Without Orphans (WWO) and Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAFO)



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