



annual report 2007

empathy in social development

ruhama foundation





**fundatia**  **Ruhama**

desvoltare comunitara

asistenta sociala

# INDEX

Chairman's message	2
Our programs and services	6
Social services	8
Homecare Services	12
Citizen Advice Bureau Oradea	18
Counselling and Support Centre for Parents and Children	24
Education	30
Roma Education Centre	34
Summer Kindergartens 2007	42
Parents School	50
Professional training & employment services	54
Professional training programs	55
Employment services	58
Community development & housing	62
Building social houses	66
Strengthening the Roma voice	70
Civic education in Roma communities	76
Roma Youth Forum	80
Advocacy & public policies	84
About us	92
Financial data	94
Vision, mission, values	96
Grantors, partners, collaborators, networks	96
Organizational chart	98
Team	99
Contacts & donations	99

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**Email:** office@ruhama.ro  
**Tel.:** 004 0259 456 180  
**Web:** www.ruhama.ro

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Ruhama Foundation.

The fundamental value of our organisation is empathy. Every day we try to feel what the beneficiaries of our work feel, ensuring in this way that we never stray from the foundation's mission, that of developing programmes and services that answer to the social needs of vulnerable groups and communities.



Marian Daragiu, chairman of Ruhama Foundation, coordinating the program of building social houses in the Roma community in the village of Telechiu, Țetchea commune, Bihor County.

Reading through the foundation's statistics regarding the number of people that have benefited from our programmes and services, I was enthusiastically expected to find that, with each passing year, their number would shrink, the more the Foundation, alongside its partners and collaborators, managed to offer solutions to the problems the citizens were confronted with. With the efforts of an extended interdisciplinary team, day after day, dozens of citizens are directly assisted or are in contact with Foundation team members, increasing the number of people that benefit from the organization's services and programmes. Their names indicate the fact that every time it is someone else. The problems are all within the same spectrum of needs: social, educational, economical, and informational. I would firstly like to thank them. The people who never stop fighting for resolving their issues, the colleagues at the Foundation that never stopped believing in the Foundation's mission even though there were some truly difficult moments, you, our collaborators and partners, representatives of local, county and central institutions, for the constructive dialogues. To you - the donors, financiers and entrepreneurs - that found it in your hearts to offer logistic, human or financial support to our propositions of contributing to the process of improving the living conditions of our peers,

we extend out grateful thanks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marian Daragiu".

Marian Daragiu, sociologist  
Chairman, Founder  
Ruhama Foundation



Ruhama Foundation provides support for children and young adults that lack the adequate resources, in order to facilitate their access to education. Education is the central pylon around which the organisation builds programmes of community development. The foundation's programmes have nurtured the dreams of some Roma students like the promising Malvina.

### SHE SAYS...

*My name is Malvina, I'm 21 years old and I'm a third year student of International Relations and European Studies. Despite the difficulties I've had to deal with in life, I've managed to fulfil my dream of attending university, and for this I have my grandparents to thank, who closely watched over my upbringing and education, and the Ruhama Foundation which gave me enormous support. Life's hardships have influenced me to focus towards human sciences, the reason for which I attended a high school with this speciality, and why later on I couldn't decide between continuing in medicine or international relations, a new and exciting field. Eventually, I opted for international relations, this being closer to my previous training.*

*I contacted the Ruhama Foundation in the spring of 2007, when I was invited by my former English teacher to take part in the inauguration of the Roma Education Centre. The speech delivered by the president of the organisation moved me deeply and convinced me to come back and get involved in their activities, to the extent that time and my resources permitted it. For a year I tried to contribute to foundation projects of community development, acquiring a series of new abilities and knowledge, that I feel will prove useful in my own career. Thanks to the foundation, I had the opportunity to work with a young and dynamic team, to participate in classes and workshops, to help other Roma ethnics for myself.*

*The Ruhama Foundation has been a real support for me, providing me with financial support for rent, food and transportation expenses and thus allowing me to concentrate on study activities, without having to worry about money or taking a job. I wish to thank the Ruhama Foundation team for the lesson taught: help others in need and fight to improve oneself. The year spent with the organisation I will forever remember as a milestone.*

**Malvina**, student of International Relations





our programs

If 10 years ago the team at the Ruhama Foundation proposed to develop social assistance programs for disadvantaged people, the work and experience accumulated with time's passing have led to the development of a new perspective and new ways of approaching social phenomena which would reorientate the organization's resources: we have gradually learnt that charity work and even providing social services to the community does not solve but a small part of the problems citizens confront. We have learnt that problems are never simple, that their complexity derives from the interactions of social, economic, educational, housing, infrastructural, health and work needs. In order to improve the quality of life of a vulnerable family the Foundation has to approach all the facets of this reality in a structured and integrated way, professionally, with a cross-function team and with quality standards well defined and assumed. This new multi-facet approach to disadvantaged groups and communities is found today in the programs and social services that we develop.

#### SOCIAL SERVICES

Ruhama Foundation has established a series of social services to respond to the basic needs of some vulnerable social categories. Our organization provides the following accredited social services: Homecare Services for the elderly and people with disabilities in Oradea, the Oradea Citizen Advice Bureau and the Counselling and Support Centre for Parents and Children in Bihor.

#### EDUCATION

The educational programs that target children from disadvantaged communities have been consolidated throughout 2007 in 23 communities in Bihor County and have generated a series of worthy results as well as best practices promoted at a nation-wide scale by the Ministry of Education.

#### PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Professional training programs have been developed in 2007 in order to meet the demands of the workforce market as well as to provide financial self-support for the social activities of the Foundation. The organization has started a project to establish the CAREER Centre for Orientation, Mediation and Professional Training in Oradea, aimed at young jobseekers and unemployed.

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

Community development and housing programs have known a new approach in 2007 geared towards mobilising and empowering the members of the communities in groups of local initiative which in turn have managed to solve a part of the community's problems with the aid of the Organization.

#### ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC POLICIES

Public policies are a new field in which the Foundation started work in 2006, with the aim of proposing changes in public policies at a legislative level, both locally and nation-wide, in order to improve programs and services aimed at vulnerable groups through advocacy campaigns..



**BIRÓ Rozália**  
deputy mayor  
Oradea City Hall

"The Ruhama Foundation is one of the most active NGOs in our city. It has managed to become a prime actor in the field of NGO provided social services in Oradea through the objectives it has set out, through their extended work, through their exigent view on the quality of provided services, through its flexibility and openness. Their professionalism and their care have drawn the appreciation and attention of Oradea's local administration as well as mine personally."



social services

## OVERVIEW

The Ruhama Foundation is an accredited provider of social services since 2003, when it laid the groundwork for services of homecare for the elderly and people with disabilities. Later, the range of homecare services was extended to include medical care at the request of the beneficiaries, most of whom are immobilized and have difficult access to medical services. Concurrently, correlating the Phare financing opportunities with the social needs of the citizens, the foundation set up a new service: the Citizen Advice Bureau in Oradea, which provides free information and counselling services on a daily basis since October 2002. The most recently created social service is the Counselling and Support Centre for Parents and Children, launched in 2007, whose purpose is to solve social cases identified in the daily field work in disadvantaged communities, especially in order to help families maintain/reintegrate children in school.

During the 5 years of continuous supply of social services, the Ruhama Foundation has helped the public authorities in Bihor County with the development and improvement of social services indispensable to the Romanian society. With the foundation's support, the following social services, taken over by the authorities, were developed: the Counselling and Information Centre in Tinca with the partnership of the Tinca Town Hall; the "Cuore" Temporary Centre for Children in Oradea with the partnership of the Oradea Social Community Administration; the Children's Day Centre in Haieu, the "Prichindel" Children's Day Centre in Rontau, the Social Canteen and the Community Centre for Information and Counselling in Sanmartin in partnership with Sanmartin Town Hall; the Day Centre for the Elderly in Alesd and the Social Canteen in Alesd in partnership with Alesd City Hall. In 2008 the Ruhama Foundation has plans to develop two multifunctional social centres for the Roma communities in Alesd-Obor and Telechiu, in partnership with Alesd City Hall and Tetchea Town Hall, whose main function will be that of an educational day centre for children.

### Social services provided by the Ruhama Foundation in 2007

- :: Homecare services
  - :::: homecare assistance for the elderly
  - :::: homecare and physical therapy for people with disabilities
  - :::: medical homecare
- :: Citizen Advice Bureau Oradea
- :: The Counselling and Support Centre for Parents and Children



Zeno TIPTER  
mayor  
Aleşd Town Hall

"It is a great pleasure to talk in a few words about Ruhama Foundation, one of the most famous foundations from Bihor and more, due to their professionalism, competence and credibility earned in time. The cooperation with Ruhama Foundation has started many years ago, announcing to be very worthy for everyone involved. We can be proud today with some of the achievements obtained together: two social services focused on elderly and low income people - Daycare Centre for Elderly and Social Canteen. We are fully convinced that the partnership with Ruhama Foundation is a best practice for other public administrations as well. NGOs' involvement in the social life of the community is welcomed. I must congratulate Ruhama Foundation for everything they have done, not only in Aleşd but in the entire Bihor County."



Ruhama Foundation assists the elderly and people with disabilities in order for them to enjoy life better, help regain their dignity and autonomy. The foundation's homecare services have contributed to an increase in the quality of life for some senior citizens, like Mrs. Maria.

SHE SAYS...

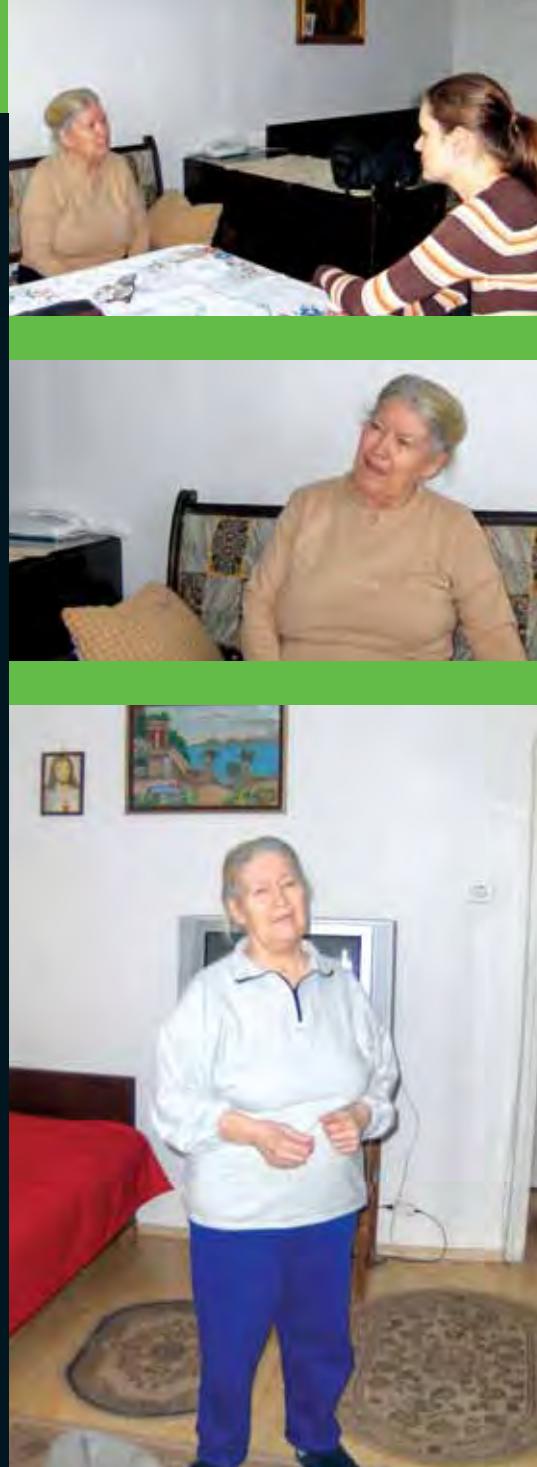
*My name is Maria, I'm 77 years old, I live in Oradea and I have benefited from the homecare services of the Ruhama Foundation since June 2007. The support I get from the foundation is with my shopping: at the grocery store, at the market; cleaning: vacuuming, dusting, cleaning windows; accompaniment: to pay various bills, to buy medicine.*

*I would like to thank the Ruhama Foundation for the help and support it has given me; I thank all the people in the foundation for their kind and humane way of treatment, for their understanding and help, especially Camelia – social worker, Ildiko – nurse, and the caregivers Ana and Illeana. I still require their support because I am very ill and I don't have anyone to help me.*

*I only have gratitude for the foundation and had I known of their existence 4 years ago, I wouldn't have had these problems with my apartment, no more headaches, no lawsuit, no more endless calls, sleepless nights, knocks on my door from strangers brought by the person with whom I signed a contract with a care giving clause for food, medicine, and expenses in exchange for my apartment, and who did not respect the agreement.*

*I would like to recommend to other people like myself to look to benefit from the services provided by the Ruhama Foundation, as well as the help and support they extend; I may add with the love that we, the elderly, need.*

Maria, assisted elder



If an acquaintance could be needing homecare, would you recommend our service?



According to the annual evaluation of the homecare services provided by the Ruhama Foundation, the vast majority of elderly people assisted would not waver to recommend this service to someone they knew in need of homecare. The evaluation of the beneficiaries' satisfaction in 2007 has offered a positive feedback regarding the quality of the service, the types of service provided and the quality of the personnel involved.



In 2007, the Ruhama Foundation, through its homecare services, became a member of the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities.

[www.easdp.eu](http://www.easdp.eu)

## HOME CARE SERVICES

The homecare services provided by the Ruhama Foundation extend assistance in three fields: social assistance, socio-medical and medical assistance. The beneficiaries of the homecare services are elderly people, who have reached the standard age of retirement, and people with disabilities, while medical care is given to any person, in accordance with the proceedings of the County Health Department. The area of activity for the homecare services is the city of Oradea and sector 5 in Bucharest.

Ruhama Foundation is accredited and authorized to provide 3 types of services:

- :: homecare assistance for the elderly;
- :: homecare and physical therapy for people with disabilities;
- :: medical homecare.

The homecare services provide three different categories of assistance:

**Social assistance** can comprise of information regarding different rights and facilitation to: the minimum guaranteed income, social canteen, disability applications, treatment or vacation tickets; information regarding services provided by other NGOs; help with legal proceedings addressed to competent institutions; participation at social and cultural activities/events; help paying certain services and current obligations: taxes, phone bill, electric bill, cable bill, maintenance fees; help with housekeeping and shopping; providing meals-on-wheels type services.

**Socio-medical assistance** may involve help with personal hygiene, feeding the assisted, services of physical therapy, massage and medical gymnastics, accompanied by medical services.

**Medical assistance** can consist of monitoring the physiological parameters: temperature, breathing, blood pressure, help administrating medicine; caring for simple wounds, bed soars and other types of assistance.

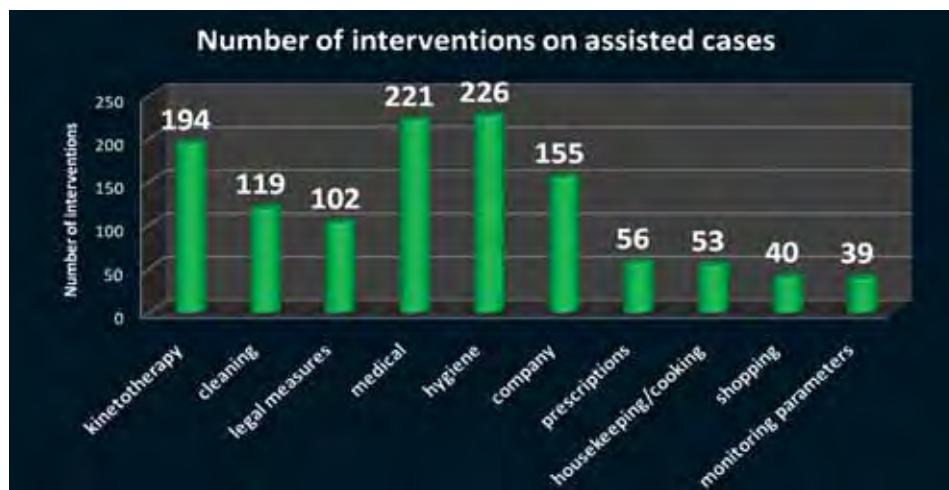
### The homecare team

In 2007 the homecare service employed the help of: 1 coordinator, 2 social workers, 1 nurse, 1 physical therapist, 1 physiotherapist, 5 care givers, 10 students doing their major field of study practice work and 5 volunteers. Of the foundation's care givers, three have a qualification diploma for the occupation of elder care giver received by graduating qualification courses held by the Department of Professional Training of the Ruhama Foundation.

## The annual monitoring of the beneficiaries

On a monthly basis, the Ruhama Foundation assists, through its homecare services, 90 people of which, on average, 30 people receive free assistance, while the rest make a small contribution depending on the person's income and those of its supporters. During 2007 we have recorded a number of 115 new requests, of which 3 were brought forth by public institutions: the Social Community Administration Oradea and the Oradea Proximity Police. Of the total requests, 71 were admitted within the service. Moreover, we have observed an increase in the number of beneficiaries of this service by a number of 10 more persons, compared to December 2006.

## The annual monitoring by intervention type



INTERVENTIONS	2007												Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	
Kinetotherapy	25	24	21	19	20	22	10	10	12	13	10	8	194
Hygiene	15	17	13	13	12	11	6	7	8	9	7	5	119
Housekeeping/cooking	7	17	1	3	1	4	9	9	9	9	7	6	102
Cleaning	9	9	17	15	21	20	24	21	23	23	18	21	221
Company	14	17	17	25	18	10	21	27	21	18	15	23	226
Shopping	8	2	1	1	1	2	21	23	24	25	24	25	165
Legal measures	3	4	2	3	17	24	1	0	1	1	0	0	56
Prescriptions	5	7	9	8	8	6	2	2	2	3	2	2	53
Monitoring physical parameters	5	10	10	4	4	2	2	0	0	2	0	1	40
Medical	2	1	3	6	4	1	3	4	2	3	4	3	39



**Ovidiu KOMORNYIK**  
artist and composer

"I am one of the persons who confidently called upon the services provided by the Ruhama Foundation, at a moment when I needed professional help for the care of my aunt who lived in Oradea. The social and medical assistance service for the elderly that this foundation provides has proved to be highly professional, competent and suited for the situation it had to deal with. I thank them for their help and the empathy they have shown."

## Funding sources of the Homecare Services



The executed budget for home-care services for 2007 is 48.291 Euro. The average monthly cost for each beneficiary is 47.34 Euro/month.

### Financing sources of the service:

- 24.835 Euro are granted by the Ministry of Work, Family and Equality of Chances;
- 8.900 Euro come from contributions of the assisted persons;
- 4.428 Euro are granted by the County Agency for Employment
- 10.128 Euro are ensured from the foundation's own resources.



## Activities

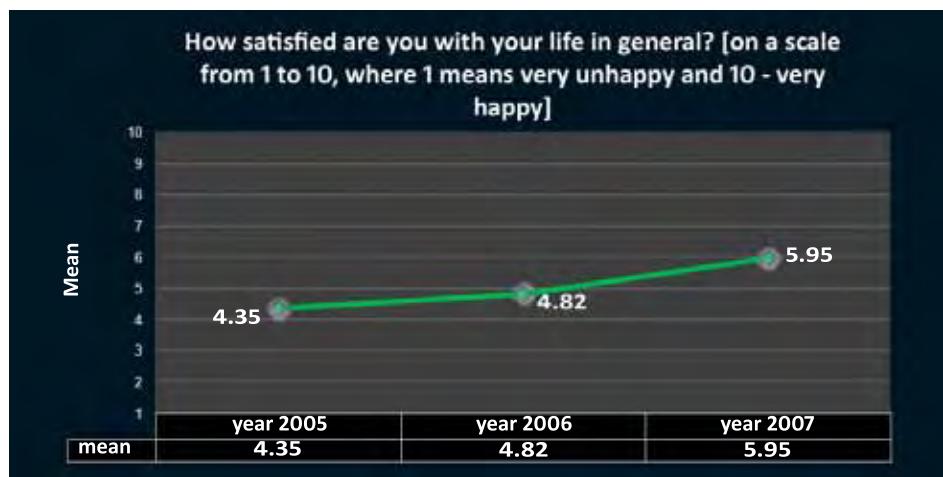
- :: For the Easter Holidays, the service's team provided food packages for the assisted beneficiaries, thanks to the financial support received from the Arnos Company and the Zaharul Oradea sugar factory;
- :: For Easter, Christmas and with the celebration of the Month of the Elderly, the service's team handed out food packages to the beneficiaries residing in Oradea, as well as to those in Bucharest's sector 5, a part of the packages having been supplied by the Oradea Social Community Administration;
- :: The service's team facilitated the grant of meal tickets from the Oradea Social Community Administration for the assisted elderly that had a pension under 200 lei in December 2006;
- :: A part of the service's beneficiaries took part in a symphony concert organized in collaboration with the Oradea Social Community Administration on the celebration of the Day of the Elderly;
- :: In May, the service's assisted participated in a social event held at the Cofetaria Scala, the service's sponsor;
- :: The practising students were in charge of the survey regarding the degree of satisfaction of the people benefiting from the organisation's services;
- :: The foundation organised the City's Seniors event - a trip to the Baile Felix Resort, at the Nufarul Hotel;
- :: Within the "Together: The elders and the students of Bihor County" project, financed by the Bihor County Council, the foundation held an event entitled "Two generations – One Santa Claus" – organised for the Christmas Holidays at the Atrium Hotel in Oradea, an event in which prizes were awarded to 5 senior citizens who contributed in a special way to the development and promoting of Bihor County;
- :: The team members took part in a meeting held by the Austrian Embassy, through the Bureau of the Attaché on social problems, whose theme was the support of the elderly, preparing a project strategy;
- :: The service's team took part in an exchange programme, financed through the PHARE programme, in the Austrian town of Gleisdorf, at the non-governmental organisation "Chance B", where they improved their skills and knowledge regarding the services provided, social services methods of approach, organising and running modes.

## **Actions for promoting the service**

- :: 21 press releases;
- :: 2 television appearances;
- :: radio show;
- :: flyers distribution during Volunteer Week, promoting activities during the events held by the Oradea Unique Centre for Volunteering and the Oradea Social Community Administration (ASCO).

## **Evaluating the satisfaction of the beneficiaries**

Every six months, the Ruhama Foundation evaluates the degree of satisfaction of the beneficiaries, evaluation is done through students or volunteers, in order not to influence the opinions of the beneficiaries. Accordingly, in May 2007 questionnaires were handed out to determine the degree of satisfaction of the people benefiting from the provided services. Most of the people assisted consider that their life has sustained a considerable improvement since they have been benefiting from the homecare services provided by the Ruhama Foundation.



The beneficiaries have mentioned that the quality of the Homecare Service has increased with the introduction of service quality standards, a reason for which they would recommend the services provided by the Ruhama Foundation to other people in need. If we were to compare the data collected in 2005 and 2006 to that from 2007, we can see a significant increase of the quality, both in the way of homecare and that of the services provided.



**Antin BARA**  
beneficiary

"I have been benefiting from the Ruhama Foundation's services for 3 years now, since my wife was ill and I needed someone to take care of her, with her personal hygiene as well as help with cooking and cleaning. Lidia (the care giver) was the one that helped me a lot and stayed with us until my wife passed away two and a half years ago. Now I get help with my cooking, weekly cleaning, and monthly medicines. I have two kids that help me with my shopping and paying my bills, and as far as cleaning is concerned, a lady from the foundation comes in once a week and helps me with it. I am very pleased with these services and with their kindness and support."



#### SHE SAYS...

*I have been a beneficiary of the Ruhama Foundation's services since 2006 – physical therapy for my husband who is diagnosed with grade I disability. We took a break for a few months but came back because we needed to get him more mobilised; due to his health state he did not fully recover and he has no balance. Together with the foundation's physical therapists we resumed the exercises recommended by the recovery physician, in parallel with the temporary recovery that the patient is doing in the hospital. Meanwhile, through the foundation's services, we managed to monitor his TA and TQ values by way of daily measurements, values that reflect the evolution of his health. Moreover, this monitoring process is needed by the family physician to fill out the medical prescription.*

*It would be efficient if the foundation had a general practitioner at its disposal to keep account of all the cases the foundation has helped with, in order to draw up a biography that would reflect the way the organisation has supported the assisted in time.*

*An exceptional moment worth mentioning was when the foundation held a social event on the Day of the Elderly, which was a pleasant surprise for the assisted as well as their families. I would like to extend an invitation to the foundation to hold more such events, to the extent of their possibilities, on other occasions.*

**Viorica**, wife of an assisted elder



# PHOTO GALLERY





The activity of informing and counselling done at the BCC Oradea is based on 4 principles that ensure a maximum accessibility for any member of the community:

- INDEPENDENCE
- IMPARTIALITY
- GRATUITY
- CONFIDENTIALITY



**BIROUL DE CONSILIERE  
PENTRU CETĂȚENI  
ORADEA**

Citizens can access BCC Oradea, at their disposal for 6 hours daily, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between the hours of 8 and 14, and Monday and Wednesday between 11 and 17, at its location at 21 General Magheru Boulevard, apt. 159, Oradea 410057; by phone at: 0256/479.454 or by e-mail at: [consiliere@ruhama.ro](mailto:consiliere@ruhama.ro)

## CITIZEN ADVICE BUREAU ORADEA

The Oradea Citizen Advice Bureau (BCC) is a service of public interest that comes in response to the needs of the citizens for information and counselling, in order for them to receive increased access to information regarding their rights and duties, to benefit from counselling with the possible solutions for the problems they are confronted with and to guide them in using public services. BCC Oradea was founded by the Ruhama Foundation in collaboration with the Oradea Social Community Administration and Oradea City Hall in October 2002, with the financial support of the European Union, through its Phare programme.

Founding the BCC in Oradea comes in support of the citizens, direct and indirect beneficiaries of this service, by facilitating their access to information given in a common language, in order for them to be aware of the rights and obligations they have according to the law and to inform them of the public and private institutions capable of helping them solve the crisis situations they are confronted with.

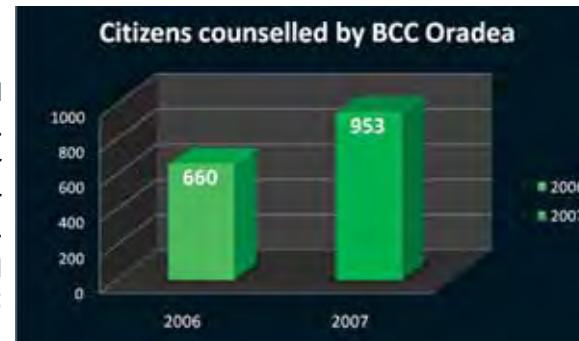
**Domains** in which the BCC offers information and counselling:

- |                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| :: public health           | :: property laws     |
| :: social assistance       | :: taxes             |
| :: social insurances       | :: education         |
| :: labor relationships     | :: notary procedures |
| :: consumer protection     | :: child protection  |
| :: civil rights and duties | :: public services.  |

### Assisted citizens

In 2007, 953 citizens accessed the services of BCC Oradea. Since its opening in October 2002 and until December 2007, BCC Oradea has assisted citizens in Oradea and Bihor County in over 4.145 problems they had to confront.

Regarding the number of people that have accessed the services of BCC Oradea we can observe an increase in 2007 from 2006. If in 2006, a number of 660 citizens were assisted, in 2007 the number of informed and counselled citizens is 953.



## **Group counselling**

In 2007, BCC Oradea held 14 group counselling sessions for 138 persons held at the Oradea Maximum Security Penitentiary and offered group counselling for the families of the terminally-ill persons assisted by the Hospice Emanuel. The actions of the BCC are positively appreciated both by the direct beneficiaries, whom after their release directly contact the bureau, as well as by the Penitentiary.

## **A bureau with views towards Europe**

On the occasion of Europe Day, on May 9th 2007, the Citizen Advice Bureau Oradea initiated two actions meant to inform Oradea school children about the institutions, symbols and values of the European Union. One of these actions took place at the Onisifor Ghibu High School with the participation of 9 groups of children from the forth grade, and the second one took place at the Oltea Doamna School with a contest on European themes in which 5 groups of forth graders competed in. All the children and teachers that took part in the events received European diplomas from the BCC Oradea.

## **Citizens with rights**

In 2007, BCC Oradea signed 6 partnerships with public and private institutions:

**County Centre for Prevention, Evaluation and Anti-drug Counselling Oradea** - a partnership meant to ensure the legal frame for cooperation between the two parts, according to the capacities they set forth through their establishing documents; developing programmes or common actions for the prevention of drug consumption; organising specialist training courses; developing programmes for the evaluation, counselling, treatment, rehabilitation and social integration of addicts;

**Pro Deo Foundation** - for facilitating the access of disadvantaged teenagers and young adults in Oradea to services of counselling, social assistance and consulting, with the objective of social integration;

**Hospice Emanuel** - to ensure free information and counselling services to the recipients of the Hospice Emanuel services;

**Smiles Association** - for the mutual information regarding cases in which the social services created by the two organisations can intervene;

**The Oradea Maximum Security Penitentiary** - for the information and counselling of convicts in the specified fields, with the objective of preparing them for liberation and social integration;

**The Bihor County Police Department** - for the mutual information regarding the solving of cases, the mutual furtherance of services, the counselling of citizens in order to prevent victimisation, and common activities that come in support of the citizen.

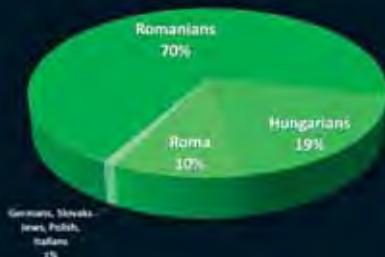


**Gabriel TICA**

head of education service  
Oradea Penitentiary

"We greatly appreciate the collaboration with the Ruhama Foundation over the course of 2007, Ruhama has become a serious partner in tackling the social problems faced by inmates that are at the end of their stay and the beginning of a new journey. The information supplied by the BCC team to the inmates comes to aid the efforts of the penitentiary's specialists in solving their social problems, supplying quality counselling to smooth the transition towards an easier and faster social re-integration of this social category often marginalised and excluded in Romanian society. We believe that in 2008 our collaboration will meet our expectations, with premises for expanding our area of activities."

## BCC beneficiaries by ETHNICS



Of the 4000 citizens that have benefited from the services of BCC Oradea, 40% are women and 60% men. According to age 24% of the cases are under 25, 44% are between 26 and 50 years old and 32% are over 50. A high percentage of these are citizens with low incomes (60%), the rest with medium incomes. BCC has serviced Romanians (70%), Hungarians (19%), Roma (10%) but also Germans, Slovaks, Jews, Polish and Italians. With regard to the level of education, 15% of the beneficiaries have primary studies, 54% secondary studies, 24% university studies and 7% are without any. The unemployed and the retired are the categories that most frequently call on the services of the BCC.

## Other activities

Alongside the County Centre for Prevention, Evaluation and Anti-drug Counselling Oradea, BCC Oradea has taken part in the information campaign regarding the prevention of drug use among school children, activity that took place in Oradea's schools and at the round table "Oradea, an anti-drug city". Moreover the Oradea Citizen Advice Bureau took part in the National Conference "Informing and information – the Romanian workforce migration to the European Union" and at the training seminar "Together for a European vote". BCC Oradea held a public debate around the time of the European elections with the theme "The 25th November European elections – the first European vote for Romania". The participation at the debate on "Public integrity in the Justice Department" was of real interest, as well as the participation in the meeting held by APADOR – CH, dedicated to the access to information of public interest and the determination of the degree of awareness and human rights compliance.

## BCC at print

Throughout the month of May BCC Oradea held events for promoting its services through Oradea City Hall's Newspaper, a freely distributed journal. In this way citizens learnt that the bureau provides information and counselling in the 12 large public interest domains. It was mentioned that the provided services are free of charge, impartial, confidential and independent from any outside intervention of individuals or parties, be they of public or private domain, and that through its objective, BCC Oradea stimulates an active citizen participation in community life. The published article emphasized that the BCC comes in aid of citizens interested in knowing their rights and duties and that as a result of a strong collaboration between BCC Oradea, Oradea City Hall and other local or county institutions and through a good citizen awareness, BCC Oradea has built a data base of specific information of general interest for citizens.

The media partnership will continue in 2007 with the local journal Crisana where, in its "Citizen Courier" column, solved cases and answers to reader inquiries will be published on a weekly basis. Media exposure of BCC Oradea's activities and the BCC Oradea's responses in the press to different problems raised by citizens have known a significant increase this year, the number of published articles in 2007 being greater than that in 2006. While in 2007 there were 71 published articles about BCC Oradea's activity, in 2006 there were only 23.

UNIUNEA EUROPEANĂ



Proiect finanțat prin Phare

## Projects

Starting with December 2007 and over a period of 10 months, the Ruhama foundation will be implementing, in partnership with the Social Community Administration Oradea, the project "Strengthening the Citizen Advice Bureau Oradea", financed by the European Union through its programme Phare /2005/017-553.01.02 Strengthening Democracy in Romania, Component 1 - Citizen Advice Bureaus, 1.1. Strengthening existing Citizen Advice Bureaus. The project aims to solidify BCC Oradea's capability of strengthening, diversifying and improving the quality of the services it provides as a response to the needs of the citizens and to ensure its long-term sustainability.

The main activities within the project are: providing information and counselling services to the citizens of Oradea; information and counselling for people with motor disability at the headquarters of the ACCESOR service; collective information and counselling for social beneficiaries of the services in the county; strengthening the access to BCC Oradea's services for people in the Oradea penitentiary alongside a delegate of the Oradea Social Community Administration; providing collective information and counselling services to disadvantaged citizens in 10 towns in Bihor county: Cefa, Sacuieni, Alesd, Gepiu, Ineu, Curtuiseni, Tileagd, Osorhei, Dobresti, Lazareni; providing information and counselling services for the elderly people in Multifunctional Centres; actions for promoting the services.

## The National Association of Citizen Advice Bureaus

The National Association of Citizen Advice Bureaus coordinates the activities for the development of services and the promotion of Citizen Advice Bureaus, represents them in front of public authorities and it proposes to elaborate documents with potential impact on the development of social services and policies on the basis of the information supplied by the BCC network. ANBCC is comprised of 50 organisations that have set up Citizen Advice Bureaus. The President of the Ruhama Foundation, Marian Daragiu has been elected to fill the position of President of ANBCC for two mandates, until the year 2008.

BCC Oradea was the first in the country to be accredited as a social service of the 50 BCCs that form the ANBCC National Network and as well the first social service to receive accreditation on behalf of the County Accreditation Commission for Providers of Social Services within the Department of Work, Social Solidarity and Family Bihor, alongside two other social services provided by the Ruhama Foundation.



Rodica FURNICĂ

director

The National Association of  
Citizen Advice Bureaus

"The Ruhama Foundation through BCC Oradea is a member of ANBCC. In 2007 Ruhama has shown itself to be a liaison between the citizens of Oradea and their need for information as well as a successful partner in shaping a development direction for the ANBCC. The foundation has been an example for the members of ANBCC, contributing to promoting better social advocacy practices. We believe that ANBCC's success is in great part due to the Ruhama Foundation. I have known the foundation since 2005 and I have had the pleasure of working with its president in the field of developing services for disadvantaged groups. I can also add that from the financier's point of view any support given to this foundation becomes an added value for the community."



Ruhama Foundation helps disadvantaged families prevent their children dropping out from school or getting separated from their families. The Counselling and Support Centre for Parents and Children has managed to bring back hope to vulnerable families like that of Alexandru.

**HE SAYS...**

*After the death of my wife I lost all hope; I was left with nine children of ages between 3 and 20 and, an invalid no less, with an amputated leg. I drowned my sorrows in alcohol, neglecting my family in the process and my children started to beg so they wouldn't go hungry.*

*Although I was in a pitiful situation and I had no more will to live, I had an epiphany and I searched for possibilities to get out of this hardship. It was in this way that I got in touch with Mr. Balog, a social worker for the Ruhama Foundation and my neighbour in the Obor Roma community in Alesd. He encouraged me to follow the example of Mr. B. Vasile who was in a similar situation himself, having an amputated leg and still managing to work as a street cleaner in the town of Alesd. I gladly listened to his advice but in order to put them to practice I needed a prosthesis. After this discussion I felt like I could once again become a support for my family, aiding them to the best of my efforts and being there for them.*

*I was the recipient of a medical pension but this was not enough to cover all the family expenses. I learnt from the Counselling and Support Centre for Parents and Children that I was eligible for a disability pension which in fact I got less than three months later.*

*Today, because of the Ruhama Foundation, I have come into possession of a prosthesis that helps me a great deal, I can even work around the house to help my family and so the children don't have to beg anymore. I can say that I have regained my love for life and that is one of my biggest wishes today is to help others in need. Hope is the last to die.*

Alexandru, CCS beneficiary





The cases assisted by the Counselling and Support Centre for Parents and Children cover a wide spectrum of problems: fixing a house that ran the risk of collapsing over a 6 month year-old, acquiring wheelchairs for a 26 year-old man and a 20 year-old woman, support given to a family with eight and one family with three children after a fire burnt down their home, counselling numerous poor families to encourage school participation of their children.



## COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT CENTRE FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

The Counselling and Support Centre for Parents and Children (CCS) social service was created in response to the needs identified throughout the implementation of the project “The development and promotion of educationally inclusive and sustainable programmes for Roma children through integrated community efforts , by founding the Roma Education Centre in Bihor county”, financed by the Roma Education Fund. Throughout the project’s activity, during the school year 2006-2007, having taken place in 11 towns in Bihor County, the reasons of school un-attendance or even school drop out were analyzed and frequent social causes were found for them.

The proceedings of establishing the social service began by requesting the help of the National Authority for Children’s Rights Protection (ANPDC) for a recommendation of the most appropriate type of service needed in relation to the reported cases, respectively the solicitations for disability aid, medical problems, poverty problems, limited access to medical care for children with severe health issues, child placement requests, problems of an educational nature etc. Following the identification of the Counselling and Support Centre for Parents and Children as a solution best fitting for assisting the social cases identified in the fieldwork, the Ruhama Foundation filed the documentation for accrediting CCS as a social service provider to the Department of Work and Social Protection Bihor.

The following **types of assistance** make up the activity of the CCS:

- :: counsellng people on a variety of problems;
- :: counsellng parents in order to suit the needs of their children;
- :: strengthening the abilities and knowledge of parents regarding child care and education;
- :: counsellng parents to overcome difficult situations: divorce, job loss, family conflicts, chronic illnesses, the death of a spouse / that endanger the development of children or that generate risks of separating children from their family environments;
- :: assisting people in proceedings of acquiring documents;
- :: help for receiving facilities or legal rights;
- :: counsellng parents on themes of interest for the child’s well being;
- :: facilitating proceedings that target institutions, authorities or service providers;
- :: aiding and counsellng children with difficulties in development and/or integration in family, school or social and professional groups.

## **Categories of assisted beneficiaries**

- :: parents/extended families/foster families that require abilities/skills of child care adapted to the new psycho-pedagogic principles in the field;
- :: parents/extended families/foster families that live in disadvantaged environments with practising models of childcare and upbringing that do not correspond or are in contradiction with models generally accepted by the community;
- :: parents/extended families/foster families that observe the existence/apparition of family problems which affect the natural/harmonious development of a child or that favour manifesting children behaviours that endanger their family, social, school or professional integration;
- :: future parents who seek information before the birth of their child;
- :: children with development problems and/or difficulties integrating in their family, school environment or community in which they live.

CCS identifies clients with a background from the following **family categories** which present a high risk for children separation:

- :: homeless families;
- :: families with low incomes that benefit from social aid;
- :: families with one or both parents unemployed, deceased, illiterate, working abroad, imprisoned, or suffering from severe or chronic mental illness, or severe or chronic bodily illness;
- :: families that have abandoned children, institutionalised children, children with behavioural problems, children with frequent health issues or mental issues;
- :: families in which one or more children have dropped out of school;
- :: monoparental families;
- :: divorced families or families with children from other marriages;
- :: families with a history of alcohol or drug abuse, families in which prostitution, violence, begging, running away from home is practiced or where there is a risk of abuse;
- :: families that reject under-aged mothers;
- :: families that neglect the health, personal hygiene and education of the child;
- :: families with a history of physical, emotional or sexual abuse.

## **CCS team**

The Counselling and Support for Parents and Children's team is comprised of: 2 social workers, 1 jurist, 1 placement agent, 1 social service worker, 3 community facilitators.



**Jaco du PLESSIS**

chairman

Theranova Foundation

"We, at Foundation Theranova, have been honoured to be associated with such an experienced and committed group like Foundation Ruhama. We have closely and constantly felt their support and encouragement through our last years of collaboration. Their efficiency and drive to make a difference in the individual lives of persons in need, as well as in the Romanian Society as a whole, has shown their insight for solutions, into current and future challenges faced. I mention that Theranova has already served more than 1600 people with physical challenges like amputations and invalidity, positively impacting these persons and their families as well as many others in similar situations on a national level."



The activities for promoting the CCS service in 2007 were held at a county level, the mayors and the representatives of the town halls in the towns where the Ruhama Foundation is present with activities being informed of the services that the Counselling and Support Centre for Parents and Children can provide at a local level. Likewise, the leaders and key-representatives from over 30 disadvantaged communities were informed and prepared in order to report social cases to the CCS.



### Annual monitoring of the beneficiaries

Within the time period of June to December 2007, CCS received a number of 71 new reports with a total number of 198 people assisted. Of the total number of cases reported, 48 are cases observed by the CCS itself, 20 brought forth by the extended family, 2 reported by other institutions and 1 reported by the case manager for another institution. Of the total reports, 65 were admitted for assistance corresponding to CCS's fields of activity.

Upon registering the received reports, the CCS commenced case assistance involving the following county and local public authorities in these proceedings:

- :: The Department of Work and Social Protection;
- :: The Health Insurance Department;
- :: The County Pension Department;
- :: The Department for Social Assistance and Child Protection;
- :: The Oradea Realty Administration;
- :: The Neurology and Psychiatry Clinical Hospital in Oradea;
- :: The Obstetrics and Gynaecology Hospital in Oradea;
- :: The County Ambulance Service;
- :: The resident Town Halls of the solicitors.

The reports came to the attention of the CCS through a formal request each, and all the information collected subsequently during the assistance was archived in a case-file for each individual request.

### Results

In the time period before the accreditation of the CCS service, respectively August 2006 to June 2007, a number of 116 social case reports were filed and after June 2007 a number of 71 new reported cases. The total number of social cases brought to the attention of the Counselling and Support Centre for Parents and Children both before and after its accreditation is 186 social cases, which involve over 500 persons. In order to resolve the cases filed to the CCS it was necessary to initiate 152 legal intercessions targeted towards the competent public institutions and authorities and 40 counselling sessions with the beneficiaries and their families. A number of 52 cases are constantly monitored to detect the changes that can arise following the assistance provided by CCS.

## Other activities

On the 29th of October 2007 the Counselling and Support Centre for Parents and Children held a visit in Balnaca, the commune of Suncuius with the objective of informing the Roma community with regards to the problems of disability. The meeting was attended by 50 Roma ethnics. The points discussed in the briefing covered the following aspects:

- :: information with regard to the eligibility for disability aid for children/adults (degrees of handicap, necessary paperwork, the competent institutions where they need to be filed – the institution, its address and the working hours);
- :: information regarding the personal assistant;
- :: rights and facilities for people with disability (children and adults);
- :: duties of the solicitors;
- :: the CCS involvement.

In the time period between the 6th of November and the 18th of December 2007 the CCS was also involved in the programme entitled “The School for Parents” implemented by the Ruhama Foundation and financed by the Roma Education Fund and the Bihor County Counsel, a programme which was carried out in 10 disadvantaged communities in Bihor County. Meetings were held throughout this programme by the Local Support Groups (GSL) of the: County Network for Teachers of Inclusive Education, 15 meetings of the Local Initiative Groups (GIL) and 30 meetings with parents in each of the 15 target communities. These meetings were attended by 16 members of the Local Support Groups from 6 communities, 24 Roma and non-Roma teachers from 15 communities and a number of 482 parents (of whom 326 were Roma parents). Of the topics discussed at these meetings the following can be given as examples:

- :: Raising awareness regarding mobilisation and involvement of Roma parents;
- :: The social problems confronted by Roma communities;
- :: Ways of approaching the Roma communities;
- :: Good parenting skills;
- :: Alternative methods to punishment;
- :: School importance;
- :: The relationship between child, parents, school, community;
- :: The benefits of an efficient school-community collaboration;
- :: Violence in school and in the family.



**Bujor CHIRILĂ**

mayor

Tețchea Town Hall

"The actions of the Counselling and Support Centre are part of a series of programs held by Ruhama Foundation in the Tețchea commune with positive results for the Roma community. The partnership with Ruhama Foundation since 2006 has generated a long line of mutual achievements of which: the building of 5 social houses, organizing 2 summer kindergartens, counselling dozens of Roma families, help given to poor Roma children in order to enrol them in the first grade, the project for a social centre and the road rehabilitation. As partner of the foundation in many projects I can only congratulate and thank them for their activity for the benefit of disadvantaged communities."



#### SHE SAYS...

*In August the house in which our family lived, my husband, my 3 children of ages between 9 months and 4 years and my father, burnt down. We were left homeless, without a roof over our heads. I went to the town hall to try and get help so I wouldn't have to live on the streets with my children. My children shouldn't suffer for this and it's not fair that they should sleep outside. The mayor supplied us with an uninhabited house, which lacked the basics, was in bad shape and rat infested.*

*One day I got a visit from the gentlemen at the Ruhama Foundation who had heard of our trouble from the neighbours but I had no hopes that they would return. But they had a discussion with the mayor informing him of our situation and the measures that could be taken to resolve it.*

*Today, because of the Ruhama Foundation, which managed to get donations from generous people, we have the necessary furniture for the house we live in and we are no longer forced to sleep on the floor. My husband found a job as a mason in Oradea, and I receive allowance for the baby and we can better manage our finances. I can honestly say that my family is not the same anymore; we have all regained hope and faith that everything will be alright again.*

**Maria, CCS beneficiary**



# PHOTO GALLERY





# education

## OVERVIEW

The Ruhama Foundation has nurtured structured projects of community development beginning with the year 2002, among very poor communities, primarily Roma communities in Bihor County. If at that time the organization's course of action was targeted towards issues of health, public involvement, housing and infrastructure, it gradually crystallized into an integrated approach to the community, that addressed other fields interwoven in-between the fabric of poverty: education and employment. Today's course of action regarding disadvantaged communities put together by the organization is a very clear and systematic one, placing Education at the core of every other programme of community development. The years of work within these communities have substantiated the importance of education over all other aspects of life. Starting with 2006, Education has become the prime interest in our programmes of local development, and we have focused on increasing the level of school attendance in children that come from disadvantaged communities and also on reducing the alarming rate of school drop out among Roma children.

In 2007 the Ruhama Foundation set out to test the alternative educational models aimed at Roma children, closely tied in with the programmes of community development launched in over 20 communities around the county. Our organization is the only one at the national level that managed to mobilize the local actors and to organize 23 summer kindergartens for Roma and non-Roma children that have not attended public kindergarten, improving the methodology of the summer kindergartens of 2006. More than 500 children graduated the summer kindergartens in August 2007, and the ones enrolled in the first grade beginning September 2007 managed to fit in successfully with classmates that benefited from a preschool education of a minimum of one year in public kindergartens. The success obtained has validated the foundation's methodology, determining the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth to recommend this methodology on a nationwide scale to all educational actors planning to organize summer kindergartens for Roma children.

Apart from preschool education, the foundation has developed programmes aimed at Roma children enrolled in the primary and secondary learning cycles, Roma high school and University students, parents of Roma children and tutors that teach classes of Roma children. All the educational programmes geared towards these target groups are integrated into a unitary approach that generates sustainable long term results and is aimed at assisting the groups of Roma children along their school carriers until their integration into the work force, with a level of competence and ability well over that of their parents.



**Gheorghe SARĂU**

counsellor

The Ministry of Education,  
Research and Youth

"The Ruhama Foundation came into collaboration with the Ministry of Education four years ago and has proven to be an extremely active organisation both at a county as well as at a regional level, especially from an educational standpoint. We have to admit that the pilot programme of the summer kindergartens started in 2001 by the Ministry has reached new levels through the innovations achieved in 2006 and 2007 in the field of summer kindergartens by Ruhama, its partners and the Roma Education Fund. Judging from a quantitative as well as a qualitative point of view, the valuable human resources of the Foundation and the programmes it has deployed are at the level of organisations with vast experience in the educational field."

A young boy with dark hair, wearing a purple sweater with a green and pink geometric pattern and tan corduroy pants, sits barefoot on a wooden porch. He is positioned in front of a doorway with a stone wall to his left and a window above the door. The scene is bathed in bright sunlight.

Ruhama Foundation assists children from disadvantaged communities and poor families ever since they're little, starting with pre-school education, in order to guide and support them throughout their school career and later in their professional one. The Summer Kindergarten is an educational program that prepares for enrolment in the first grade children who haven't had the chance to go to public kindergartens, like Norbert.

### HE SAYS...

*Norbert is a 7 year-old from the Roma community in the village of Telechiu. He is now in the second grade and he attended the Summer Kindergarten organized by the Ruhama Foundation in Tetchea in 2006. He comes from a very poor family with 2 more children and a pregnant mother and used to live in a hut. Due to the lack of money his mother couldn't afford to sign Norbert up in a public kindergarten. His first contact with an educational environment was within the Summer Kindergarten. He first learnt a poem, learnt the colours, the animals, learnt how to draw, learnt what it means to be disciplined and even managed to get high grades and was praised by his teacher as being one of the best at the Summer Kindergarten.*

*What is most important is that his interest for learning continued in school where his teacher credited him as being a model pupil, considering that the Summer Kindergarten was very helpful in preparing him for the first grade. She observed the difference between Norbert, who attended the Summer Kindergarten and other children in the Roma community. Norbert already had the skills needed in the first grade, like holding a pencil. Likewise, his family is very glad that Norbert is praised by his teacher. The only thing that saddened his teacher was the fact that Norbert was always wearing the same old worn-out clothes. This situation was fixed a short while after because Norbert, as well as other hundreds of poor children, received a voucher consisting of new clothes and shoes from the Ruhama Foundation, which made him very happy. He finally had new clothes like his classmates.*

*Later on, Norbert's family was helped by the Ruhama Foundation and the mayor of Tetchea to build a home that has electricity, in which the children could study. His parents were encouraged by his teachers to support Norbert in order for him to succeed in life.*

Pardalian, Roma leader





The Roma Education Centre was established by the Ruhama Foundation in April 2007 as part of a project financed by the Roma Education Fund from Budapest. The programs and objectives set forth by the Centre are the result of an excellent collaboration between the Foundation's team and the financier's representatives - Judit Szira, inclusive education expert; Florin Nasture, facilitator for Romania and Mihai Surdu, public policy expert. The Education Fund has demonstrated that it is more than a financier; it has a clear objective and supports organizations with quality technical assistance.



## ROMA EDUCATION CENTRE

The complex problem of Roma children education and the lack of good practices in the field on a nation-wide level have indicated the necessity of establishing an educational centre for Roma that could conceive, test and validate the alternative educational programmes and propose changes in public educational policies at a legislative level. It is so that in April 2007 the Ruhama Foundation inaugurated the Roma Education Centre, that has its headquarters in its partner's campus, The University of Oradea - The Faculty of Social Sciences. With the financial aid from the Roma Education Fund, the financier of our educational programmes, we managed to renovate the building given to us by the University and to create an important resource in the field of education and social inclusion at the level of our county.

To shed some light on the problems facing Roma children education, we will present data collected from the county. In 2007 the over 40.000 Roma citizens in Bihor County faced a massive discrepancy regarding the access to education and the level of school performances between Roma and non-Roma children. Despite the rather favourable legislative circumstances we can observe a small school attendance rate and a very high school drop out rate among Roma children, all of these being correlated with low social-economic standards.

In 2007 the Ruhama Foundation carried out educational programmes in 23 Roma communities in the county. We have observed a low rate of school attendance of Roma children in general but with vast differences between age categories. The rate of school attendance decreases as kids grow older. If Roma children have a school attendance rate of 65.77% in primary school, in secondary school it drops to 43% and plunges to a dramatic 3.4% for high school. Moreover the kindergarten attending rate for Roma children is only 37.6%. In comparison the school attendance rate for the non-Roma population is much higher as follows: 96.5% for children between the ages of 7 and 10, 94.1% for children of ages between 11 and 14 and 73.7% for children between the ages of 15 and 18. As kindergarten is concerned the attendance rate of non-Roma children increases from 70% in the toddler grade to 90% in the pre-school preparation year.

These are the figures that the Roma Education Centre proposes to drastically alter in the following years by mobilizing all the human and financial resources available, in the context of education reform and that of Romania's integration in the European Union.

## The mission of the Roma Education Centre

The mission of the Roma Education Centre is to develop inclusive and sustainable educational models for Roma children that promote desegregation and integration, supported through integrated community efforts.

## The objectives of the Roma Education Centre

- :: to improve access to pre-school education for Roma children - for 500 Roma children with ages between 3 and 6 in 20 Roma communities in the county;
- :: to improve and monitor the access to education and school attendance of Roma children in primary school and to promote school desegregation - for 2000 Roma children with ages between 7 and 10 in 20 Roma communities in the county;
- :: to improve and monitor the access to education and school attendance of Roma children in secondary school and to promote school desegregation - for 1500 Roma children with ages between 11 and 14 in 20 Roma communities in the county;
- :: to develop a network of local Roma activists and to offer them training in fields like education, communication, counselling, with the aim of increasing their direct participation and that of other actors interested in community development, around the central objective of education;
- :: to develop and promote an inclusive and motivating educational programme by establishing a Voucher Programme targeted towards the poorest Roma and non-Roma children that enrol in the first grade and by establishing a Support Fund for the Roma children that present a high risk of school drop out due to the family's financial status;
- :: to capitalize and disseminate good nation-wide practices and to implement tested and validated educational programmes for both children and parents.

The creation of the Educational Centre has been one of the objectives of the project "The development and promotion of sustainable and inclusive educational programmes for Roma children through integrated community efforts, by founding the Roma Education Centre in Bihor County" financed by the Roma Education Fund and implemented in partnership with the School Inspectorate of Bihor County, the Institution of Prefect - the county office for Roma, and the University of Oradea - Faculty of Social Sciences.



Judit SZIRA

senior adviser

Roma Education Fund, Budapest, Hungary

"The project implemented by Ruhama Foundation "ROMA EDUCATION CENTRE Developing and promoting inclusive and sustainable educational Programs" is rated as a best practice in our internal overall assessment. During the two years of implementation we were very happy to see the achievements of our investment in Romania through this project. From the very beginning we understood that this project is clearly in line with the priorities of REF Strategy for Romania. In general our relationship with Ruhama has developed very positively. An important work has been accomplished during 2 years, mainly through the « Roma Education Center », thanks to which more than 5000 Roma kids benefited. In addition we as Roma Education Fund feel richer since we learned more from this experience how to approach communities, local government and motivate people to commit themselves for the education of Roma children. We are very happy that the Ministry of Education in a partnership with Ruhama has taken over components of the project now. This is a good example of sustainability because we can move to another level regarding our partnership with Ruhama whilst there is a ministerial program pursuing the same objectives which we launched through our project."



According to our estimates in Bihor County the annual rate of school drop out for Roma children in primary school is 12% per year, which means that only 2 out of 3 Roma children enrolled in the first grade have a theoretical chance of graduating the 4th grade. The school drop out rate for Roma children in secondary school is 21% per year which means that only 1 in 2 Roma children enrolled in the 5th grade has a theoretical chance of graduating the 8th grade. The majority of Roma children that graduate 8 grades do not continue their studies. Interestingly enough, Roma children enrolled in high school have a school drop out rate close to 0%, a fact which encourages the Roma Education Centre in continuing the support program for Roma children that wish to attend high school.

## Results

- :: 19 collaboration protocols for the education of Roma children signed by local actors in 19 towns in Bihor County;
- :: 19 Local Support Groups put together in the assisted Roma communities;
- :: 657 families informed and counselled on problems of pre-school education;
- :: 237 families informed and counselled on matters of primary school education (grades 1 to 4);
- :: 100 Roma families have been informed and counselled on matters of secondary school education (grades 5 to 8);
- :: 22 meetings held with the parents of children who attended the Summer Kindergarten in 2007;
- :: 11 meetings held with parents of children in primary and secondary school;
- :: 485 Roma families informed about the national facilities in education field:
  - :: the Euro 200 programme - 50 families helped in acquiring computers;
  - :: organizing the Romani language Olympics at Curtuișeni - 13 participants;
  - :: 360 persons informed about the free school supplies program;
  - :: 5 children helped to participate at the county Romani language Olympics;
  - :: 4 children helped to attend the national Romani language Olympics;
- :: Enrolment in 9th grade on the places allocated for children of Roma ethnicity:
  - :: actions to encourage high school enrolment, meetings with 8th graders;
  - :: 20 Roma families counselled and helped to keep children in highschool;
  - :: identification of Roma 8th - graders in order to assist them;
  - :: informing parents on places allocated to Roma children and procedures;
  - :: 110 meetings with parents of 8th - graders;
  - :: 20 Roma leaders informed of the procedures for enrolling in 9th grade;
  - :: mediating for 11 Roma children for their enrolment in high school;
  - :: 2 young Roma enrolled in high school;
- :: Starting a tutorial program for Roma children in primary school in the towns of Aleşd and Teteşti - 34 benefiting children;
- :: 21 teachers informed about Roma children education, discrimination and segregation in a course session on this theme and in the visits held to the schools involved in the project;
- :: 2 training sessions with teachers, entitled "School and Community", a course accredited by the Teaching Department, sessions that benefited from the participation of 34 teachers from 11 schools in Bihor County;
- :: 146 poor children received support for their immediate needs: Vouchers for clothing and shoes, support for transportation, accommodation, meals, participation at school contests, medical cases, school fees etc;
- :: A database comprising Roma children enrolled in school in 11 towns;

- :: Elaborating a program for preventing school drop out and forwarding it to the schools involved in the project. The Program for Preventing school drop out and reenlistment was conceived to help school children develop a positive attitude towards education and their future. This program explains to school children the benefits and economic advantages of the education they receive in school. Throughout the program's implementation, school children will partake in various activities in order to better understand what is "the price to pay" if they give up education too soon and what are the benefits they will enjoy by achieving a higher level of preparation. By implementing this program, school children assimilate the concept of "career opportunities" and discover what are the abilities they need to have in order to get the jobs they desire in the future;
- :: A training course for young adults and Roma activists on the subjects of education, discrimination, desegregation, society;
- :: A meeting with 44 young Romas in Bihor County with the participation of 8th - graders, high school students, vocational and craftsmanship school students and university students;
- :: Participation at different meetings, seminars, round tables with the topic of Roma children education both at a local and nation-wide level;
- :: Participation at the meetings held by the county Mixed Work Group, other meetings with the topic of education or desegregation and non-discrimination;
- :: Participation at meetings of the health mediators in the county, where information regarding results and activities of the Educational Centre were passed along;
- :: Organizing the first meeting of NGOs in Bihor county that provide activities for Roma children education;
- :: Over 30 volunteers involved in the project's activities;
- :: 5 young people involved in the programs of the Roma Education Centre;
- :: Assistants given to schools in the process of desegregation: Diosig, Aleşd, Tinca, Săcueni;
- :: Elaborating the school calendar, an A3 poster that comprises of a series of activities and programs that can be done throughout a school year in order to increase school attendance, school results and to prevent school drop out. Throughout the year, 60 calendars have been distributed to the schools and institutions in the county;
- :: 326 vouchers for autumn clothing and shoes were given to poor children who enrolled in the first grade in all of the 23 towns as well as 296 winter vouchers that contained winter clothing, boots, scarves and hats.
- :: Support given to schools in order to attract funds necessary to support children in difficulty. Following this action 13 1st - graders were financially helped to acquire clothing and shoes;
- :: The Ruhama Foundation is the partner of the School Inspectorate of Bihor County in the project "One school for all", financed by the European Union through its Phare program Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups.



**Liliana ANTONESCU**  
general school inspector  
School Inspectorate  
of Bihor County

"Ruhama Foundation has been a viable and interested partner in obtaining great results ever since the beginning of its collaboration with the school inspectorate. We have established partnerships at the level of different local and school communities, mutually proving to ourselves a constant opening towards interdepartmental collaboration. As concrete results of this partnership I will remind you of the two consecutive years of summer kindergarten held in multiple communities and the Phare project "One school for all". The overall activities of the foundation bring an added value to all the social, educational and community initiatives, which we hope will continue to benefit even more communities."



#### SHE SAYS...

*Eliza is a well-behaved girl and a hard worker. She gets good grades in school. She studies hard and always listens to us at home. Her teacher has always praised her and we have always wanted to reward her for that, giving her something special, something she would enjoy. She would always be glad for any presents she would get. She knew of and understood our poor financial status and she didn't have any demands. We could see it in her eyes that she wanted things we couldn't provide for her but she never asked us for anything.*

*One day we got a visit from people at the Ruhama Foundation telling us we can submit a file to get a computer through the EURO 200 program. They told us what kind of paperwork we needed for the file. We did not get our hopes up.*

*Then came the day we will never forget. We got the computer. Our girl was laughing and crying with joy. We had never seen her so happy. She had her own computer. The same day we called the Foundation and thanked them for their assistance. With their help we managed to reward our daughter for her good grades and her good behaviour.*

**Esterá, mother of an assisted girl**



# PHOTO GALLERY





Ruhama Foundation helps vulnerable families reintegrate children in the educational system through active measures like the summer kindergartens, the voucher program, the support fund, counselling, literacy, school recuperation, the after school remedial program. One of the beneficiaries of these measures is Annamaria.

### SHE SAYS...

*My name is Erzsebet and I am from Sacuieni. I am the mother of 5, 1 boy and 4 girls. We are a simple and modest family. Our children are our greatest joy. For us the greatest joy we can take is to see our children happy. Annamaria, our daughter, surprised us. She is very happy to be attending school. My husband and I have never been to school. We do not know how to write or read. School wasn't important to us. We didn't sign up Annamaria for school either. But one day we got a visit from someone at the Ruhama Foundation who told us we can sign our children up for summer kindergarten. Our girl wanted to go so we let her. She did not miss a single day. Then the school enrolments started in September. We learnt that our daughter couldn't be enlisted in the day courses because she was already ten years old. With the help of the Foundation she was signed up in a program for literacy and school recuperation.*

*We don't understand why she wants to go to school so badly, why she reads the books she gets there. We see her reading stories for hours, which she then so beautifully tells us. At first we thought she was faking reading and making up the stories. One day we went to church and heard a story about the lost sheep. My little girl wasn't in the church. She did not hear the story. Not long after she read to us the same story from the Bible. It was then that we knew she wasn't making up the stories and that she could read.*

*She has big dreams. She wants to become a doctor. Her teacher tells us she has a chance because she's a smart girl. All we have to do is let her attend school, let her read and write. Annamaria is a good girl and a bit too shy. We're glad she gets to play with other children at school. She has girlfriends with whom she spends all her time. We don't know what's to come; we don't know how long she'll attend school. We just know it makes her happy, we won't stop her and we'll try to give her nice clothes and shoes so she can fit in. This year she got clothes from the Foundation. We don't know if she's going to become a doctor but we do know that she's smarter than other kids and she will do better than us.*

**Erzsebet**, mother of an assisted girl





#### The human resources involved:

- 520 children from 23 communities
- 46% boys and 54% girls
- 316 children enrolled in 1st grade
- 35 teachers
- 22 Roma community facilitators
- 23 Roma teaching assistants
- 260 counselled parents
- 4 partner institutions
- 10 students and young Roma

#### Financial resources:

- 6 kindergartens fully financed by the Ruhama Foundation
- 17 kindergartens partially financed
- Local Councils contributed with 6.622 Euro
- Ruhama Foundation contributed with 6.799 Euro
- Total county cost: 13.421 Euro
- Kindergarten cost: 583,52 Euro
- Average cost per child: 27 Euro

## SUMMER KINDERGARTENS 2007

In August 2007 we held 23 Summer Kindergartens in 22 towns in Bihor County: Alesd, Batar, Balnaca, Boge, Beznea, Chet, Ciumeghiu, Diosig (2 summer kindergartens), Gepis, Ineu, Lugasul de Jos, Ortiteag, Osorhei, Salonta, Sacuieni, Sannicolau de Munte, Santelec, Silindru, Tamasda, Tinca, Tetchea and Vasad. Two summer kindergartens were held in Diosig at the request of the community and the local authorities, in the two Roma communities. Although initially only 20 summer kindergartens were planned, other local communities requested the Foundation's help in organizing summer kindergartens. Thus the school in the town of Santelec was given support, receiving financial aid from the Local Council. Likewise, in Balnaca and Ortiteag the Local Councils responded in a positive manner to the school's requests to fully finance summer kindergartens in the two towns.

The Ruhama Foundation provided assistance to all the schools to organize summer kindergartens. Thus, the following were held: a training session with the teachers, a training session with all the human resources involved in the program, information briefings regarding the methodology to be followed in the deployment of the summer kindergartens were sent as well.

17 summer kindergartens were organized by the Local Support groups with partial or total financial coverage on the part of the Local Councils and with financial and technical assistance on the part of the Ruhama Foundation and 6 Kindergartens were organized by the Ruhama Foundation with the help of the schools.

In every summer kindergarten a young Roma student held a teaching activity with the aim of preparing and motivating children to enrol in school. 15 teaching activities with kids were held in which stories about the role of education in life were told, role-playing-games were held as well as the presentation of school instruments (backpack, pencil-case, textbook, notebooks). The activities held in the summer kindergartens were both curricular as well as extracurricular (visits, trips, school plays, etc.), visits of the Local Support Group members (doctor, policeman, etc.).

For the better development of Summer Kindergartens other companies and organizations were involved in supporting them. The ABN AMRO Bank Romania helped finance the summer kindergartens with the total sum of 1500 Euros.

Our local teams tried to get funding from different economic agents in the area. Thus, we had funding for the children's lunch, water and beverages, transport for extracurricular activities (trips, visit to the Zoo in Oradea, etc.).

On the 4th of September 2007, at the end of the summer kindergartens we held the "2007 Summer Kindergartens" Conference. The Conference was attended by 102 people: teachers, teaching assistants, community facilitators, representatives of the partners (the School Inspectorate of Bihor County, the Institution of the Prefect – Bihor County), local authority representatives, as well as press representatives. The results of the summer kindergartens, the problems faced, good practices and local team initiatives were presented at the Conference. For example, in the Diosig Summer Kindergarten the teachers held an event in which parents and children learnt what it meant to participate in the educational process. Also, within the conference themes of interest for Roma children education were presented (the Order of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth no. 1539 from 19.07.2007 regarding the framing and activity norms of the school mediator, the Order of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth no. 1540 from 19.07.2007 regarding the ban on school segregation of Roma children and the approval of the methodology regarding the prevention and exclusion of school segregation of Roma children) and the School Calendar was distributed to be used as a teaching aid for the actions started for the Roma school children.

The activity of the Summer Kindergartens was opened to the press through a press briefing at the start of the activity as well as with a press conference. As a result of these promoting actions, we had 15 press articles, 2 nation-wide news stories and 3 radio interviews.

The report from the Summer Kindergartens was sent to the local authorities in all of the 22 towns where summer kindergartens were held, to all of the 22 schools, partners, community facilitators, Local Support Group members.

The organizational model and methodology put together by the Ruhama Foundation for the Summer Kindergartens were included in a good practices package, which was assumed and recommended at a nation-wide level by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth to all educational actors with the intent of setting up summer kindergartens.



**Georgeta BORA**

head

Sustainable Development

ABN AMRO Bank Romania

"The durable development strategy of ABN AMRO is oriented towards aspects like education, the environment, and supporting people with the aim of providing the necessary means for existence. Having this objective in mind, ABN AMRO Romania supported the project for inclusive education "Summer Kindergartens" in Bihor County, held by the Ruhama Foundation in August 2007, with the desire of bringing a positive contribution to the local community."



### 23 Summer Kindergartens in:

Aleşd  
Batăr  
Bălnaca  
Bogei  
Beznea  
Cheț  
Ciumeghiu  
Diosig  
Diosig II  
Gepiș  
Ineu  
Lugașul de Jos  
Ortiteag  
Oșorhei  
Salonta  
Săcueni  
Sânnicolaul de Munte  
Sântelec  
Şilindru  
Tămașdu  
Tinca  
Tețchea  
Vășad

### Results of the Summer Kindergartens 2007

- :: 23 summer kindergartens in 23 Roma communities in Bihor county;
- :: the summer kindergartens took place over the course of a month;
- :: 520 children graduated the summer kindergartens: 54% girls & 46% boys;
- :: 300 of the 520 graduates of whom were of ages between 6 and 8 were enrolled in the 1st grade in September 2007;
- :: 35 teachers were involved on a volunteer basis;
- :: 22 young Roma activists were involved as volunteer teaching assistants, ensuring translation to Romani were it was necessary;
- :: 21 activists and Roma leaders were involved as volunteer community facilitators ensuring relations between the kindergarten and the community;
- :: over 230 Roma parents were informed and counselled in matters relating to education, including enrolment in kindergartens and schools;
- :: 13.421 Euro were spent on the 23 summer kindergartens of which 6.622 Euro was the contribution of the Local Councils and 6.799 Euro was the contribution of the Ruhama Foundation;
- :: 17 local councils financially contributed to support the kindergartens;
- :: 1 training session with the teachers involved in this program;
- :: 1 training session with all the human resources involved in summer kindergartens;
- :: the Summer Kindergarten model is assumed as a best practice and recommended on a nation-wide level by the Ministry of Education Research and Youth;
- :: the dissemination of the summer kindergartens methodology within the work groups of the inspectors on Roma issues from School Inspectorates in the country;
- :: the partners involved: School Inspectorate of Bihor County, Institution of Prefect - Bihor County, ABN AMRO Bank Romania, 17 local councils, 22 local schools.

### Comparative results in 2006

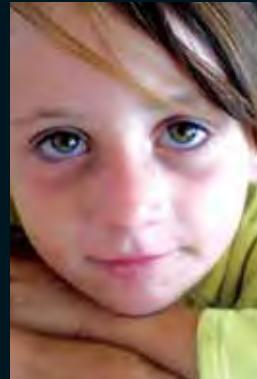
- :: 11 summer kindergartens in 11 Roma communities in Bihor county;
- :: the summer kindergartens took place over the course of a month;
- :: 295 children graduated the summer kindergartens: 45% girls & 55% boys;
- :: 177 of the 295 graduates and whom were of ages between 6 and 8 were enrolled in the 1st grade in September 2006;
- :: 18 teachers were involved on a volunteer basis;
- :: 11 young Roma activists were involved as volunteer teaching assistants;
- :: 11 activists and Roma leaders involved as volunteer community facilitators;
- :: over 300 Roma parents were informed and counselled;
- :: 5.500 Euro were spent on the 11 summer kindergartens.

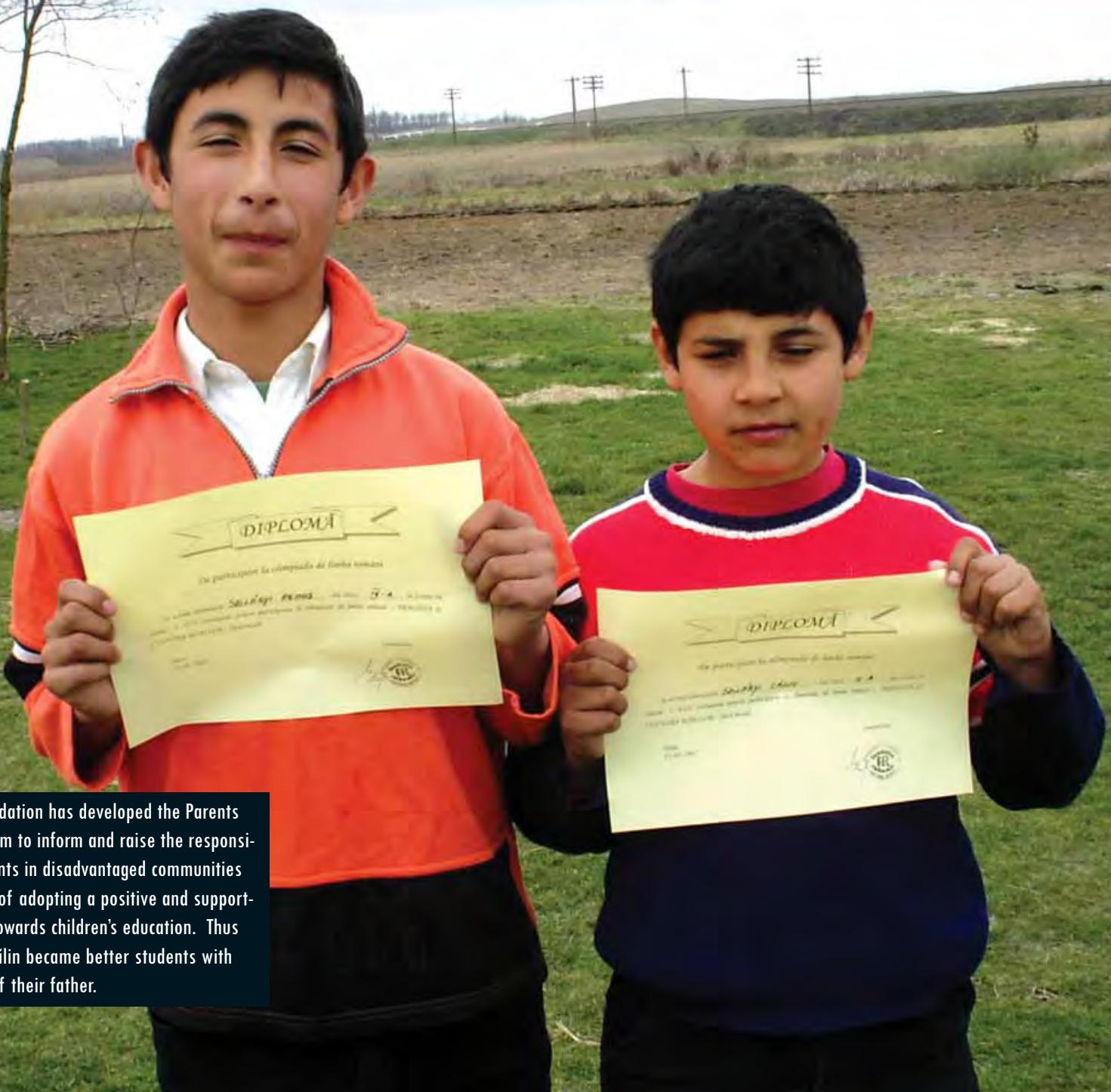
# THE LITTLE ONES





# PHOTO GALLERY





Ruhama Foundation has developed the Parents School program to inform and raise the responsibility of parents in disadvantaged communities with the aim of adopting a positive and supportive attitude towards children's education. Thus Remus and Călin became better students with the support of their father.

## HE SAYS...

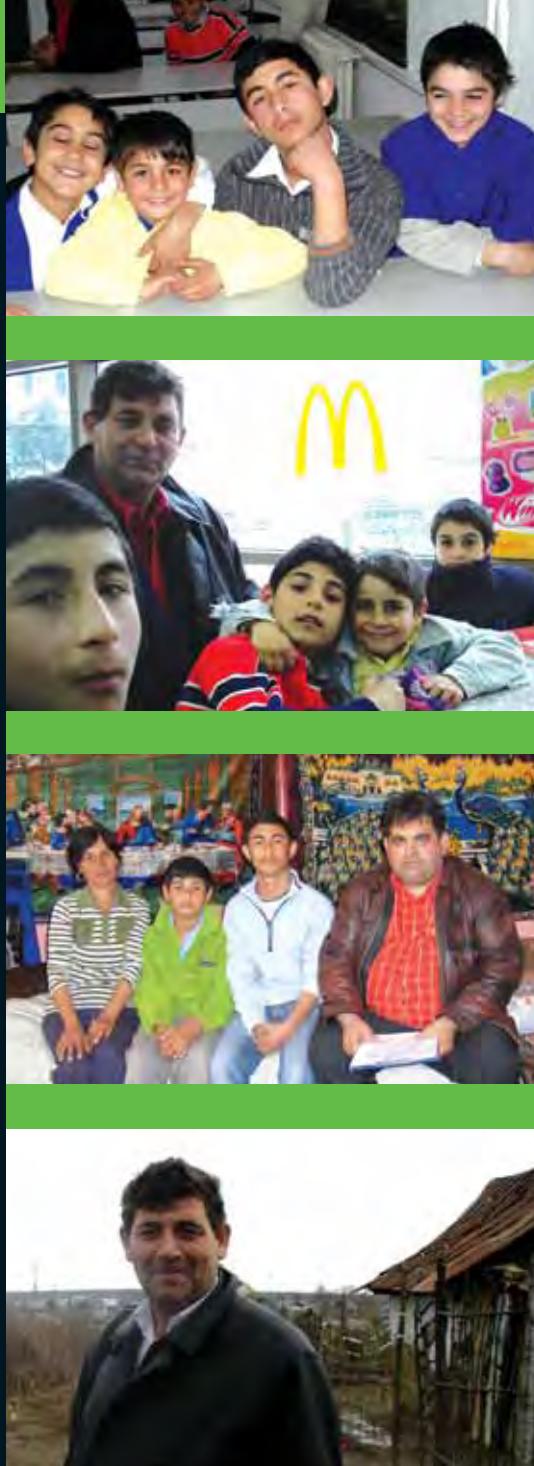
*It is time that we admit it, school is the one that changes us as parents and our children at the same time. I have two boys in school, Remus and Calin. When they were in the 1st and 2nd grade I didn't have any problems with them. They were hard working and well behaved. Then I had to take a job in Hungary. I seldom saw the children and I couldn't watch over them any more. They didn't complain. They were healthy and growing up nicely and that to me was the most important thing. Their study situation worsened, they missed school and their teacher complained she had no one to work with. They didn't do their homework and didn't prepare for lessons anymore.*

*One day, people from the Ruhama Foundation came to the school and announced that there were tryouts for the County Phase of the Romani Language School Contest. My boys wanted to try out. They were chosen to go to Oradea and attend the contest. They managed very nicely. For them it was a special day. They got to see Oradea, they went to McDonald's, and they felt like little celebrities. They received diplomas. They were told they could attend the contest again if they'd study hard.*

*I was asked to attend parent meetings at school. They talked about good parenting skills. It was then that I realized a good parent is someone who apart from providing bed and board to his child is also aware of their dreams and aspirations. I know my boys would like to have a better life than ours, a better future and a more stable job. Calin wants to become a famous dancer. He has a chance because he's got the rhythm in his blood and he knows a lot of dance moves. To ensure the fulfilment of this dream I have to offer them the possibility of attending school for as long as need be.*

*I have grown more aware. They are not always aware of the fact that they have to study. I have to watch over them. I want to know if they've finished their homework, learnt their lesson, if they behave in school. I don't miss any parent meetings. If I can't go, my wife takes my place and together we closely watch over the education of our children.*

**Iosif, Roma parent**





#### Approached topics:

- good parenting skills
- alternate methods to punishment
- communicating with the child
- the child-parent-relationship
- life's journey, steps towards success
- the benefits of an efficient school-community collaboration
- health education
- parent-child relationship
- school and family violence.

#### Used methods:

- role-playing games
- case studies
- problems
- brainstorming
- conversation
- presentation
- explanation
- demonstration
- modelling.

## PARENTS SCHOOL

The Parents School program is a new initiative of the Ruhama Foundation that first took place in 2007 with financial support on behalf of the Bihor County Council and the Roma Education Fund in Budapest. The program was preceded by a series of events that took place in 2006 and 2007 especially through giving support to the local schools in order to organize periodical meetings with parents from disadvantaged communities, mostly Roma. The community feedback was very encouraging, which prompted the Roma Education Centre to conceive this program, taking full advantage of the human resources of the County Network of Teachers for Inclusive Education, network which was put together by the foundation.

The first activity within the program was to inform the County Network of Teachers for Inclusive Education about the project's implementation in 10 towns in Bihor County: Tinca, Diosig, Sacuieni, Suncuius, Curtuiseni, Alesd, Tetchea, Chet, Osorhei, Ineu. The teachers of the network who are active in towns other than the 10 selected ones expressed their desire to get involved in the event. Thus, the Parents School program was extended to Silindru, Tileagd, Gepis, Sannicolaul de Munte and Telechiu, making up a total of 15 places in the county. The training course for the members of the County Network of Teachers for Inclusive Education - Roma and non-Roma teachers that promote the concept of inclusive education - took place on November 13th. This meeting was attended by 24 teachers from 15 communities. The course was given by 2 professional trainers who covered topics related to the Parents School: Good parenting skills, How to communicate with your child, Alternate methods to punishment, Health education, School importance, etc. Following this course the teachers accumulated the necessary skills and knowledge to hold an activity like the Parents School throughout the whole school year and without any support from an NGO.

Another resource employed in this program was the Local Initiative Groups that were established with the Foundation support in the Roma communities. The Local Initiative Group is an informal structure made up of people active in the Roma community who wish to contribute to the process of local development and social inclusion, but also in education by supporting the school and the community through activities aimed at improving the educational process and school attendance of Roma children. Throughout this program 4 new Local Initiative Groups were set up in Gepis, Diosig, Sannicolaul de Munte and Tinca.

A number of 15 meetings were held with the members of the Local Initiative Groups from the 15 communities with the objective of training them in mobilising Roma parents to attend the Parents School and to identify topics of interest for parents. Parents were identified in each community where the program takes place, which have shown a desire to contribute to the better organizing and functioning of the program. In every town where the program takes place, the following preparation activities were set up: the space for the meetings was identified and prepared, the necessary logistics and protocol was put together, trainers were identified, and parents were invited as well as teachers and members of the Local Support Groups.

The Parents School program totalled a number of 30 meetings with parents from 15 communities. Each meeting was attended on average by 20 Roma and non-Roma parents who identified the steps that need to be taken to ensure the child's orientation, the necessary advice for upholding the child's rights and methods and techniques through which teachers can aid adults in fulfilling their parenting responsibilities. The aim was to adopt a positive attitude towards the Roma parent's involvement in assuming this role: affection, social skills, mutual respect and harmonious development, gratitude and appreciation, trust, support for child development. The activities with the parents were interactive in nature, the aim being the participants' involvement over the course of 3 to 4 hours through role-playing games, exercises and discussions. These activities were assisted by a Foundation's trainer who supported the local teacher in getting the messages through to the parents.

According to the feedback, in the future, parents would like to participate in these types of meetings with topics that address the problems faced by the community and the way in which these affect children education, school performances and school attendance as well as topics on health education. The parents wish to actively participate in school life, getting involved in extracurricular activities like the organizing of trips, the organizing of the International Roma Day in school as well as providing information about Roma culture and tradition to the other ethnic groups and to promote inter-ethnic tolerance at the level of the local non-Roma community.

School principals believe that the Parents School is very important because it has a positive impact by creating partnership type ties between the parents and the school. The methodology of the parent meetings has been different than the one used up until now in school, the parents being directly involved as partners in identifying solutions for an inclusive education.



**MOCSSÁR László**

school principal

Sânnicolau de Munte

"Ruhama Foundation's initiative has positive consequences on the educational process as well as on the school - community relationship. The idea of organizing activities like the Parents School in Roma communities has proven to be very rewarding. The Parents School is a program that brings together those parents who have yet to discuss the common problems relating to school and child education. Parents became more receptive to the problems of their children, to their way of learning. Moreover they get a better understanding of the teacher's activity. As a result of this program attendance at parent meetings has increased as well as the activity in the programs started by our school, where parents participate with new ideas."



Parents School in 15 towns:

Aleşd  
Cheț  
Curtuișeni  
Diosig  
Gepiș  
Ineu  
Oșorhei  
Săcueni  
Sânnicolaul de Munte  
Şilindru  
Şuncuiuș  
Telechiu  
Tileagd  
Tinca  
Tețchea



Thus, according to the parents' responses the meetings were interesting and pleasant, educational and well organized, more relaxed than the other meetings – the classical parent meetings. The communication was different and more efficient. The relaxing exercises were seen as necessary and welcomed moments. Even the teachers were pleasantly surprised by this initiative. The trainers from the Ineu School had the following to say: "We were honoured to pave the way for a future of communication between the school and the parents as practiced in the two meetings. The relaxed atmosphere favoured questions on behalf of the parents and contributed to their engagement in the educational process".

#### Positive aspects of the Parents School identified by the teachers:

- :: parents believe in education, they know what goes on in school, they learnt new things, they had a good time, everybody's opinion was taken into consideration, they're receptive to new things and are willing to put to practice that which they've learnt, they have shown so much interest that the length of the meetings was prolonged. They requested support for the education of the children and they asked the organization to set up meetings on similar topics, the parents' level of interest in the education of their children rose.
- :: the teachers managed to create a communication bridge between the school and the local community, they learnt new things about the local community and they started to give more attention to children from disadvantaged environments.
- :: The children were better behaved, they increased their school performances and school attendance grew as an immediate consequence of the program.
- :: The local authorities attended the meetings and thus found out the problems faced by children in disadvantaged communities, they were able to collaborate and they promised to get more involved in improving the Roma's situation.

#### Negative aspects of the Parents School identified by the teachers:

- :: the lack of a school mediator or a community facilitator to support the school and the community.
- :: the lack of trust in change shown by some of the parents.
- :: the lack of involvement in solving problems faced by poor communities on the part of the local authorities in some towns.

The final meeting for evaluating the Parents School program in all 15 communities took place on the 18th of December. This meeting was attended by the benefiting parents, the trainers and the school principals - 30 persons. The purpose of this meeting was to identify the results, the positive aspects and the aspects that can be improved for the Parents School program in 2008.

# PHOTO GALLERY



A photograph showing a worker from behind, wearing a dark t-shirt and a cap, welding two large, dark-colored metal pipes together. Bright orange and yellow sparks are erupting from the point of contact between the pipes. In the background, there's a white brick wall and some industrial equipment, including what looks like a large cylindrical drum or tank.

professional training  
& employment services

## OVERVIEW

The Ruhama Foundation worked in the social field during its first eight years of existence, deploying programs of community development and social services. The wide spectrum of interdependent needs of the foundation's beneficiaries prompted the involvement in a new field, that of the employment in order to therefore respond with active measures to the needs of people who stand a small chance of getting employed. The need for professional training was being felt evermore clearly in the Romanian society, this in turn affecting to a great extent the human resources in the social field. Thus the organization's management decided that the Ruhama Foundation would mobilise its human, logistical and financial resources in order to become an important supplier of programs for professional training and later on, employment services at a county level. Apart from the social impact of the programs for professional training, these would ensure a long term financial source for the foundation that would in turn ensure the necessary funds for sustaining the social services and community development programs.

## PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

The Ruhama Foundation is an authorised supplier of professional training programs according to the decisions of the Authorising Commission for Professional Training Providers within the Department for Work, Social Solidarity and Family Bihor and according to the orders given by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of National Education. The Foundation started its activity in the field of professional training in 2004 by obtaining the authorization for holding the qualification course for the occupation of Elderly Caregiver. The activity of professional training was started in response to the internal need for qualification of our own personnel within the homecare services. The second authorization, pertaining to providing the qualification course in the occupation of Child Caregiver and the third one pertaining to providing the qualification course in the occupation of Social Worker came about as a result of a Phare Project of the Ruhama Foundation - "The Development of Social Service Providers from NGOs in Bihor County", one of the aims of which is to evaluate the need for professional training of the active personnel in supplying social services in Bihor County. Obtaining the authorization for supplying the initiation courses in Conceiving and Drawing Up of Funding Requests or Project Development and the Advanced Course in the occupation of Trainer came in response to an existing request on the social market, especially from the personnel within the local public administration services.



**Daciana NICA**

deputy director

Bihor County Employment

Agency

"Ruhama Foundation is a main local actor in information, counselling and job mediation activities for jobseekers. The cooperation with the County Employment Agency has began in 2002 with specific actions in Roma communities. If in the beginning of our cooperation the actions had a smaller amplitude, starting with the year 2005 these actions became very concrete: round tables, workshops, meetings, and have finalized by signing the first partnership that is still ongoing. Our collaboration is very worthwhile and the outcomes are really important if we bear in mind that all the hired people come from an underprivileged social category."



#### Training offer:

- real estate agent
- sales agent
- florist
- trainer
- hygiene
- air conditioning technician
- elderly caregiver
- child caregiver
- vegetable grower
- social worker
- computer operator
- database operator
- project development
- secretary
- communication, abuse prevention, supervising and alternative techniques in child education



Gradually the Ruhama Foundation developed its Professional Training Department authorizing a new course in the first semester of 2007 and planning to authorize another 5 courses in the following period and to register a number of 15 authorized courses by the end of the year.

#### Authorized courses

- :: Qualification in the occupation of ELDERLY CAREGIVER
- :: Qualification in the occupation of CHILD CAREGIVER
- :: Qualification in the occupation of SOCIAL WORKER
- :: Professional improvement in the occupation of TRAINER
- :: Initiation in CONCEIVING AND DRAWING UP FUNDING REQUESTS
- :: Learning the fundamental notions of HYGIENE
- :: Specializing in the occupation of VEGETABLE GROWER
- :: Professional improvement in the occupation of SALES AGENT
- :: Qualification in the occupation of SECRETARY STENOGRAPHER
- :: Specializing in the occupation of FLORIST
- :: Specializing in COMMUNICATION, ABUSE PREVENTION, SUPERVISING AND ALTERNATIVE TECHNIQUES IN CHILD EDUCATION

At the end of 2007 the Ruhama Foundation was in the course of obtaining authorization for supplying the following courses:

- :: Qualification in the occupation of AIR CONDITIONING TECHNICIAN
- :: Specializing in the occupation of REAL ESTATE AGENT
- :: Perfecting in the occupation of COMPUTER AND NETWORK OPERATOR
- :: Qualification in the occupation of DATABASE OPERATOR

#### Courses provided

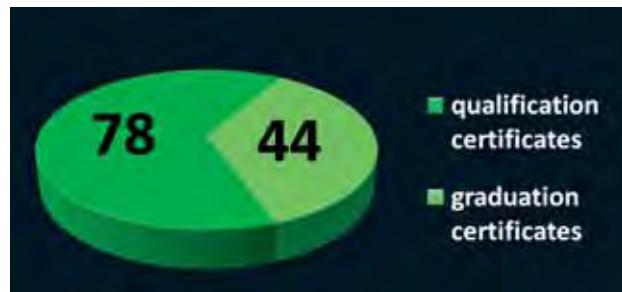
In 2007 the Department for Professional Training held 9 courses:

- :: 2 qualification courses in the occupation of CHILD CAREGIVER
- :: 3 qualification courses in the occupation of ELDERLY CAREGIVER
- :: 1 qualification course in the occupation of SOCIAL WORKER
- :: 1 course for professional improvement in the occupation of TRAINER
- :: 2 initiation courses in CONCEIVING AND DRAWING UP FUNDING REQUESTS

Each course held was finalized with an evaluation exam, with a total of 7 exams held, all the enrolled participants having passed them. Two courses started in 2007 will end at the beginning of 2008.

The total number of persons that benefited from courses in 2007 is 122. Thus 122 professional training certificates were issued as follows:

- :: 78 persons received a qualification certificate.
- :: 44 persons received a graduation certificate.



The total sum collected with the title of participation fee at the nine courses held in 2007 is 10.952 Euro. Of this 3.895 Euro were expenses necessary to hold the courses; hence the sum for supporting the Foundation's social activities is 7.057 Euro.



**Anca SOCOLOVSCHI**  
international consultant/trainer  
in socio-economic development

"I had the great pleasure and honour to work with the Professional Training Department of Ruhama Foundation and I can state that the professionalism of this team and the abnegation of its members when comes about addressing the training needs of the beneficiaries are raising very high the standard in professional training delivery. The members of the Department, like the entire personnel of Ruhama Foundation, are dedicated in a responsible and ethical manner to increasing the beneficiaries' quality of life. Such organisations are honouring the NGO sector and represent a standard hard to reach or to overstep. I wish every success to Ruhama Foundation team in fulfilling their generous objectives."



## Estimated beneficiaries of the CAREER Centre:

- 200 young people benefiting of information and counselling
- 50 young people benefiting of Job Club type assistant service
- 500 young people in the mediation service's database
- 20 young people hired through the mediation service at jobs corresponding to their abilities
- 200 young people certificate graduates of professional training courses for developing common abilities
- 60 young people certificated graduates of qualification courses
- 20 young people certificated graduates of the course for entrepreneurial skills
- 100 employers in the mediation services data base
- 200 job offers included in the mediation services data base

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

In 2006 the Ruhama Foundation was selected together with 10 other NGOs in the country to participate in the project "Accredited social services for workforce employment in Roma communities", a project implemented by the Resource Centre for Roma Communities Cluj-Napoca in partnership with The National Agency for Employment. Within this project 2 persons from the organization were qualified in the job of Employment Agent after graduating the course held by The Regional Centre for Professional Training for Adults Cluj-Napoca. In June 2006 the Ruhama Foundation was accredited by the National Agency for Employment to provide counselling and information services for employment and workforce mediation services on the internal market.

The first major activity of the department was to create the Centre for Mediation, Information and Counselling for Roma citizens looking for a job in the Tetechea region and its surroundings. The Centre was created after winning a public service auction held by the County Agency for Employment Bihor for a contract for providing mediation, information and professional counselling services to unemployed people of Roma ethnicity in Tetechea and the surrounding areas.

## Activities

In 2007 the Department for Professional Training and Employment Services repeatedly tried to establish collaborations with economic agents in order to supply jobs to unemployed Romas which were the target group for the employment services at that moment. The collaborations did not end in hiring because the economic agents gave up on supplying services before holding any interviews. In 2007, 38 persons benefited from information, counselling and work mediation services, of which 31 were employed. In June 2007 the Information, Mediation and Counselling Services for Employment were evaluated by the County Agency for Employment Bihor and as a result, the services' accreditation was extended for another year.

The Ruhama Foundation is a founding member of the NGO Network for Employment in Romania - RONOR, alongside 37 other NGOs. The network was created at the National Conference of NGOs for Employment held between April 24th and 26th 2007 in Busteni.

## Press coverage

In 2007 the activity of the Department for Professional Training and Employment Services was covered by 12 press stories, 8 of which were regarding the activity of professional training and 4 regarding employment services.

## Results between 2004 and 2007

Since the start of its activity on professional training in 2004 and up until now, the Department for Professional Training and Employment Services has provided courses on professional training to a number of 308 people.

Of these 212 received qualification certificates and 96 received graduation certificates. Moreover the Department for Professional Training and Employment Services provided a number of 18 courses of which 12 were qualification courses, 2 were professional improvement courses and 4 were initiation courses. The people that attended the courses came from public institutions as well as from NGOs or individuals.

Since starting the Employment Services in 2006 up until now, the Department for Professional Training and Employment Services has provided information, counselling and workforce mediation services to a number of 227 people of which 56 were successfully employed.

## Projects

Starting with January 2008 and over the course of 12 months the Ruhama Foundation will be implementing the Phare Project “Centre for Orientation, Mediation and Professional Training for Youth in Bihor County CAREER” in partnership with the Bihor County Council, the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Oradea, the County Agency for Employment Bihor and the European Partner Gesellschaft fur Soziale Unternehmensberatung Berlin/Brussels with expertise in employment policies and services. The project’s objectives is to increase the flexibility, adaptability and employment rate for over 500 youth unemployed or in search of a job in Bihor County by creating an integrated employment service: professional information and counselling, work mediation and professional training capitalizing on the European good practice models at a level of private-public partnership. The CAREER Centre will be established in Oradea in the vicinity of the State University Campus through this project. The German employment service Job Point will be piloted by adapting it to the local environment.



**Stephan LEHMANN**

head of EU office Brussels  
Gesellschaft für Soziale  
Unternehmensberatung mbH

“The Ruhama Foundation has expanded its international network through the co-operation with the GSUB, the main ESF managing agency of Berlin, Germany. Through a joint effort it developed a project that will transfer the successful JobPoint from Berlin to Oradea in the frame of the Phare-supported project “CAREERS”. In the JobPoint concept the vacancies are presented to passers-by and visitors, many a job seeking but not necessarily unemployed. The Job Points are often more efficient then the local employment agencies due to their unique structure and ad-hoc reaction potential. The project will adapt new solutions in Bihor to foster a institutional network of actors across the county capable of managing workforce flow in accordance with the European Standards.”



#### SHE SAYS...

*I have attended the qualification courses for the occupations of Child Caregiver and Elderly Caregiver held by the Ruhama Foundation firstly out of curiosity and secondly with the aim of becoming a professional both in child care and care for the elderly.*

*I have three younger brothers and in raising and educating my youngest brother I was equally involved as my mother. By attending the course of Child Caregiver, I came to the conclusion that many of the methods tried out on my brother were not exactly correct and the course gave me the opportunity to learn the appropriate child feeding techniques, child motivation techniques, etc.*

*At present I am a student of the Faculty of Social Sciences, majoring in Social Assistance and a volunteer at the "Gavril Curteanu" Municipal Hospital (Children's Hospital) where I have had the opportunity to practice all that I have learnt in the course on childcare.*

*I recommend this course to all future moms!*

Dora, course graduate



# PHOTO GALLERY



A close-up photograph of a person's hand reaching towards a stack of large, blue-grey, textured blocks, possibly concrete or foam. The blocks are stacked in a herringbone pattern. The hand is positioned as if it is about to grasp one of the blocks.

community development & housing

## OVERVIEW

The Department for Community Development of the Ruhama Foundation provides activities for the development of poor communities, especially Roma, in 27 towns and villages in Bihor County: Aleşd, Batăr, Bălnaca (com. Şunciuş), Bogeï (com. Tăuteu), Beznea (com. Bratca), Cheț (orașul Marghita), Ciumeghiu, Cubulcuț (oraș Săcueni), Curtuișeni, Diosig, Gepiș (com. Lăzăreni), Gepiu, Ineu, Lugașu de Jos, Ortiteag (com. Măgești), Oșorhei, Salonta, Săcueni, Sânnicolaul de Munte, Sântelec (com. Hidișelul de Sus), Silindru (com. Șimian), Tămașda (com. Avram Iancu), Tarcea, Tileagd, Tinca, Tețchea, Vășad (com. Curtuișeni). Compared to 2006, the Ruhama Foundation, along with its partners, has extended its assistance to incorporate another 16 towns, hence in 2007, we have provided assistance to 27 local communities.

The department's fields of activity are:

- :: the socio-economic development of Roma communities
- :: improving the living conditions
- :: development of local infrastructure - roads, electricity, drinking water etc.
- :: mobilizing and empowering Roma citizens
- :: capacitating community members in their relationship with local authorities
- :: improving the access to education for Roma children
- :: the training and employment of Roma workforce.

### A new approach

In 2007 the way of approach for the organization's assistance on the local level was improved. If until 2007 the organization's team got directly involved in solving problems at a local level and assisting social cases, since 2007 the Ruhama Foundation provides assistance and encourages the local actors to conceive, initiate and implement local actions for the development of their own communities. In the first semester of 2007 we started supporting the disadvantaged Roma communities to come together in local initiative groups so that within the group the problems and needs of the communities as well as solutions to them could be identified. The group members are trained and assisted in establishing a long term collaboration with the local institutions and authorities. The local support groups were created at the local level through the aggregate collaboration with local authorities, the Roma community and various other local institutions: school, church, police, etc. The local support groups have an initial objective of starting and implementing programs for reducing the school drop out rate and increasing school attendance as well as school performances of Roma children.



**Valeriu NICOLAE**

Roma diplomat

general secretary European

Roma Grassroots Organisations

Brussels, Belgium

"Ruhama brings something new and refreshing in the Romani movement. An integrated approach and openness to critical thinking and constant adjustments which is rare to find nowadays in the world of NGO. Their focus on the young generation and well as their pragmatism and successes in isolated and often considered "doomed" Roma communities prove that Ruhama Foundation does something rare, namely it matches the words with effective action."



Ruhama Foundation runs programs of community development in disadvantaged communities thus helping the Romanian Government in its efforts to put into practice the priorities established in the National Strategy for Improving Roma Situation. The Foundation's contribution is widely appreciated by the central and local authorities of whom one is the National Agency for Roma led by Gruia Bumbu.

**HE SAYS...**

*Dear friends,*

*The National Agency for Roma, a governmental structure for representing Roma on a national and international level, which is responsible with applying, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the fields for social intervention that are comprised in the Strategy of the Romanian Government for improving Roma situation, expresses its gratitude and congratulates the members of the Ruhama team for the activities they have embarked upon for the benefit of Roma communities.*

*The NGOs have a well defined role in public life. Through its implemented programs and projects, both at a county and a nation wide level, the Ruhama Foundation has become an important actor in the process of promoting values and civic initiatives for the benefit of the general public.*

*Following my visit to Oradea as President of the National Agency for Roma I was pleasantly surprised to find a team of young activists at the foundation's headquarters which through their professionalism and maturity are implementing a series of actions for the benefit of the Roma communities.*

*The promoted values of the organization: empathy, respect for the beneficiary, transparency, correctness, ethical behaviour, teamwork and respect for the members of the team, responsibility for the future generation and representing the interest of the beneficiaries, are values that are followed through by all members of the RUHAMA team.*

*I wish you success in your activity and assure you of my highest consideration.*

*Respectfully yours,*

**Gruia BUMBU, president of the National Agency for Roma**





## Partners of the Community Development Department:

- Institution of Prefect Bihor
- School Inspectorate of Bihor County
- University of Oradea - The Faculty of Social Sciences
- Bihor Public Health Authority
- County Agency for Employment Bihor
- Aleşd City Hall
- Avram Iancu Town Hall
- Gepiu Town Hall
- Salonta City Hall
- Săcueni City Hall
- Tețchea Town Hall
- Săcueni Police Department
- "Together" Agency for Community Development Bucharest
- Community Public Service for Population Records Săcueni
- Obstetrics and Gynaecology Hospital Oradea
- Bihor County Council
- Teachers Department Bihor

## BUILDING SOCIAL HOUSES

In 2005 the Ruhama Foundation helped the Roma community in the village of Telechiu, the commune of Tetchea with identifying and prioritizing the problems faced by the community. The most serious problem raised by the members of the community was the poor shape of the houses: built out of clay, covered in nylon, without any windows. After analyzing the economic situation of the area and after public consultation with the Roma community, it was decided to start building a number of 5 new houses in the community which were meant for the poorest families that had the worst off houses and which were proposed by the community members in the public debate. The organization's team and the community members proposed to get the support of the local public authorities by lobbying to private companies in the region. The Ruhama Foundation's team supported by the mayor Bujor Chirila, by the local authority and the Roma community members started a campaign for attracting sponsorships and donations from local firms in order to build the houses. Concurrently the foundation's team held a series of meetings with the community members in order to promote volunteering in constructing these houses. In these meetings the community members agreed on who were the persons that could volunteer for the job. The construction of the houses was coordinated by a community member who had experience in construction work alongside a member of the organization's team.

The Tetchea Town Hall was in charge of getting a sponsorship for 500 pieces of asbo-cement. These pieces were distributed for the roof construction of the 5 houses and the renovation of other dozens of houses identified after a public consultation of the community. The community decided which the poorest families were, whose houses needed their roof fixed. Moreover the Tetchea Town Hall allocated funds for connecting the households to the power grid. The foundation launched an announcement at the local radio station through which it requested donations (furniture, doors, windows, stoves, building material, etc.) for the houses in Telechiu. Following this announcement 13 doors, 11 windows, 2 stoves and furniture were collected. The truck for transporting the donations from Oradea to Telechiu was supplied by an employer from the Tetchea region, the Ruhama Foundation having supported only the fuel costs. Over 15 individuals and companies were involved in this activity through donations and financial material or service contributions.

The 5 new houses were taken over by the beneficiary families in December 2006 and were finished and furnished throughout 2007.

# PHOTO GALLERY





Ruhama Foundation experiments with good practice models in housing projects with the aim of developing an integrated and inclusive model for improving housing conditions for disadvantaged categories. One of the beneficiaries of these pilot actions for constructing social houses is Lia.

### SHE SAYS...

*My name is Lia and I am from Telechiu. I used to live in a 4-square meter hut with my husband and 6 children with only a bed made out of some wooden planks. That's where the children slept. We used to sleep on the ground because we had no floor. There were many times when my husband would stay up all night to protect the children from rat bites because they used to get bitten while they slept. I was often at wits end, so much so that I thought about whether or not it would be better for my children if I'd put them up for adoption. I used to pray to God day and night for help so we could have a house of our own because I saw the suffering of my children, especially at winter time when we would keep their faces warm so they wouldn't feel the cold that was almost as bad as the one outside.*

*In 2006 we got a visit in our community from 2 people from the Ruhama Foundation, Alina and Alexandru who we told our story to, alongside 4 other families that were living in conditions no different from ours. Not long afterwards, approximately 2 weeks later, the Foundation held a meeting with all the Roma in the village where we told them what the urgent things that needed to be done in our community were. I prayed people would bring up the housing problems and that is exactly what happened. Then people talked about who needed the houses and of the five houses to be built one was for my family. It was like I was day-dreaming the whole time. I was afraid the foundation would not come and that nothing would get done.*

*But it happened and all the Romas alongside with the mayor and the foundation worked together and managed to do something unheard of before, to build new houses for Roma which we had only seen done for Romanians before. In the course of time the mayor kept his promise and got us electricity while the foundation dug fountains all over our street. Now I have my own house with electricity and water, the children can grow up without any problems and I send them to school everyday, because that's the promise I made to the foundation. I hope other people are as lucky as I was.*

Lia, beneficiary of a social house





## Results of the community development actions:

- 18.000 EURO raised for small infrastructural activities;
- 10 households connected to the power grid in the Roma community of Obor in the city of Aleşd;
- 8 households connected to the power grid in the Roma community from the village of Gepiu;
- 6 wells drilled in the Gacso Roma community in the city of Salonta;
- 1.400 meters of sidewalk built on 3 streets in the village of Tămaşda.



## STRENGTHENING THE ROMA VOICE

The project “Strengthening the Roma Voice” took place in 2007 in 5 Roma communities in Bihor County: Aleşd, Gepiu, Salonta, Tamasda and Sacuieni, with financing from the Spolu International Foundation. The aim of the project was to strengthen the abilities of the organizations that work for improving the Romas’ situation and for consolidating the Roma activist network in Bihor County. The main activities were: County meetings with Roma leaders and local activists in Bihor County, community consulting meetings regarding the problems faced by the community and identifying solutions for them, holding community development activities.

The process of strengthening the Roma voice was held on two levels: locally and on the county level. Two informal structures were established at the local level: The Local Support Group and the Local Initiative Group. The Local Initiative Group is an informal structure made up of people active in the Roma community who have shown an interest in contributing to programs of community development. The aim of the Local Initiative Group is to identify the problems faced by Roma communities, to represent the community in its dialogue with the local authorities and institutions and to implement projects at a local level. The Local Support Group is an informal structure built on the basis of a collaboration agreement and it is formed by local actors: school, town hall, police department, medical practice, churches, the Ruhama Foundation and the community representatives. The aim of the Local Support Group is to initiate, implement and develop programs for the Roma communities especially in the field of education.

The first step in this process was to identify the problems faced by the community and to prioritize them. After identifying the problems meetings were held between the local authorities, the communities’ representatives and the Ruhama Foundation in order to identify solutions. Two round tables were also held: one at Gepiu where the Institution of Prefect was also invited to take part in finding a solution regarding the state of the terrain on which some of the houses in the Roma community were built in order to connect them to the power grid and another at Sacuieni where the Public Service for Population Records Sacuieni was invited to identify solutions for obtaining civil status papers and identity papers. The activities for each party involved were determined within these meetings and partnership agreements were signed. Public meetings between the local authorities, the community members and the Ruhama Foundation took place in all the other towns.

The Town Halls in Salonta and Tamasda were involved in solving some of the problems, both financially and materially: in Salonta it was decided to drill wells to solve the problem of drinking water and in Tamasda the Town Hall offered construction material for building a sidewalk on 3 streets in the town in order to solve the problem of children going to school through muddy streets. In Aleşd the local community was helped in building a social house and connecting 10 other households in the Roma community to the power grid. The implementation of these small infrastructure activities was coordinated by the Local Initiative Group established in each of the 5 towns with the foundation's support. In parallel to these activities the Local Initiative Group members set up meetings with the local authorities in order to come up with solutions to other problems faced by the community.

At the county level, over the course of 3 years the County Network of Roma Leaders in Bihor County was created, which is an informal structure made up of Roma leaders, local activists and members of the Local Initiative Groups. The purpose of this network is to analyze the programs that take place at the county level, to propose solutions, to resolve the problems at the local level, to undergo exchange programs, to accumulate experience in solving problems, to exchange information, to hold information and training sessions. 3 work meetings of the County Network of Roma Leaders in Bihor County took place in the course of 2007.

### Quantitative results

- :: 5 Local Initiatives Groups established;
- :: 4 collaboration agreements with authorities in Aleşd, Gepiu, Tămaşda, Salonta;
- :: 2 round tables with authorities and community members in Săcueni and Gepiu;
- :: 1 work meeting of the members of the Roma Leader Network in Bihor County;
- :: 5 meetings with community members for prioritizing the community's problems;
- :: 18.000 EURO raised for small infrastructure activities in Roma communities and their implementations by the members of the community in partnership with the local authorities and the Ruhama Foundation;
- :: 110 households connected to the power grid in the Roma community of Obor in the city of Aleşd;
- :: 8 households connected to the power grid in the Roma community from the village of Gepiu;
- :: 6 wells drilled in the Gacso Roma community in the city of Salonta;
- :: 1.400 meters of sidewalk built on 3 streets in the village of Tămaşda;
- :: 3 work meetings of the County Network of Active Roma Persons attended by the members of the Local Initiative Groups, active persons in the community, young Roma activists, and members of the Roma Youth Forum.



Ruus DIJKSTERHUIS

director

Spolu International Foundation

Utrecht, The Netherlands

"In 2007, Spolu proudly supported Ruhama to further develop their regional Roma Leaders Network composed out of leaders from 25 communities in Bihor county. During network meetings, issues like housing, employment, education were intensely discussed and each network member elaborated activity plans and signed partnerships with local authorities. Ruhama developed a unique approach: creation of mix teams consisting of young Roma and leaders, enabling leaders to link up with the younger generations. Paralelly, Ruhama supported Roma youth to unite into a network and stimulated them to team up with the leaders to implement the action plans. Therefore the youth are seen as helping the Roma leaders and not as an obstacle or competitors. Great work, Ruhama!"



Ruhama Foundation develops programs for community development based on the process of mobilizing and empowering Roma citizens by establishing, training and assisting local initiative groups to undertake concrete measures for improving the Roma situation. Guti is the elected President of the Local Initiative Group in the village of Tămașda.

## HE SAYS...

*My name is Guti and I am the president of the Initiative Group in Tamasda. At the initiative of the Ruhama Foundation we held a public meeting of the Roma community and we agreed to establish a group to represent the community and its interests. No longer said than done. We had a talk with the people about getting involved in an action for the community's development. We all agreed that the community's biggest problem is the poorly functioning road which is impossible to cross during rain. After consulting with the community and the foundation's team, we decided to build a sidewalk in the community. This sidewalk would be very important for us because our children could reach the school with clean shoes and their colleagues wouldn't make fun of them anymore because they're muddy.*

*Being a local councillor myself alongside Florea we got the Town Hall involved in our action. We basically had 2 partners in our endeavour: The Town Hall and the Ruhama Foundation. The Ruhama Foundation was involved in buying the cement, the Town Hall supplied the gravel and a cement mixer and the initiative group and the community handled the sidewalk construction work. Although initially we thought things will run smoothly because people were eager to participate, we encountered difficulties along the way: the majority of men were at work during the day and the women could not get involved in the construction work. So the work was difficult because it could only be done on weekends and in the afternoons until nightfall. Seeing the slow progress the Town Hall provided 4 workers to hurry along the work. So here we are today at a community meeting to stroll down the 1400 meter sidewalk that runs along the side of the 2 streets. Now children can get to school with their clothes tidy even when in rains, people can get to work without rubber boots on and we can transport the sick to the ambulance more easily. We are already coming up with plans with the initiative group to solve the problem of drinking water so children won't get sick anymore.*

Guti, Roma leader





# PHOTO GALLERY





The Local Initiative Group is an informal structure made up of people active in the Roma community who have shown an interest in contributing to programs of community development. The aim of the Local Initiative Group is to identify the problems faced by Roma communities, to represent the community in its dialogue with the local authorities and institutions and to implement projects at a local level.



## EDUCATION FOR THE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OF ROMA COMMUNITIES

The project “Education for the civic engagement of Roma communities” is implemented by the “Together” Agency for Community Development in Bucharest and involves 60 poor Roma communities from 3 regions of the country (North West, Centre and South). For the north-western region the partner in the project’s implementation is the Ruhama Foundation. The project takes place over the course of 2 years starting with July 2006 and is financed by the Roma Education Fund. The project proposes to contribute to increasing the level of attendance of Roma children in primary school and to improving the capacity of Roma citizen of participating in the decision making process within their own community. Between 2007 and 2008 the facilitation process takes place in 16 communities in Bihor County.

The facilitation process in 2007 took place in 7 towns in Bihor County: Balnaca, Beznea, Tarcea, Sacuieni, Ortiteag, Vasad and Santelec. The 8 facilitators in Bihor County were trained by the “Together” Agency for Community Development and the Romanian Fund for Social Development - FRDS. A meeting was held with the local authorities in the 7 communes where the project took place in order to present the project’s activities, its facilitator, etc. At the local level, the facilitators contacted all the local actors (the Town Hall, the police department, the school, the church, the doctor) in order to inform them about the activities, the facilitation process and in order to obtain data about the Roma community and the problems they are facing. The community chart, a document that comprises of statistical data about the community and its access to services (electricity, drinking water, school, etc.) was drawn up within the process. The facilitators alongside the community members identified and prioritized the problems they face in the fields of education, health, infrastructure and employment. The community’s representatives supported by the facilitators held meetings with the local authorities in order to identify solutions to the community’s problems. The local authorities, the institutions and the churches established the Local Support Groups, groups that propose to initiate and implement educational programs. Local Initiative Groups were established in Roma communities with the aim of representing the community in its dialog with the authorities and institutions. The Local Initiative Groups together with the Local Support Group and the school’s representatives drew up the educational plan that encompasses the educational problems faced by the Roma community and possible solutions put forth by the school and the community. At the community’s initiative, the Local Councils in Balnaca, Beznea, Sacuieni, Ortiteag, Vasad and Santelec in partnership with the Ruhama Foundation held the Summer Kindergarten for children of school-age that never went to public kindergarten.

## Results

- :: a meeting at the county level attended by local and county authorities;
- :: meetings of the facilitators with authorities in order to promote the project - presenting activities, the facilitator's role, the purpose of the actions in community;
- :: making up the community charts for all of the 8 Roma communities;
- :: holding a meeting with the Roma community in order to prioritize the problems they face (a total of 8 such meetings were held);
- :: holding 8 meetings on the topic of education with the parents of Roma children;
- :: signing 8 local partnerships in the field of Roma children education and establishing the Local Support Groups;
- :: establishing 8 Local Initiative Groups in all 8 towns;
- :: holding a training session with the members of the Local Initiative Groups in all 8 towns, regarding the communication with the local authorities, drawing up a request, filing a request to a public institution/authority;
- :: meetings of the Local Initiative Groups with school representatives in order to draw up the educational plan in the towns of: Bălnaca, Ortiteag, Văşad, Tarcea, La Margine, Cubulciu, Sânteles;
- :: 7 meetings of the Local Initiative Groups with Town Halls representatives in order to present the problems of the Roma communities and to identify solutions;
- :: improving the relationship between local authorities and the Roma community;
- :: drawing up the educational plans, plans which will be applied according to the available financial resources of the schools;
- :: 80 Roma parents, members of Local Initiative Groups;
- :: 180 Roma parents participated at the meetings with the school and Town Hall;
- :: involving the parents in the activities of the Summer Kindergartens - 6 parent meetings were held during which they were informed about the importance of education, enrolling their children in school and kindergarten, the parental involvement in education;
- :: at the initiative of the Local Initiative Group, the Suncius Town Hall hired a Roma local expert;
- :: creating a database of local actors from the 8 towns;
- :: creating a database of the number of Roma children enrolled in school (Roma children enrolled at the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year and Roma children who graduated at the end of the school year) in all of the 8 towns;
- :: starting the Summer Kindergartens which were financed by the Local Councils and managed by the schools in Magesti, Balnaca, Beznea, Sacuieni and which were attended by 132 children that come from disadvantaged families.



**Gelu DUMINICĂ**

executive director

"Together" Agency for  
Community Development  
Bucharest

"I had the pleasure and honour of coming upon the Ruhama Foundation's activity in 2002 when I was in Oradea for a training session. Ever since the beginning I was fascinated with the Foundation's potential, which in a very short time transformed into a real and proven value. We are honoured that the Ruhama Foundation is our main partner in the north-western region for development and our closest friend in the battle for promoting socio-economic development in Roma communities in Romania."



#### HE SAYS...

*I never thought I would get a better life. I was even out of hope. Nobody in my family managed to get employed. The hut we lived in kept coming down on top of us and, regardless of whether we fixed it or not, rain and wind still passed through it and rats came out at night. I would have liked to help my father and my family but I felt like my hands and feet were bound. I would have worked in any conditions because I am young and healthy.*

*I thought it was impossible for me to escape this poverty that plagued my family but that changed when the Ruhama Foundation started to provide counselling in Obor so Romas could get a job. The foundation managed to find work for both me and my brother, which meant the prospect of a better life with plenty of money for food, school for the little ones and other things.*

*Then the foundation helped us build a better house; they brought us construction materials and our neighbours lent us a helping hand as well. Today I have a safe place to live with my family. I believe it is very important never to lose hope. I would like to thank the people at the Ruhama Foundation especially Marian who always encouraged us and gave us advice.*

Vasile, member of an assisted family



# PHOTO GALLERY



a new geometry



different but equal

“A new geometry: different but equal” campaign in figures:

- over 20 members of the Roma Youth Forum actively involved in the campaign;
- 25 t-shirts, 45 hats, 50 bags and over 2.400 flyers printed for the campaign;
- over 2.500 youth informed during the campaign;
- over 100 teachers informed during the campaign;
- over 20 Roma communities in the county visited during the campaign.



THE WORLD BANK

The project “Roma Youth Forum” was financed by The World Bank.

## ROMA YOUTH FORUM

The Bihor County Roma Youth Forum was established with the support of a project that took place in 2007 with financial support from the World Bank. The aim of the project was to actively promote civic involvement within the ranks of young Roma and to develop social skills in order to involve them in information campaigns and community development actions. The active youth from the Roma Education Centre held a campaign for identifying young Romas enrolled in high school or in arts and craftsmanship schools in Bihor County as well as those enrolled in universities in order to invite them to join the Roma Youth Forum.

Following the campaign over 50 young Romas, school children and students were identified and a meeting was held in order to get to know them and to inform them about the Roma Youth Forum and the importance of its activity. The youth expressed their desire to form a group and to take part in the forum during this meeting. Between June and October 2007 the young Romas took part in retraining sessions on the topics of Community Development, Public Relations, Communication and European Values. These training sessions were given by Roma expert trainers who became models for the forum youth. The role of promoting these models was to contribute to giving the young Romas an identity to assume by sharing their own life experiences. The first training session took place in June 2007 on the topic of Community Development and Cross-Culture. The purpose of this meeting was to inform and raise awareness among the youth about what cross-culture really means but also that of preparing a campaign for promoting cross-culture in schools. At the training session on Communication and European Values they learnt about what it means to be a European citizen, about what communication is, how to communicate and the forms of communication. This training session was led by Valeriu Nicolae who is a Roma figure on a European level and who represents an important model for the Roma youth. The training session regarding Public Relations was aimed at training them about the role of public and private institutions, about the competences of European institutions and especially those of the European Union.

During the project’s implementation 2 work meetings of the forum members were held as well as 3 social meetings. The work meetings were focused on planning future events that the forum would undertake while the social meetings were aimed at attracting new members and consolidating the young team. The young active Roma took part in the meetings of the Local Council in their commune or in neighbouring ones, in order to observe the process of decision making at a local level and in order to develop their civic skills.

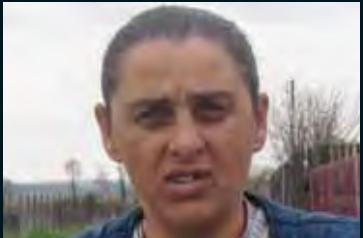
Moreover the young Romas took part in the meeting of the Mixed Work Group held by the County Bureau for Romas within the Institution of Prefect. Over the course of 2007 a campaign for information and raising awareness was held regarding tolerance, cross-culture and fighting discrimination called "A new geometry: different but equal". It was held in 8 towns in Bihor County, in public institutions, shops, markets, schools and on the streets. The youngsters wore visual identification marks during the campaign: hats, t-shirts printed with the key message of the campaign "Different but Equal". They took part in the meetings with Roma parents during the Summer Kindergartens in order to raise the parents' awareness about the importance of school. They distributed flyers in the non-Roma community and sent a clear message of promoting tolerance and non-discrimination. During the campaign "A new geometry: different but equal" that was held in schools, the forum's members sent messages to the school children and the teachers about tolerance, non-discrimination and cross-culture in classes and they handed out flyers. The young Roma and non-Roma members of the Forum were real models for the Roma children in school. Following the campaign the foundation got requests to extend the campaign in other schools and high schools in Bihor County. During this campaign more than 2.400 flyers were handed out and more than 100 teachers were informed.

The forum members attended a series of meetings and events held at the Roma Education Centre. They took part in the meeting for the launch of the County Network of Teachers for Inclusive Education in Bihor County. The young Romas took part in the visit of the President of the National Agency for Roma at the Roma Education Centre at the offices of the Ruhama Foundation where they presented the forum, the activities they deployed and their future plans. They also took part in the study visit held at the Roma Education Centre within the conference "Responses to violence in everyday life in a democratic society" held by the Bihor Teaching Department. In partnership with the Pro Democratia association the forum members held a civic education campaign in 20 Roma communities regarding the Euro-parliamentary elections during which more than 1.000 information materials were handed out. In the Roma communities, they informed the Roma citizens of what voting means and the importance of voting. Moreover the youth took part in the activity of monitoring the Euro-parliamentary elections in 50 towns in Bihor County. In December 2007 6 young Roma members of the Forum took part in the training session "Lobby and advocacy in the relationship with the local authorities and other relevant factors" held at Sinaia. Here they honed their lobby and advocacy skills as well as the communication skills with the local authorities and exchanged experiences with a team of young Romas from Botosani, each of them presenting the activities that took place at the level of their county.



**Marian DARAGIU**  
chairman  
Ruhama Foundation

"No one knows better the difficulties faced by Roma population than these youngsters. The Roma Youth Forum is the warranty for a new generation that prepares to bring the change from within. A change for the better, based on knowledge, education and profession. Over 40 Roma youngsters, high school and university students, along with their non-Roma colleagues are meeting regularly and learn together to overcome the invisible barriers generated by social and cultural differences and stereotypes. The Roma youth must stop the hide and seek game and start to understand that assuming their identity is the keystone of the reconstruction process of disadvantaged Roma communities and it is their attribute to get involved in developing a Roma middle class - a major requirement for positive change."



SHE SAYS...

*I am Doina, Loredana's mother. We are very poor but we used to be worse off. A lot of the times I didn't know how we were going to get by, how I would provide food my children. It was only the Lord's mercy that watched over us every day. We were healthy, we could work but nobody wanted to hire us. We always thought of the ones going to work everyday and saw how better off they were than us, the ones who help around people's houses every now and then.*

*Then came the day when the people from the Ruhama Foundation came to our community and asked which one of us would like to get hired. Loredana, my daughter, told them she would like to get a job as soon as possible. The people from the foundation helped her with the paperwork. We hoped they could find her something to work. Eventually the foundation got her a job and today she is working. Our life isn't as harsh anymore. Our debts have gone down. Loredana is our support now.*

*I have another child who is able to work and I would be very glad if the Ruhama Foundation would find him a job as well.*

**Doina**, mother of an assisted girl



# PHOTO GALLERY



# STRONG

Coaliția pentru consolidarea SectoRului ONG din Județul Bihor

[www.coalitiastrong.ro](http://www.coalitiastrong.ro)



advocacy & public policies

## **STRONG COALITION**

### **The Coalition for Consolidation of the NGO Sector in Bihor County**

The Coalition for Consolidation of the NGO Sector in Bihor County - The STRONG Coalition came into being in 2006 as a result of implementing the project “Partnership and advocacy for developing social sector policies in Bihor County”, by 6 NGOs: The Ruhama Foundation, The Romanian Foundation for Children, Community and Family (FRCCF), the Albin Foundation, the Ecclesia Mater Foundation, the Umbrella Society for Regionally Associated People with Disabilities (SUPHAR) and the Caritas Catolica Association during August 2006 and October 2007. The project was financed within the Romanian Civil Society Strengthening Program (RCSS) held by the World Learning for International Development, with financial resources from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The main objective of the project was to establish The Coalition for Consolidating the NGO Sector in Bihor County in order to strengthen the NGOs' capacity to deploy advocacy campaigns.

Establishing the STRONG Coalition came as a result of the raised awareness on the part of the representatives of the 6 coalition founding NGOs to the importance of coming together in order to obtain results by changing local level social policies to favour the beneficiaries that they represent.

One of the first consolidating activities of the STRONG Coalition was to hold a meeting with the NGOs in which the purpose for the coalition was presented as well as its openness to NGOs that provide social services. As a result of the coalition's presentation, 5 of the NGOs present at the meeting adhered to its program, thus managing to extend the coalition from 6 to 11 members. Moreover this NGO meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the problems in the NGO sector. Taking advantage of the presence of a significant number of NGO representatives and their expertise in working with disadvantaged groups, the coalition created a hierarchy of disadvantaged groups which NGOs have had contact with in their activity. Later on these groups represented the target groups of the research done by the University of Oradea as a result of the STRONG Coalition initiative.



**Ancuța VAMEȘU**  
consultant & trainer

“The STRONG Coalition is a model of NGO organization for the benefit of disadvantaged groups in a community. The organizations in the social field are usually considered capable of performing services different from advocacy and lobby - the Coalition has proven that these organizations can too influence public policies by having obtained victories in influencing local social policies for the benefit of the assisted. It's the start of a journey that can transform Oradea and Bihor into pioneers in the field of social inclusion in Romania, a country that exports its workforce and social problems to Europe and can't seem to take full advantage of the opportunities brought on by the European integration. I hope that other organizations in the country can follow the example of Ruhama Foundation and contribute to the reform of the social services at a national level.”



## Founding members of the STRONG Coalition:

- Ruhama Foundation
- Romanian Foundation for Children, Community and Family (FRCCF)
- Albin Foundation
- Ecclesia Mater Foundation
- Umbrella Society for Regionally Associated People with Disabilities (SUPHAR)
- Caritas Catolica Association

[www.coalitiastrong.ro](http://www.coalitiastrong.ro)



Because the STRONG Coalition has established a mission of influencing local public policies in favour of disadvantaged groups by implementing advocacy campaigns, one of the first training activities for the members of the coalition was to hold a training course in advocacy. This course was attended by numerous other organizations that provide social services in the county and thus became another type of event through which the coalition could be consolidated as a result of an increase in the number of its members. The course was held by experts from the Advocacy Academy in Timisoara and over the course of the three days, the members of the STRONG Coalition managed to attain insight on preparing an advocacy campaign, prioritizing the problems that could at one point concern an advocacy campaign as well as notions pertaining to a campaign's implementation.

During this training course the NGOs were presented with the importance that some legislative acts could have for the success of advocacy actions.

At the moment when the coalition gathered a number of 15 NGOs that assumed the coalition's mission and purpose it was decided to publicly launch it. The launch of the STRONG Coalition took place during an event that was attended by dozens of people, representatives of local public institutions, representatives of the media, representatives of member organizations of the STRONG coalition and those of organizations that support the coalition's programs. The activity was aimed at promoting the coalition in the media so that it could become known by the whole community but especially by the representatives of the local public authority with whom the coalition proposed to bring positive changes in the social policies at the local level.

### Preparing the advocacy campaign by collecting data

The Strong Coalition has made use of the legislative instruments provided by the 544/2001 Law in order to request information of public interest from the institutions and authorities involved in the activity of social assistance in the city Oradea and Bihor County. The main institutions involved in providing social assistance in the city of Oradea and Bihor County (the Oradea Local Council, the Oradea Social Community Administration, the Bihor County Council and the Department of Social Assistance and Child Protection Bihor) were the recipients of numerous requests for public interest information.

Through these demands the STRONG Coalition requested information about the social services created and developed, the funds allocated for the functioning of these services, the number of beneficiaries served by each of these services as well as the sums allocated by each of these institutions for the support of social services created and developed by NGOs and the mechanisms through which these funds were allocated.

If at the beginning of the activity of collecting information of public interest, the authorities to whom the requests were addressed responded in a vague manner, of the type “the information is available on the website, in the X section”, the relationship of collaboration with the people responsible for offering information of public interest was built in time and with perseverance.

Of great importance in understanding the concept of accessing and offering information of public interest was holding a training course with the topic of “Decision making transparency”, a course which was attended both by representatives of the coalition’s NGOs (the ones that need to know the legal mechanisms of accessing information of public interest and those of getting involved in the decision making process) as well as persons responsible with offering information of public interest and ensuring decision making transparency within public institutions (the ones that need to know, respect and ensure the right to access information of public interest and the right to get involved in the decision making process of each citizen). The course was a perfect opportunity to put together a work procedure regarding the access of information of public interest in such a manner that the rights of neither party involved would be violated. The public information that was collected was the starting point in drawing up the main support document of the advocacy campaign: the financial analysis of budgetary allocations for social assistance in the city of Oradea.

#### **Preparing the advocacy campaign by analyzing vulnerable groups' needs**

Another instrument for preparation in the advocacy campaign was the sociologic research regarding the needs of people with disabilities, of elderly people, of homeless people and of children from disadvantaged families that was done by the University of Oradea through its Faculty of Social Sciences - The Department of Sociology. The research was requested by the STRONG Coalition in order to identify the social services of priority needed to respond to the needs of the disadvantaged groups assisted and represented by associations and foundations in Bihor County.



**Corina DRAGOMIRESCU**  
senior consultant CMC  
Advocacy Academy  
Timișoara

“The Ruhama Foundation has been, is and hopefully will remain a pillar of support, a factor of inspiration and mobilization for what the social sector represents in Bihor County. Together with the other members of the STRONG Coalition they proved through tenacity and dedication that they can change the world, that they can emphasise the Respect for others in need as well as the Love for our peers. They reminded the rest of us, the ones dedicated in body and spirit, to take notice of our fellow brothers in need. They have been and will remain an example to follow.”



## Members of STRONG Coalition:

Christian Aid Association Tinca  
AASC

Caritas Catolica Association  
Caritas Parish Association  
ADL Bihor

Down Association  
Mentally Disabled Association  
Pro Christo et Ecclesia Assoc.

Ramiluck Association  
Agape Foundation  
Albin Foundation

Barnaba Foundation  
House of Children and Youth Found.

ELIM Christian Foundation  
Csillagvaros Foundation  
Dorcas Foundation

Ecclesia Mater Foundation  
Egykori Iskalment Foundation  
People to People Foundation

Pro Deo Foundation  
FRCCF

Ruhama Foundation  
Theranova Foundation  
SUPHAR

Multiple Sclerosis Foundation  
A New Life for Children Foundation  
Thysia Association  
County Union of the Retired  
SOS Autism Bihor Association

The conclusions of the research were presented to all local people involved in the decision making process during an organized event. Moreover the conclusions of the research were the basis for the statement of the advocacy campaign, the establishment of services that were deemed as necessary as shown by the research, which was one of the proposals addressed by the STRONG Coalition to the local powers of decision.

## Preparing the advocacy campaign through drawing up a financial analysis

The STRONG Coalition drew up an analysis that reflects the way in which funds from the local budget are allocated for social assistance activities on the basis of the data collected from both NGOs as well as public institutions. The reason for doing this analysis was to show the inefficient allocation of funds for social assistance activities at a local level. The advocacy campaign of the STRONG Coalition comprised of many concurrent activities: on the one side taking a firm stand regarding some of the actions of the public authorities with regard to the local system of social assistance and on the other a careful documentation of the advocacy campaign in order to influence the budget project for 2008.

Thus one of the first advocacy actions taken was to submit a document of the position held by the Local Council of Oradea as a result of the publishing of the Local Council Decision project regarding the establishment of the Home for the elderly service under the administration of the Local Council of Oradea – the Oradea Social Community Administration. In fact the Local Council of Oradea through its Department of Social Assistance, respectively the Oradea Social Community Administration, was taking over a social service of an NGO without ensuring equal chances for all the social service providers to access public resources in order to assist disadvantaged persons. Through this document the representatives of the STRONG Coalition proposed to the Local Council of Oradea that the establishment of the Home for the elderly service under the administration of the Local Council of Oradea - the Oradea Social Community Administration be done by respecting the stipulation of the 68 ordinance from 2003 regarding social services, by offering all providers of social services for the elderly, the possibility of accessing local budget resources in circumstances of competition, efficiency and competitiveness in the field of supplying services. These demands came about because in Oradea there are other providers of residential type services that need to have an equal right to access public resources alongside the other service providers.

In the same context, that of submitting the statement to the Local Council, ASCO had the initiative of holding a round table on the topic of "Dialog and cooperation for fighting poverty and social exclusion in the city of Oradea". NGOs that provide social services, members and sympathizers of the STRONG Coalition were invited to take part at this round table. At the beginning of the meeting the ASCO representatives criticized the Coalition's initiatives of taking a stand against the Local Council regarding the funding of NGO services by non-transparent criteria and without respect for the principle of competition, whereas afterwards, they invited the NGOs to propose actions targeted at disadvantaged groups considered by ASCO as being of priority for 2007, the deadline for submitting the proposals being only 2 days. The NGOs filed a statement to the Social Community Administration Oradea on behalf of the STRONG Coalition which contained proposals for the development of the social services provided by the associations and foundations in Oradea through allocation of public funds from the Local Council budget for 2007. This statement contained statistical data regarding the social services in the city of Oradea as well as data on the necessary financial resources for better functioning of these services. The statement was filed to ASCO during a press conference in the context of elaborating the budget for 2007, the budget project being made public later on. The statement did not influence in any way the sum allocated for social assistance in the budget of the Local Council for 2007.

The failure of the first advocacy action of the STRONG Coalition was mainly due to the insufficient documentation of the status of social services in the city and the coalition's lack of experience in performing advocacy actions. To prevent these types of situations from happening in the future, the coalition started an ample process of documentation regarding the status of social services in the city of Oradea and Bihor County both those provided by public institutions as well as those provided by private ones. Thus, making use of the stipulations of the 544/2001 Law regarding the free access to information of public interest, the coalition requested to the 4 institutions involved in the social assistance activity at the local level (The Local Council of Oradea, the Oradea Social Community Administration, The Bihor County Council and DGASPC Bihor) a series of information regarding the social services they provide, the number of beneficiaries of these services, the costs involved in supplying these services as well as data regarding the mechanisms through which, each of these institutions is involved in supporting social services provided by NGOs. The documentation process included collecting data from NGOs using the same criteria.



**Ionut SIBIAN**  
executive director  
**Civil Society Development**  
**Foundation - FDSC**  
**Bucharest**

"It gives me great pleasure to thank the Ruhama Foundation for the support it has given the FDSC - Foundation for the Development of Civil Society in two initiatives which are very important for us. The NGO coalition for social services and the advocacy campaign regarding the improvement of the funding mechanism for social services. The good practice models that they have promoted at the local level, in contracting social services, recommend them as being one of the most important civic partners in Romania."



Ruhama Foundation published "The Advocacy Guide for NGOs that provide social services". This guide is meant to lend a helping hand to NGOs that wish to develop advocacy campaigns in order to improve local and national policies regarding the supply of social services. The guide presents the development of an advocacy campaign by means of a coalition formed by multiple NGOs, both from a theoretical standpoint as well as through concrete examples.

All the data gathered in the collecting process was used to create a financial analysis of the budgetary allocations for social assistance. This financial analysis was done to strengthen the point of view according to which the funds allocated for social assistance are distributed in an inefficient manner, and the social services provided by the NGOs are neglected by the public authorities (the only way in which they are financially supported is through a subsidy granted by the 34/1998 Law and moreover these are granted at one quarter of the maximum amount allowed by law). The research done by the University of Oradea at the request of the STRONG Coalition, having as target groups the elderly, the homeless, children from poor families and people with disabilities, represents another document that supports the Coalition's demands to the authorities. The research provided a series of social services and priority needs of the analyzed groups which were embedded in the coalition's requests to the local decision makers.

The data from the financial analysis and the data unravelled by the research were included in the statement that was filed by the coalition to the authorities: the Mayor of Oradea, the deputy mayors, the local councillors and the representatives of ASCO. This statement was analyzed in a public debate which was attended by approximately 150 beneficiaries of the social services provided by the member associations and foundations of the STRONG Coalition. Apart from the large number of beneficiaries that attended it, the public debate was host to all the representatives with power of decision for the institutions involved in supplying social assistance in the city of Oradea. A special result of the debate was the fact that the mayor of the city publicly stated that the demands regarding the increase of the budget allocated for social services of associations and foundations do not represent a big effort for the budget of the Oradea Local Council.

At the County level, the STRONG Coalition took actions alongside the County Council by submitting a well structured proposal in order to influence the introduction of the social field within the ranks of fundable fields according to the 350/2005 Law regarding the regime of non-refundable funding from the funds allocated for non-profit activities of general interest. The County Council decided to include the social field within the rank of those that could be funded on the basis of the 350/2005 Law and as a result the NGOs in the social field now have access to obtaining non refundable funds.

At the end of 2007 the STRONG Coalition was a well known entity at a county level and was comprised of 35 organizations determined to continue the advocacy process until the objectives regarding the improvement of local social policies would be achieved.



The material was done with financial support from the World Learning for International Development - Romanian Civil Society Strengthening Program (RCSS) financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

# PHOTO GALLERY





about us

Ruhama Foundation is nearing its 12 year anniversary - on May 23 2008 - thus being one of the most experienced NGO in the region. Apart from the experience it has accumulated in this time, the foundation has known a harmonious development as an organization, marked by bouts of intensive growth followed by periods of consolidation of its institutional acquisitions. This way the organization has followed a toilsome path, managing to grow in an organic manner from a group of 3 people dedicated to the social process to the current team of over 30 employees and contracted specialists, alongside some 30 collaborators and volunteers. The area of activity has grown exponentially, from a local level of reach to a national and a European level. In 2008 it included 40 communities in Bihor County alongside another 400 communities in all of Romania's counties as well as programmes with European partners from The Netherlands, Belgium, Hungary, Germany, Austria, Turkey, Moldova, Albania, Macedonia, Slovakia, and Bulgaria.

Ruhama Foundation has specialised over the years in that which concerns its own departments and programmes as well its management. The organisation has accredited all of the social services that it provides and has authorised all its professional formation programmes as well. The medium term development strategy of the foundation includes other managerial objectives: obtaining the public utility status and obtaining the ISO certification for the foundation.

The organisational development has been felt throughout all the levels of the foundation: in the team's professionalism, in the results they have obtained, in the annual budgets they have drawn, in the quality standards they have assumed, in their public image, etc. But what is most important is the increase in the satisfaction level of the hundreds of the foundation's beneficiaries. The involvement level of the foundation in solving social needs has grown considerably, leading in 2007 to the drawing up of good practice models that were promoted at a national level and also to proposals for the improvement of public policies regarding the increase in the quality of life for the citizens. This new level of action has brought about more responsibility on the part of the foundation regarding the assuming of the role of expert organisation, which offers expertise and technical assistance to disadvantaged communities, public authorities and NGOs.

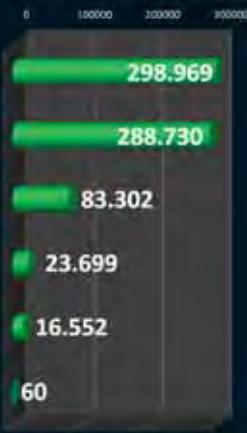
The organisation's development strategy for 2008 implies taking a stand at a national level in matters in which the foundation has expertise, as well as consolidating the social programs and services developed at local level. Moreover, Ruhama Foundation intends to extend the number of beneficiaries of its own programs.



**Ciprian TORJ**  
sociologist  
senior consultant

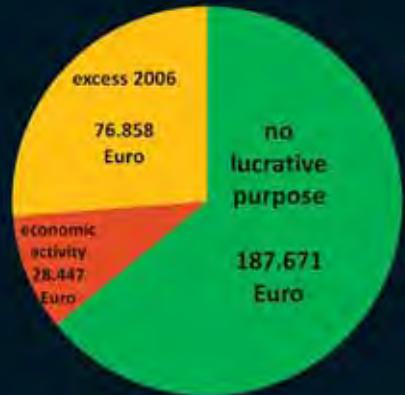
"My first contact with Ruhama team took place in the summer of 2002, at which point I have bet on the extraordinary potential for development of this organisation, which is related to the professionalism and the tenacity of the team. 2007 was the falling due of my bet, which proved to be a winning one, as well as the period of consolidation of the human and financial resources management and the organisation's reach to maturity regarding the implementation of its social programs and services. The status of consultant of the foundation staff constantly compels me to resort to critical analyses of the organisation activities, but that does not mean that I cannot notice a progress, desirable by any organisation, a progress whose ultimate winners are the beneficiaries of the programs and services initiated by Ruhama."

## CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET 2007 (euro)



The consolidated balance sheet of Ruhama Foundation for the year 2007 indicates incomes of 298.969 Euro, expenses of 288.730 Euro, property and equipment in value of 83.302 Euro, cash and cash equivalents of 23.699 Euro, incomes received in advance (projects installments) of 16.552 Euro and a participation title of 60 Euro.

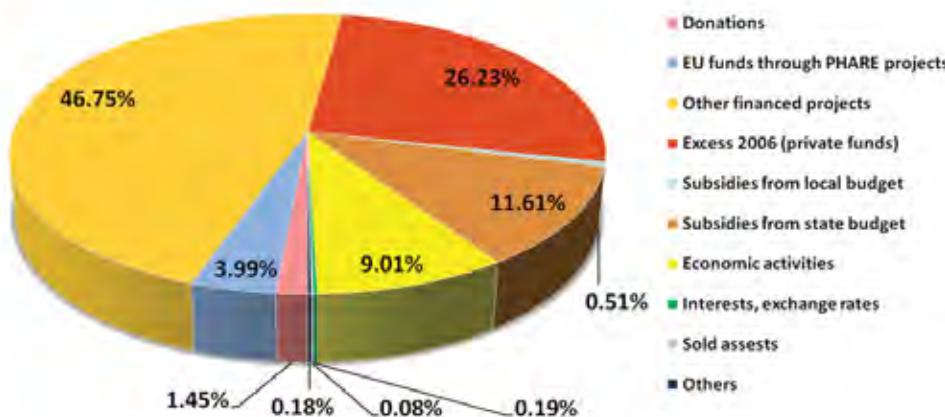
## Income categories 2007



## FINANCIAL DATA

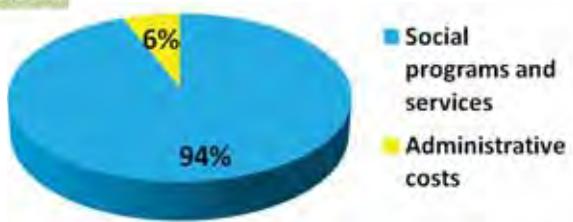
### INCOMES 2007

INCOME SOURCES	AMOUNT (euro)
Donations	4.235
EU funds through PHARE projects	11.700
Other financed projects	136.957
Excess 2006 (private funds)	76.858
Subsidies from local budget	1.498
Subsidies from state budget	34.020
Economic activities	26.392
Interests, exchange rate	552
Sold assets	240
Others	524
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>292.976</b>



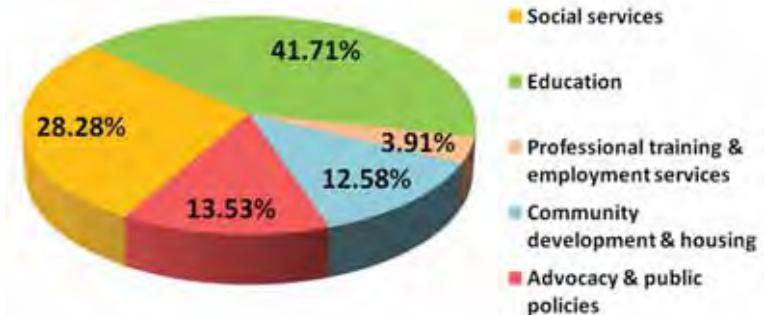
## EXPENSES 2007

EXPENSES	AMOUNT (euro)
Social programs and services	271.415
Administrative costs	17.315
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>288.730</b>



### EXPENSES WITH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN 2007

EXPENSES WITH SOCIAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	AMOUNT (euro)
SOCIAL SERVICES (Homecare Services, Citizen Advice Bureau, Counselling and Support Centre for Parents and Children)	76.749
EDUCATION (Roma Education Centre, Summer Kindergartens, Parents School)	113.194
PROFESSIONAL TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES	10.604
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING (Building social houses, Strengthening the Roma voice, Civic education in Roma communities, Roma Youth Forum)	34.136
ADVOCACY & PUBLIC POLICIES	36.732
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>271.415</b>



**CONFIDENT AUDIT**  
Financial auditor

"SC CONFIDENT AUDIT SRL, member of the Romanian Financial Auditors Chamber, carried out audit missions with special purpose regarding the auditing of the financial reports from projects funded through PHARE programs, World Bank, foreign nongovernmental organisations, local, county and national institutions. As for Ruhama Foundation, our opinion regarding the eligibility of the costs and the use of the sources indicates the accordance with the national bookkeeping standard, with the requirements of the funding contracts and the applicable legislation. After evaluating the accounting and internal monitoring system, we can appreciate that these are adequate to be used as a base for elaborating financial reports and for maintaining a correct book keeping, meant to ensure responsibility and credibility in relationship with third parties."

## VISION

**Ruhama Foundation - main civic partner of the public actors and companies, representing the citizens' interests at the highest level.**

## MISSION

**Ruhama Foundation is a nongovernmental organization, non-profit and apolitical, established in year 1996.**

**Ruhama Foundation is an expert organisation in social field with a interdisciplinary team which develops programs and services in response to social needs of vulnerable groups and communities from the region in order to increase their quality of life regardless ethnicity, religion and gender.**

## VALUES

- :: Empathy**
- :: Honesty**
- :: Transparency**
- :: Ethical behaviour**
- :: Team work and respect**
- :: Respect for beneficiaries**
- :: Advocacy for beneficiaries' interests**
- :: Responsibility to the next generation**

## GRANTORS

European Union through Phare programs  
Roma Education Fund, Budapest  
Bihor County Council  
United States Agency for International Development through World Learning for International Development  
Spolu International Foundation, The Netherlands  
Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities  
County Agency for Employment Bihor  
Oradea Local Council

## PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

**Public authorities at central level**  
National Agency for Roma - ANR  
Romanian Fund for Social Development - FRDS  
Ministry of Education, Research and Youth - MECT  
Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities - MMFES

**Public authorities at local level**  
Social Community Administration Oradea - ASCO  
County Agency for Employment Bihor - AJOFM  
Public Health Authority Bihor  
Territorial Authority for Public Order Bihor - ATOP  
County Office for Roma Bihor  
Teachers Department Bihor  
County Pension Department Bihor  
Centre for Prevention, Evaluation and Anti-drug Counselling Oradea  
Unique Volunteering Centre Oradea  
Bihor County Council  
Oradea Local Council  
Bihor County Population Records Department  
Oradea Population Records Department  
Department for Work, Social Solidarity and Family Bihor  
General Department for Social Assistance and Child Protection Bihor  
Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Oradea

**Public authorities at local level**

County Police Department Bihor  
School Inspectorate for Bihor County  
Institution of Prefect - Bihor County  
Maximum Security Penitentiary Oradea  
Siguranță Oradea  
Oradea Proximity Police  
Police Department of Săcueni  
Town Hall of Avram Iancu  
Town Hall of Batăr  
Town Hall of Bratca  
Town Hall of Ciumeghiu  
Town Hall of Curtuișeni  
Town Hall of Diosig  
Town Hall of Gepiu  
Town Hall of Hidișelul de Sus  
Town Hall of Lugașu de Jos  
Town Hall of Măgești  
Town Hall of Oșorhei  
Town Hall of Șuncuiuș  
Town Hall of Tăuteu  
Town Hall of Tinca  
Town Hall of Țețchea  
City Hall of Marghita  
City Hall of Salonta  
City Hall of Aleșd  
City Hall of Săcueni  
County Ambulance Service  
SPCLEP Population Records Aleșd  
SPCLEP Population Records Beiuș  
SPCLEP Population Records Marghita  
SPCLEP Population Records Săcueni  
SPCLEP Population Records Ștei  
SPCLEP Population Records Valea Lui Mihai  
Obstetrics and Gynaecology Hospital  
University of Oradea

**NGOs at local level**

Agape Association  
Christian Aid Association Tinca  
Social Workers Association Crișana  
Caritas Catolica Association  
Caritas Parish Association  
Locomotors Disabled Association  
Down Association  
Mentally Disabled Association  
Liman Association  
Mustard Seed Association  
Pro Christo et Ecclesia Association  
Ramiluck Association  
Smiles Association  
SOS Autism Bihor Association  
Thysia Association  
FRCCF  
Agape Foundation  
Albin Foundation  
Barnaba Foundation  
Children and Youth House Foundation  
ELIM Christian Foundation  
Csillagvaros Foundation  
Multiple Sclerosis Foundation  
Dorcas Foundation  
Ecclesia Mater Foundation  
Egykori Iskalment Foundation  
El Sadai Foundation  
People to People Foundation  
Pro Deo Foundation  
Hope Foundation - Wonderful House  
Theranova Foundation  
A New Life for Children Foundation  
Hospice Emanuel  
SUPHAR  
County Union of the Retired

**NGOs at national level**

Advocacy Academy, Timișoara  
"Together" Agency for Community Development, Bucharest  
Amare Rromentza, Bucharest  
APADOR-CH  
Pro Democracy Association  
Equal Chances Association, Zalău  
Juridical Resources Centre, Bucharest  
Resource Centre for Roma Communities, Cluj  
Civil Society Development Foundation, Bucharest  
NESsT Romania  
Romani Criss, Bucharest

**NGOs at international level**

Integro Association, Bulgaria  
Chance B Association, Austria  
EDROM, Turkey  
Gesellschaft für Soziale Unternehmensberatung mbH, Germany  
Nonprofit Enterprise and Self-sustainability Team - NESsT, Chile  
Roma Active Albania  
Roma Progres, Macedonia  
Spolu International Foundation, The Netherlands  
Tarna Rom, Moldova  
Zdruzenie Spolu, Slovakia

#### **Companies**

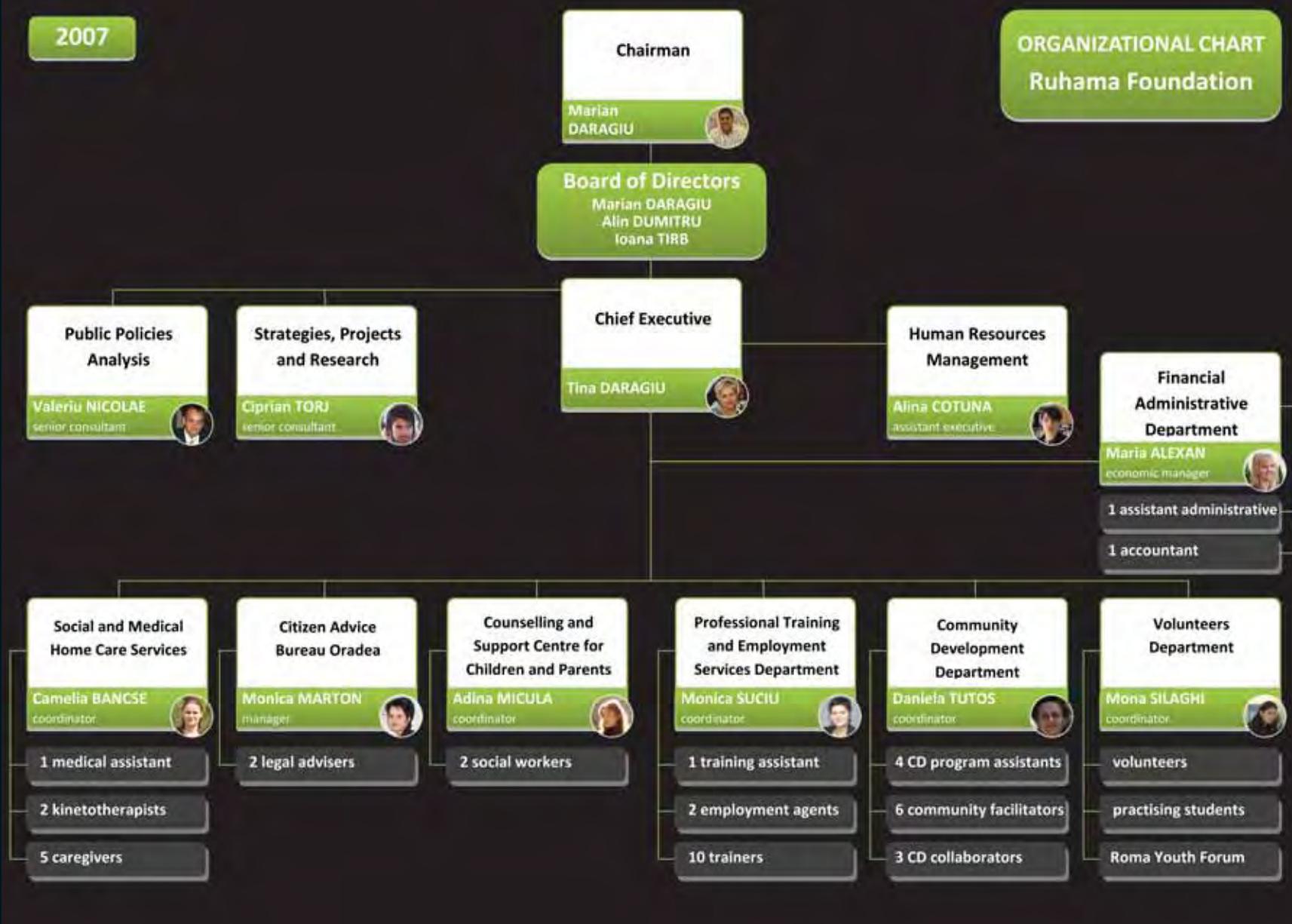
ABN AMRO Bank Romania; Scala Pastry shop; Patmos Bookstore;  
S.C. Arnos S.R.L.; S.C. Zahărul Oradea S.A.

## **NETWORKS AND COALITIONS**

ANBCC - National Association of Citizen Advice Bureaus  
ACRR - The Civil Alliance of Roma in Romania  
Coaliția STRONG - Coalition for Consolidating the NGO Sector in Bihor  
NGO Coalition for Social Services  
NGO Coalition for Structural Funds  
EASPD - European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities  
ERGO Network - European Roma Grassroots Organisations  
ESREA - European Society for Research on the Education of Adults  
RONOR - NGOs in Employment Network Romania

2007

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART  
Ruhama Foundation



## THE TEAM

without which these pages would have remained white...

Employees and contracted  
Adela HUS - psychological counsellor  
Alexandru BALOG - social worker  
Alina COTUNA - assistant executive  
Anamaria SARKADI - caregiver  
Anca ARDELEAN - accountant  
Camelia BANCSE - services coordinator  
Ciprian TORJ - senior consultant  
Claudia ROGOJAN - training assistant  
Dacian IVAŞCA - data operator  
Daniel VARGA - DC assistant  
Daniela TUTOS - DC coordinator  
Ecaterina CRĂCIUN - caregiver  
Elisabeta TIMAR - administrative assistant  
Elvira ŞANDOR - kinetotherapist  
Gabor GONDOS - kinetotherapist  
Gheorghe LAKATOŞ - social worker  
Ibolya VERES - caregiver  
Ilidiko OLAH - medical assistant  
Ileana UJVAROŞI - caregiver  
Ilona Beata KOVACS - kinetotherapist  
Ionuț ŞERBAN - DC assistant  
Jozsef SZILAGYI - community facilitator  
Ludovic "Marinel" TEGLAŞ - DC assistant  
Maria ALEXAN - economic manager  
Maria PARCIU - caregiver  
Marian DARAGIU - chairman  
Mariana ȚINCU - caregiver  
Monica MARTON - CAB manager  
Monica MIHUȚ - social worker  
Monica SILAGHI - DC assistant  
Monica SUCIU - training coordinator  
Nicușor CĂLIN - DC assistant  
Octavia VLAJ - caregiver  
Pardalian COVACIU - community facilitator  
Raluca GLIGOR - economist  
Roxana IGNA - physiokinetherapist  
Tina DARAGIU - chief executive  
Voichița BICA - services coordinator  
Zsolt TASNADI - kinetotherapist

Collaborators  
Adrian HATOS  
Adina MICULA  
Adrian "Lideru" COVACIU  
Adriana DIACONU  
Alina OROS  
Alina ȘTIUBE  
Aliz RĂDU  
Anamaria KARACSONYI  
Andreea RUGAN  
Aurica CRIŞAN  
Camelia RUSU  
Ciprian COVACIU  
Claudia PETRESCU  
Corina CIUCIOIU  
Daniel TEGLAŞ  
Daniela ȚIRIGAN  
Doina BÜLZAN  
Ecaterina TEXE  
Elisabeta MATEIAŞ  
Erika NAGY  
Eugen VARGA  
Eugenia GROZA  
Eva SZABO  
Florian VARGA  
Imre BERES  
Ioan CORDOVAN  
Ioana MOT  
Iulia GEORGESCU  
Iuliana VAŞADI  
Laura KHELEMEN  
Liliana TRUŞCĂ  
Livia MONENCIU  
Lucia CIOBANU  
Lucia PANTEA  
Luminița ILEA  
Marcel DEDIU  
Maria PLAŞTIN  
Maria BUCIU  
Ramona IRIMITA  
Viorica ȚEPOSU  
Zsuzsanna KADAR

## CONTACTS

### Mail address

Fundația Ruhama  
B-dul Gen. Magheru nr. 21, Ap. 154  
410057 Oradea  
Județul Bihor  
Romania  
Tel./fax: 004 0259 456 180  
Email: fundația\_ruhama@rdslink.ro  
office@ruhama.ro  
Web: www.ruhama.ro

### Roma Education Centre

Str. Universității 5  
Campus Științe Socio-Umane, Oradea

### Homecare Services Call Centre

Str. Octavian Goga nr. 4  
Căminul Cominca demisol, Oradea  
Tel./fax: 004 0259 479 454  
Email: ingrijire@ruhama.ro

### CAREERS Employment and Training Centre

Str. Universității nr. 4 (cazarmă), Oradea  
Email: training@ruhama.ro

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