



Sunshine Foundation Romania Trust

Registered charity NIC 105446

Annual report 1 January – 31 December 2021



Sunshine Foundation Romania Trust (SFR) is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. It was established as a Trust on 22 November, 2001 and is governed by a board of trustees in accordance with its trust deed.

Trustees

Aodh O'Loan, Denise Copeland (Secretary), Maire O'Loan, Marie Williams (Chair), Mary Duffy (Assistant Treasurer), Nodlaig Keenan (Treasurer), Ryan Williams.

Charitable Purposes

In June, 2016 the trustees submitted a cy-pres scheme to the Charity Commission to request a change to our charitable purposes to make it clearer what the current focus of our work is including supported living. The Commission granted the scheme in March 2021. Our new charitable purposes are now:

“To relieve the needs and promote the social inclusion of children, young people and adults who were abandoned as children into state orphanages ('the beneficiaries') in particular but not exclusively, those with special needs and/or disabilities in Brasov County, Romania through the provision of quality residential care, supported living services, education, vocational training, supported employment, recreational activities and by any other charitable means as the trustees shall consider appropriate. For the prevention or relief of poverty of the beneficiaries and their families and other people in need, in the area of benefit through the provision of financial support or by any other charitable means as the trustees shall consider appropriate. The trustees must use the income of the Charity in promoting the Objects as outline above.”

Since 2002, we have built three homes - Casa St Maria, Casa St Patrick and Casa Irlanda (see page 12 for more detail) - for just over 30 children and young adults who previously lived in overcrowded buildings, were rarely allowed to go outside and rarely had any visitors.

This work is enabled through our Romanian sister charity Fundatia Sunshine Romania.

Public benefit Statement

The trustees have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The trustees are confident that SFR's charitable work is in accordance with the regulations on public benefit.

In 2021 we continued to ensure the development of the children and young adults in our homes and supported living apartments, most of whom have special needs. This report highlights some of our main achievements in this period.

Covid-19

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic continued to affect our operations in 2021. For a second year running we were unable to send out volunteers to Romania because of the restrictions and concern for both catching and spreading the virus. We know

that the children and young adults really missed the visits from the various groups that normally would've been going out from various charities in both the winter and the summer.

Our fundraising was also greatly affected as we were not able to carry out our usual fundraising activities. There was no jumble sale in Beragh in 2021 and no bag packing in Ballymena.

Our Trustee Board, following Covid-19 guidance from the Charity Commission, was able to meet online during the period.

As our board meetings were online, Viorel was able to attend and keep us up to date on the Covid-19 crisis in Romania.

The effect of Covid-19 on the children and young adults

Thankfully our homes in Harman have plenty of outside space so our young adults were able to go outside within the grounds. They also kept busy with growing their vegetables and other jobs.



Pictured: Jonella making sure Vali gets properly wet in the yard in Harman and Lili simply loving being in the sea on holidays.

While there may not have been the same extended isolation periods as the previous year because of covid, the young adults still found it challenging to have their freedoms restricted. Thankfully they had each other and wonderful Carers to see them through but we do not know what long term impact the enforced isolation will have on their mental health.

Birthdays are always a special time, something which even covid couldn't spoil! The Carers really make a special effort for each and everyone's birthday, making a lovely homemade cake and throwing a party that everyone can enjoy.



Pictured above: Lili celebrating her birthday and Danutza celebrating her 30th
Below: Alexandria celebrating her birthday and Bebe celebrating his 34th birthday



The children and young adults

The children and young adults especially love to get out on day trips and there is much excitement when holidays are on the cards in the summer.

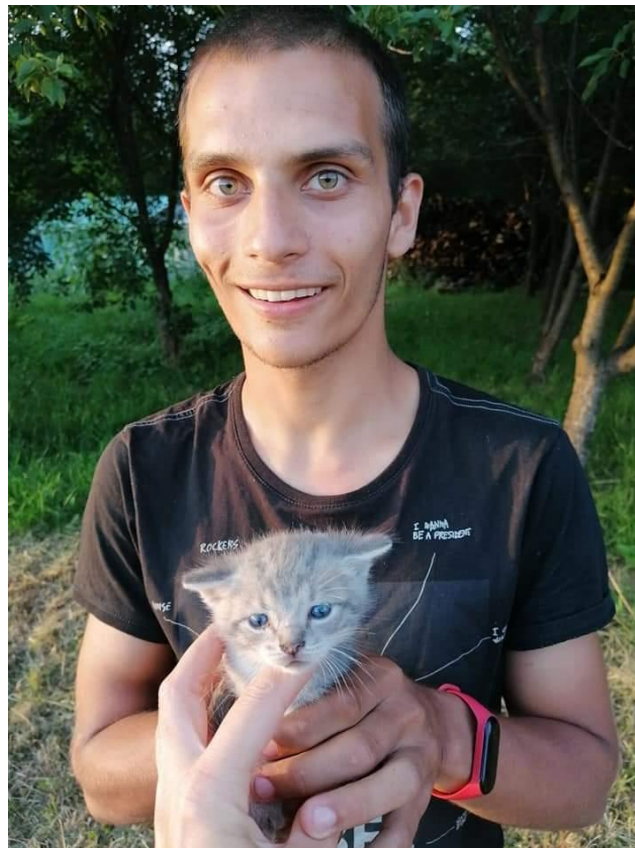


Pictured: Casa Irlanda on holidays and on a day trip to Poiana enjoying the snow. Casa St Patrick, pictured below, enjoying a day out at the zoo



Eugene turned 18 in 2021 and so was eligible to return to Harman towards the end of the year. Viorel had been keeping in contact with him while he was in Bradet, but Eugene is delighted to be back home with his Sunshine family in Harman.

Nico, pictured below, is now settled back into Casa Irlanda after returning from Bradet last year. He had been attending school online and qualified with a certificate in catering.



In September the children in Casa Santa Maria returned to (physical) school after spending much time at home learning online. Everyone is delighted to be back at school!

Some of our young adults continue to work in various employments but not all are able to get jobs as yet.

The Sunshine children no longer in our homes

Adrianna continues to flourish living independently from the Sunshine family. Viorel sees her every month and she keeps in regular contact with her Sunshine sisters who still miss her alot.

Vali is still in a boys' home near Bran and has settled in well and is very happy there. He has had some new surgery this year and is doing really good. Viorel keeps in contact with him.

Vasile has been back living with his family for a number of years now and we continue to support them. They are very happy together.

The shop

Unfortunately, the shop is not doing as well as it had been due to a lack of new stock. The many volunteers that would've normally visited would've brought cases of donated clothes to the shop but unfortunately there were no volunteers this year. The Trustees also had to take the difficult decision not to send a lorry as new rules in Romania mean that there is very strict monitoring in place for donated goods sent to Romania.

The shop is still an important supported employment training place for the young adults, and while Danutza works in it full time, she has plenty of other helpers from time to time.

Co-ordinating our work in Romania

A special word of thanks to Viorel, our project manager in Romania who ensures that the work of SFR is maintained and developed. It must have felt especially lonely for Viorel this year with no visiting groups from Ireland and Belgium. Hopefully the covid pandemic will come to an end and the groups of volunteers will start to visit again.

We are forever grateful to Viorel for his dedication and commitment to SFR and the many other charities that he engages with on behalf of Fundatia Sunshine Romania.



Fundraising

Many thanks to our regular donors who continue to donate monthly to us via standing order or via our online fundraising platform [CAF](#).

Our fundraising took a bit of a setback this year also as it was hard to plan for our usual events because of lockdowns and concerns with adhering to social distancing. Thankfully we were able to benefit from two sporting events in the period:

Ryan's unassisted Iron Distance Triathlon

After a phenomenal Iron Man performance at Lough Erne. Ryan Williams completed a 2.4 mile swim, then cycled for 112 miles before finishing with a full marathon in Castle Caldwell. Raising a grand total of £3,535...fantastic achievement all round!



Pictured: Ryan Williams with Mum Marie and friend Danny

Belfast City Marathon

In 2021, the Belfast marathon was delayed from its usual spot on May Day bank holiday weekend to October because of covid. Thank you, Sunshine Sloggers, in NICVA for entering a relay team and for raising an amazing £3,398. We are so grateful for your continued support!



Pictured: Stephen Gray, Sandra Bailie, Roisin Kelly, Déarbhla Sloan and Denise Copeland, collectively the 'Sunshine Sloggers' from NICVA

We continued to receive donations from Amazon Smile in the period. Amazon shoppers who choose to shop via Amazon Smile results in 0.5% of the purchase being donated to SFR. If you're shopping on Amazon, choose Amazon Smile and look for Sunshine Foundation Romania.

Financial support in Romania

Our work is also greatly supported by other charities working in Brasov County in Romania who contribute to our sister charity Fundatia Sunshine Romania.

Special thanks to the continued financial support from The Eileen Moreland Foundation and School Aid Romania including St Patrick's College, Maghera; Methodist College, Belfast; Cookstown High School and St Patrick's College, Armagh; St Patrick's High School, Keady.



Pictured: The young adults from Casa St Patrick- New Year Party and Gifts paid for by School Aid Romania. Below: Casa St Maria children receive presents from Eileen Moreland Foundation.



Many thanks also to the Helpende Handen vzw and to Hands on Brasov the two charities from Belgium for their continued generosity and support.

Financial scrutiny

Many thanks to Michelle Quinn for stepping in for Enda to carry out the independent examination of the annual accounts. Enda's continued support and advice is very much appreciated.

Thanks also to Nodlaig, our treasurer for the financial analysis of the income and expenditure in Romania and the work on keeping our gift aid claims up to date.

Financial review

During the year the total Income was £11,979 (2020: £10,905) Expenditure was £11,639 (2020: £13,082).

Reserves

The trustees have calculated that the charity needs to maintain Reserves of ten months running costs which are unrestricted reserves, not invested in fixed assets and available for general use. In 2021 the impact of Covid has had a severe impact on fundraising and the reserves have been used to cover this shortfall.

Gift Aid

Sunshine Foundation Romania is recognised as a charity for tax purposes with HMRC and as such claims back gift aid on all eligible donations from UK taxpayers. This means that for every £1 that is gift aided, the charity can claim an additional 25p from HMRC.

Registered charity address C/o Marie Williams, 89 Derryhale Rd, Portadown, Co Armagh, BT62 3SR

Governance in Romania

The Project Manager from Fundatia Sunshine Romania, Viorel sends monthly reports to the trustees in NI. He also oversees the running of the shop as well as liaising with all the charities that support our work in Romania.

The Sunshine Foundation Romania Properties

Sunshine Foundation Romania Trust established a Romanian charity called Fundatia Sunshine Romania in 2002 so that it could purchase its first house in Brasov city. This first house, Casa St Maria, was converted into a residential home for the children rescued from Barza Mica orphanage.

A further property was purchased the next year in the town of Harman not far outside of the city. A second home, Casa St Patrick, was built the following year from a timber frame structure donated from N.Ireland.

A few years later, Casa Irlanda was built in Harman to accommodate two self-contained apartments for the first of our young adults who were being moved from Casa St Maria.

Many teams of volunteers travelled out from N.Ireland to work on all three houses including both skilled tradesmen to carry out their craft and willing volunteers to paint and do whatever else needed doing.

The original homestead was converted into a shop, storeroom and an office. With the help of a seeding grant from Lloyds TSB Foundation, we established a second hand shop to sell donated items sent out mostly from Ireland.

Unfortunately, there is no such thing as a 'charity shop' in Romania so this had to be established as a separate business, having to comply with the same regulations as any other private sector business in Romania.

All properties are held in trust by our Romanian sister charity – Fundatia Sunshine Romania. Two of our founder trustees, Marie and Mary are also trustees of this charity.

Fundatia Sunshine Romania is fully registered as a charity with the Romanian authorities.

Declaration

The trustees annual report was approved on the 24th October 2022 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

Denise Copeland (Honorary Secretary) 

If you would like to help Sunshine Foundation Romania, there are several ways to do this:

Volunteer – hold a fundraising activity to raise money for SFR or volunteer to work with our children and young adults in Harman.

Text Message - Donations can be made in the following amounts; £1, £2, £3, £4, £5, £10. To donate all you have to do is text SFRM00 (followed by the amount) to 70070.

On Line -You can donate securely online via our online fundraising platform provider. To make a regular or one-off online donation visit

[Sunshine Foundation Romania Trust - Donate now \(cafonline.org\)](http://cafonline.org)

Or organise a fundraising appeal or sponsored event via

www.gofundme.com and choose Sunshine Foundation Romania Trust when you create your fundraiser page. Please get in touch with us if you have any issues with setting this up.

Standing Order - Make a regular donation by completing a standing order form at your bank with your account details and SFR's account details:

Ulster Bank
English Street
ARMAGH

Account No 48043098

Sort Code 98-01-90



If you would like more information on our charitable work please visit our website www.sunshine-foundation.com or email info@sunshine-foundation.com or follow us on Facebook at [Sunshine Foundation Romania | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/Sunshine-Foundation-Romania) or Twitter at [SFR \(@SFR_Romania\) / Twitter](https://twitter.com/SFR_Romania)