

Sunshine Foundation Romania Trust

Registered charity NIC 105446



**Annual report 1 January – 31
December 2024**

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.

Mary Duffy (RIP)



The Trustees acknowledge, with great sadness, the passing of our fellow Trustee Mary Duffy in November.

Mary was a founding member of the charity and gave tirelessly of her time over the years and touched the hearts of the children and young people that she worked to help in Romania. Her warmth and sense of humour were so important as we developed the SFR charity from the beginning to where it is today. She gave tirelessly of her time over many years and will be missed greatly.

Rest in peace Mary.

Charitable Purposes

Sunshine Foundation Romania Trust's charitable purposes are:

“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. All three homes are run under the control of the Child Protection Authority in Romania in cooperation with 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 2024 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. Viorel Mares, our co-ordinator in Romania attends Trustee meetings online to keep the Trustees updated on all activities. This report highlights some of our main achievements in this period.

Casa St Maria children

The children in Casa St Maria are all doing well and still attending school. The new children that moved in last year have now settled in well to the home with the other children.

Supported living in Harman Casa Irlanda and Casa St Patrick

The young adults in our two homes in Harman are all thriving. They mainly came to us as children from various orphanages and so have lived together for a long time. There is a large outside space and garden for everyone to enjoy which is perfect for the evenings. The Carers instruct them on morning exercises in the yard also.

Everyone has their chores to do, from preparing meals and cooking dinner with the support of their Carers. It is wonderful to see how the Carers treat the young adults with such care and affection, they really are one big family together. The Carers always make a special effort for birthdays, making a lovely cake and throwing a party that everyone can enjoy.

The Garden

Iulian, under Viorel's tutelage, is in charge of tending the vegetables in the garden and watering them. Ionutz's strength is called upon to do the digging when needed. The vegetable garden is absolutely superb and a credit to Viorel.



Pictured: The apple tree, planted by the Armagh group a few years ago is abundant with fruit.



Supported employment

Some of our young adults are now working in various full time or part time employments. For those that have employment, they take great pride in being able to go to work, but not all are able to jobs.

Unfortunately, some of our young adults have still not found new jobs after a fire in the shoe factory where they worked. Tax rules in Romania has meant it is difficult for employers to keep part-time employees as they have to pay the same tax for them as full-time employees.

The tax increases have affected our second-hand shop in Harman which has also seen a decline in customers over the last few years as there are many second-hand shops in Brasov and it is difficult to compete. Financially it is not bringing in the income that it did, but it still provides supported employment for our young adults as they are kept busy rotating the stock. This is so important at the moment now that other work is difficult to find.

The Beragh Support Group trip

The Beragh Support Group volunteers were delighted to return this summer. The children and young people were so happy to spend time chatting, playing ball and dancing. The team focused on painting the exteriors and then playing ball. Great chats and laughs were had by all!

There is a very long yellow gas pipe that runs along and between all the buildings which needed to be repainted. They enlisted the help of Ionutz to pull out the weeds to expose the pipe for painting, offering him a day's pay for his work. He is so eager to work but just needs a little supervision to guide him, he was soon pointing out the bits that Sean had missed.

While he loved working with us, especially the tea break, he wasn't long finished before he was looking for his wages!

After a bit of early morning painting, they took the children from Casa St Maria trampolining and then for a pizza which they loved. Everything went smoothly with the help of their Carers Dalia, Nicoletta and Mirella who have worked in Casa St Maria for 22 years. It's always lovely to see them.

Come evening time in Harman, it was time to take the young people from the different casas out for a pizza. Walking to the pizzeria where Adriana works, is such good fun as everyone is in good spirits looking forward to a good meal!



The Sunshine children no longer in our homes

The Beragh Group visited Vasile in Commona where he has been back living with his family for a number of years now and we continue to support him and his family. We brought food parcels when we visited in the summer, and Viorel keeps in contact with him and his family throughout the year.



When the minibus comes to Commona, there's always plenty of children following waiting for the great sweetie handout.



Fionnuala makes sure that everyone gets some sweets

Big Vali has now left Harman and is living and working in Fagares where he is adapting to life on the outside of Child Protection. It was great to see him when he joined us for a pizza with Casa Irlanda.

Young Vali now lives independently also and has a job in a factory. Viorel keeps in contact with both of them and helps them when needed. He also keeps in touch with Adriana to make sure she is still doing well. We also caught up with Anca who is doing very well living independently, she is working in McDonald's in Brasov and is happy.



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. His dedication to the children and young people in the Sunshine homes is very much appreciated by the Trustees of SFR.

He really looks forward to the various groups of volunteers who visit the project each year.

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.

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 financial support provided this year by The Eileen Moreland Foundation and School Aid Romania including St Patrick's College, Maghera; Methodist College, Belfast; Cookstown High School; St Patrick's College, Armagh and Keady High School.

Many thanks also to Hands on Brasov and An Dumon from Belgium for their continued generosity and support.

A new minibus

Fundatia Sunshine Romania received a very special gift this year from School Aid Romania, a new minibus!

We are extremely grateful to School Aid Romania for replacing the previous minibus which was 18 years old and had 300,000km.

The minibus is so important to the work of the charity, it enables Viorel to easily transport the children and young adults to various appointments, outings as well as being used when the voluntary groups come. It is specially adapted so that two wheelchairs can be used in the back.

The volunteer visits

Charities that financially support our project also volunteer to spend time with the children and young adults and some painting also when they visit. This year the children and young adults were delighted to spend time with An Dumon, Belgium as well as the volunteers, pictured overleaf, from School Aid Romania summer group, Cookstown; Hands on Brasov from Belgium; School Aid Romania from Belfast and Maghera, in January and Eileen Moreland Foundation.



Fundraising

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

Sincere thanks also to those who donate and support our fundraising events during the year and give one-off donations. During the year we benefited from the following fundraising activities:

Iron Man, Tallinn

Ryan Williams completed the Iron Man Estonia European Champs in August. This race required him to swim 2km, then cycle 91km and *then* run 21.5km. Great achievement Ryan!

Thanks to everyone who sponsored him to raise an incredible £5,550!



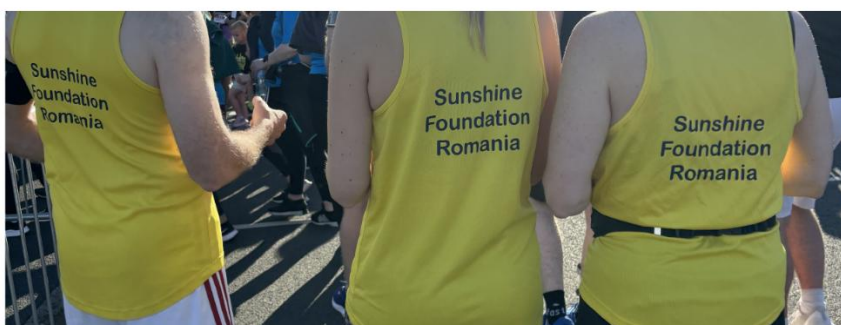
Jumble Sale, Beragh

The Beragh Support Group held a Jumble Sale in May and raised £2,086 from sales and donations on the day. Thank you to everyone who donated goods and money, to all the volunteers who baked, sorted and sold and to those who packed up. A special word of thanks to Beragh Care and Development Association for the use of their lovely centre.



50km for Sunshine - Lisburn 10K

Past and present staff from NICVA got together to enter a relay team in the 2024 Belfast city marathon but it was sold out! Not to be deterred, they entered to the Lisburn 10k in June and raised an amazing £1,750 from sponsorship. Special thanks to Roisin, Sandra, Caroline, Jimmy and Denise for their efforts and to everyone who donated to them, we are so grateful for your continued support!



Pictured: Sandra, Roisin, Jimmy, Denise and Caroline all set for the starting line and at the top with their medals!

Table Quiz – Farley's Bar, Beragh

The Beragh Support Group held a Table Quiz in February. There were many donations from those that couldn't attend as well as generous contributions from those that could. Thanks to all those who donated prizes for the raffle and special thanks to Fergal in Farley's Bar for putting up the prize money for the winning team which was then donated, thanks Sister Act quiz team!



Financial scrutiny

Many thanks to Enda for carrying 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 submitting our gift aid claims.

Financial review

During the year the total Income was £125,112 (2023: £11,654)
Expenditure was £22,626 (2023: £22,713).

A very unexpected, but hugely welcome donation of over £102,000 was received from a lady who left a donation in her will to us. This donation is very timely as expensive repairs will be needed on our four properties in Romania in the coming years.

Reserves

The trustees have calculated that the charity needs to maintain reserves of 10 months running costs which are unrestricted reserves, not invested in fixed assets and available for general use.

Reserves have now been set aside to cover a new roof for Casa St Maria in 5 years time as well as for other maintenance costs with the four properties.

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 2 April 2025 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

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 \(cafonline.org\)](https://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/SunshineFoundationRomania) or Twitter at [SFR \(@SFR_Romania\) / Twitter](https://twitter.com/SFR_Romania)