



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Children In Distress

Raising funds for vulnerable children in Romania

A message from our Co-Chairs

By building on the legacy of the past, together with our team and supporters we are creating an even better future for our beneficiaries.

A year of investment

Our priority this last year has been to engage with the existing team and supporter network to understand their expectations and to together build a resilient, sustainable charity that is future proofed for the next generation of beneficiaries, supporters, donors, and management team.

Impact Snapshot



12

A family home opened for children with complex neurological, physical and educational needs

400

A programme of extra tuition for truant children from disadvantaged communities launched

7000

Families received gifts from UK donors for Christmas

2000

Christmas meals prepared and distributed to disadvantaged families



Projects

Casa Maria

Details

To provide family environment with specialist care for children with complex needs

Outcome

- A home for 12 children a safe, home with specialist care opened.
- Continued therapies to help children with mobility, nutritional needs and education.
- A centre of specialist best practice in care for children with complex disabilities.

Jansen Community Education Outreach

A new community-based project providing support for children from disadvantaged communities, extra tuition, extracurricular education and support to remain in school. Bursaries to ensure continued education

- Programme established with local authorities
- Free of charge space provided by local authorities. Volunteers recruited.
- Programme launched in November to support 80 children in 2023.

Zarnesti PineView Retreat Lodge

Our vision for the future is to create a respite space that will encourage social integration of children and young people of mixed abilities whilst providing rest for the children with complex disabilities, parents and carers.

- Work continues on the process of obtaining preliminary authorisations for construction;
- Obtained a partial approval for the electrical connection. In order to obtain the final approval, a coexistence study has been commissioned to an authorised company.

Shoebox Campaign

A annual fundraising activity to provide love in a box to over 7000 children at Christmas.

- 2022 saw the delivery of over 7000 boxes to Romania in time for Christmas.
- Over £17k raised in 2022

Funds Raised

Total - £ 394k

- **£197k from regular giving and donations**
- **£166k from Legacies**
- **£31k Gift Aid**

A message from our Co-Chairs

When we took up office in June 2022, it was against the backdrop of a changing operating environment, new and more complex developments in the Romanian charity sector, the impact of our new trading relationship with the EU, the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine War, and the increasing economic challenges in the UK and globally. We knew that we were not going to have an easy time. We also knew that Children in Distress had reached an important milestone and there would also be many exciting opportunities to create and look forward to.

Together with the Board we have developed our strategy for the charity to effectively respond to the demands of the new environment, to build on the legacy of the founding Trustees and the supporter network in the UK and to take the charity through its next important milestones. The strategy has been based on consolidation, investment in structures, people and supporters and planning for growth.

We have restructured, invested in our team, providing a clear understanding in respect of roles and responsibilities, and training and development needs. We have invested in upgrade to premises, introduced new technologies and automated structures and have reviewed benefits for employees. We have introduced new communications and marketing tools and have invested in these platforms to better profile our charity and its work and increase our follower reach.

We have re-engaged with our network of supporters in order to encourage continued support, and to learn from their abundance of expertise and experience in order to help us build our fundraising plans for the future.

When we first took up our new roles, we were aware that we have a big target to reach, and new and exciting projects to support, including a brand-new home and hospice for our young beneficiaries, the development of an exciting community outreach project to support children to return and stay in education and the vision of the foundation in Romania for the next 10 years - a brand new social enterprise in the heart of Romania's beautiful countryside.

Our Shoebox Campaign has continued to sit at the heart of our communities, with greater engagement than ever before and we are looking forward to developing and expanding our ambitions for this important initiative that is held so dearly in the hearts of our supporter network.

Our shops are transformed. They are going from strength to strength, led by a dedicated troop of incredible volunteers. Their revenue has increased exponentially and we have big plans for their future.

We want to build a resilient, sustainable charity that is future proofed for the next generation of beneficiaries, supporters, donors, and management team. But we can only do that with our supporters and team, and we take this opportunity to thank you all for all your hard work and dedication during this last year, and for many years before and those ahead.

Anne-Marie Martin and Simon Errington
Co-Chairs

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS AND VOLUNTEER SUPPORTERS

We couldn't have done it without your generous support.



admin2@childrenindistress.org.uk



www.cid.org.ro



Children in Distress UK
Ladywell Business Centre
Suite 31
94 Duke Street
GLASGOW
G4 0UW



+44 (0)1 1 559 5690



Major Donors
Carolyn Marshall
Mavis Walton
John Freeman
Morag McIlwraith
Harry & Sue Ward
Leonard Stevens
Diana Comsa

Church Donations
Diocese of Glasgow & Galloway
Holy Cross Convent
St Laurence's Church Scalby
St Martin's Church Sherwood
St Nicholas Church Chislehurst

Trusts & Foundations
Fulmer Charitable Trust
Buckley Charitable Trust

Legacies/In-memoriam
Sheila May Cook
M J Egan
Olga Powel
Margaret McGarvey
Marie Cowdell
Alethea R C Rivers
Sylvia Jervis



About the Charity

Who we are

Children in Distress is a small UK charity officially founded in the UK in 1990 and registered with the OSCR (Office of Scottish Charity Regulator), number SC039383. We are directly associated to the Romanian charity of the same name, Fundatia Copii In Dificultate, which is located in Bucharest, Romania. Prior to 1990 we operated for one year as a volunteer unincorporated association, providing critical urgent response in Romania with a group of dedicated volunteers.

We celebrate 35 years in 2024.

What we do

We raise funds in the UK to help the most vulnerable children in Romania and provide specialist hospice care, educational community outreach and respite care for children, their families, and carers in Romania through our sister charity Copii in Dificultate.

Our purpose

Our work in Romania has grown over the last 34 years. Our initial focus of caring for children with HIV/AIDS has evolved into provision of respite, palliative and end-of-life care, and we have developed some of the best-trained and most experienced pediatric nurses in Romania.

Until 2022, our flagship centre, St Margaret's Hospice has provided specialist care to infants and children with a range of complex neurological needs, physical disabilities, and those who need a little extra support to overcome discrimination, disadvantage, and an opportunity to change their future.

The good work has evolved and continues in a new family and community style environment. We opened **Casa Maria**, our new Children's Family House in Romania that provides care for children living with the most severe disabilities. It builds on the legacy of our flagship St Margaret's Hospice and Children's Centre.



Public Benefit

Children in Distress serves the children of Romania.

The Charity works with volunteers and supporting partner organisations that provide financial and pro bono support, as well as advice and guidance in best practice in hospice care, free at the point of delivery, and child development and educational and welfare opportunities for those who need them.

Children and families are accepted based on need and residential proximity and specific need, not on race, religion or ability to pay.

The expertise provided by professionals and education provided to professionals in education, medicine, the disciplines allied to medicine and social welfare, is subsidised where possible.

Financial Review

Reserves policy

The Trustees have adopted a reserves policy, which they consider appropriate to ensure the continued ability of the Charity to meet its objectives. The Charity aims to maintain reserves at a level, which will provide a minimum 6 months funding to manage any unforeseen circumstances.

Funding

Funding received, net of activity and operations costs, is sent to our sister charity Copii in Dificultate in Romania to meet aims and objectives.

Funds from supporters are recorded against specific categories to recognise purpose of donation and use, fully recorded in the annual audited report and accounts.

Future Plans

The current Board was appointed at the 2022 AGM and undertook a full strategic review at that time, focused on investment in structure, people, governance and operations to ensure the wellbeing and sustainability and future direction of the charity. The strategy was built on the evolving environment in Romania and the strategic direction agreed by the Board of Copii in Dificultate in respect of the Romania foundation. The UK strategy directly supports and complements that of the Romania foundation.

2023 will be a year of consolidation in operations and plan for rapid growth in order to meet the needs of an ambitious plan for the foundation in Romania. The charity celebrates 35 years in 2024 with plans for events in the UK and in Romania to mark this important milestone.

Our structure

HQ in Glasgow which provides administrative, operational, governance, fundraising and communications functions. Run by a staff team of 3.

We operate 3 shops in Yorkshire - Guisborough, Kirkbymoorside, and Shildon operated by 3 Managers and teams of volunteers from the local community.

The charity is governed by a Board of Trustees comprising of two Co-Chairs and 4 additional Trustees, a total of 6 Trustees.

The Charity's Royal Patron is HRH Princess Maria of Romania.

Patron

HRH Princess Maria of Romania

Trustees

Anne-Marie Martin & Simon Errington, Co-Chairs

Ian Catley

Diana Comsa

Rev. June Hurn

Maria Cristina Mitu

Valentina Zaharia Smith, CEO Romania (observer)

Staff

Tina Connelly, Operations Manager

Lesleyann Connelly

Julian Dawydiak

Lauren Paterson

Vicky McColgan, Book-keeper (to Feb 2023)

Karen Taylor, Book-keeper (from Feb 2023)

Shop Managers

Tracy Russell, Kirkbymoorside

Tracy England, Guisborough

Melanie Morgan, Shildon

Solicitors

Brechin Tyndal Oatts 48 St Vincent Street Glasgow

G25 5HS

Statutory Auditors

Fortus

Equinox House Clifton Park Avenue Shipton Road

York

YO3 5PA

Bankers

Royal Bank of Scotland PLC

City Branch

10 Gordon Street

Glasgow

G1 3PL



Contact/Donate at:



**Children in Distress, Ladywell Business Centre,
Unit 31,94 Duke Street, Glasgow, G4 0UW**



0141 559 5690



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lesleyann.connelly@childrenindistress.org.uk



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