

October 2019

An investment of time and money pays off in Romania

George Gurescu from ARC, Romania, describes below the support provided over 18 months leading to the establishment of two community foundations in Romania, with another two in the pipeline.



The second half of 2019 comes with wonderful news from ARC's Community Foundations Development Program. Two new organizations have been established, which brings the Romanian network to a total number of 18 organizations. As of today, more than 50% of the population has access to a community foundation.

The newly established organizations are in the southern part of the country (CF Buzău and CF Vâlcea) and their future programs will be accessible to 831,351 Romanians.

In this process, that lasted more than 18 months from the moment of launching the call, we had a dedicated member of staff, Mihai Tudorică, who worked on a constant basis with four Initiative Groups. In one year, our colleague spent around 150 days in work visits or delegations at these IGs.

We wanted, from the beginning, to create a relationship based on trust and equality. Therefore, we decided to take a personalized approach with each Initiative Group. We worked together to meet their needs and we offered them access to all the expertise available at ARC and in the national CF movement. The Initiative Groups got constant support not only from the Community Foundations Development Program team and other colleagues in ARC, but from their peers in other community foundations, who understood how important it is to share their knowledge and experience with brave people taking the hard path of making their community stronger.

With some groups we've spent more time on improving their fundraising skills, while with others, on getting to know the community. This can be seen in the variety of events they organized in the past year. For example, Vâlcea Group wanted to connect with members of their communities who have moved to bigger cities; this way they would have a chance to explain how a community foundation works, but also, to attract new allies. Buzău Group, on the other hand, focused on developing a thorough fundraising plan, which included a Donors Circle and online fundraising platforms.

It has been an amazing journey for these two Initiative Groups, which showed us the untapped resources that exist in our counties and communities, and that people are becoming more and more interested in getting involved in civic initiatives. It has also been a formative journey for our team, since it was the first New Initiative process we worked on since 2016, when we took over from the previous team.

Our pride in these new organizations comes from the passion and authenticity they will bring in their work with the community. Each founding group (10-12 people each) is made up of people coming from various professional and social backgrounds; we have entrepreneurs, NGO practitioners and former public servants. Many of them moved back to Buzău or Vâlcea, after living abroad or in Bucharest, and they are committed to work for a stronger and caring community.

We are still working with two other initiative groups in Reșița (a community in south-western Romania) and in Suceava (north-eastern Romania), guiding them in the efforts to set up new community foundations. The birth of new organizations in the network wouldn't have been possible without the financial support of the Romanian-American Foundation and of Charles Stewart MOTT Foundation, long time supporters and strategic partners of our program. In order to register as organizations, each initiative group had to raise from their community approximately 25.000 USD, funds which were matched by the Romanian-American Foundation.

This process has also shown the power of a movement that knows how important is to share and care for the others.