

Argeș, 18th September, 2023

We are pleased to announce that ReachingOut Romania is joining the Foundation for the Development of Civil Society (FDSC) and Kaufland Romania to launch the project "Together for the Protection of Children: Interinstitutional Approach to Combating Child Trafficking". This project represents our response to the first funding call of the "In Stare de Bine" program and benefits from the support of Kaufland, being implemented by FDSC.

Human trafficking is a global phenomenon. All countries, whether of origin, transit or destination, are affected by this phenomenon of organized crime that creates an underground economy and destroys the lives of the most vulnerable. Romania is one of the main countries of origin for internationally trafficked women and children. Every year, thousands of victims fall into the traffickers' net, becoming victims of sexual abuse, forced labor, begging, etc.

European Directive 36/2011 recommends a combat model based on victim assistance, because a victim assisted according to their psycho-social needs becomes a solid witness in the criminal process.

Therefore, the project "Together for the Protection of Children: Interinstitutional Approach in Combating Trafficking in Minors" aims to address the problem from two perspectives. First of all, we want to support underage victims of human trafficking in our center, offering them a complex support framework: safe shelter, support and access to education, social, medical, psychological and legal assistance, food and clothing, education financial, looking for an accommodation as well as a job, multiple extracurricular activities. By creating a favorable environment for development and enjoying childhood, we support children to remain anchored in the present, overcoming the traumas of the past and, finally, we facilitate complete reintegration into society.

Also, the project aims to implement HG 49/2011 by forming an inter-institutional network, which, through real cooperation, will protect the victim, avoiding victimization. If we follow the path of the victim between these institutions, starting with the first statement given in order to open the

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criminal file, and reaching the courtroom, we find that all of these are a burden for them considering the trauma suffered and the impact of trauma on human behavior. Many times cases involve children, and then it is even more difficult for them to understand the necessity of these procedures. Through this project, we propose the optimization of the multi-disciplinary networks mentioned in HG49/2011 as follows:

- Monthly meetings where the cases at work are discussed, useful information is exchanged that can be shared according to the law between these institutions, thus reducing the interaction of the victim with many people unknown to her.
- At these meetings, the team members can inform each other about the new procedures, laws, regulations and best practices that have appeared in each one's field of expertise, so that the team becomes homogeneous even if the fields of activity are different. Usually the workload is very high, often times employees do not have time to participate in training courses, to purchase new work tools, or to exchange good practice models with specialists from the country or other countries. That is why, within the project, we propose 4 training courses in which it is important that the whole team participate, even if the topic of discussion is from another field.

During the 10 months of the project, we will organize 4 courses / 3 days with trainers from the country and from other member states. The themes are the following:

1. "Trauma Informed" approach - for social services
2. NYCHD Protocol - for Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism
3. Collection of evidence in a non-invasive way - for forensic medicine
4. Communication techniques for the whole team

In order to have a solid collaboration, a collaboration protocol will be developed where the roles are well defined, the flow of information established by mutual agreement, so that the victim's route between the institutions can be simplified.

The "Together for the Protection of Children: Interinstitutional Approach to Combating Child Trafficking" project is run by the Reaching Out Romania Association and financed by the In Stare

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de Bine program, supported by Kaufland Romania and implemented by the Civil Society Development Foundation.

About the Reaching Out Romania Association

Reaching Out Romania (ROR) aims to rescue, protect and reintegrate victims of human trafficking into society. Registered in 1999, we are currently the only licensed non-governmental shelter for minor victims of human trafficking in Romania.

Over the years, we assisted more than 750 victims, mostly Romanian girls and women (since 2007, mostly minors) who were trafficked and abused in several European countries. We collaborate with law enforcement agencies, government institutions and justice. We offer the beneficiaries medical, social and psychological assistance, financial education, support in starting or continuing their studies, in looking for a job so that they can rebuild their lives.

We are also actively involved in efforts to change both legislation and attitudes. ROR led cross-border cooperation initiatives to combat trafficking and trained law enforcement officers to better respond to the needs of victims.

About the In Stare de Bine program

In Stare de Bine is an annual funding program that offers non-refundable grants totaling 1 million euros per year to non-governmental organizations in Romania. **The program is implemented by the Foundation for the Development of Civil Society, with the financial support of Kaufland Romania.**

The objective of the program is to increase the quality of life of the inhabitants of rural and urban communities by supporting initiatives that have a positive impact in three essential areas – **culture, sport and healthy living** – and which address vulnerable groups and the communities they belong to.

This year, exceptionally, the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine led to a partial reorientation of the program to support migrants and refugees displaced by the war in the neighboring country.

For more information, go to www.instaredebine.ro.

About Kaufland Romania

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Kaufland is among the largest retail companies in Europe, with 1,300 stores in 8 countries, 132,000 employees and a network of 149 stores in Romania. Taking on environmental and social responsibility is an essential aspect of Kaufland's corporate policy. The company's creed consists in the idea that the world can be a better place through everyone's involvement, that's why in 2018, Kaufland developed the "Involvement makes a difference" platform, under the umbrella of which all social responsibility actions are communicated. Most of the company's CSR projects are carried out in partnership with regional or national non-governmental associations and aim to implement complex social programs aimed at large groups of beneficiaries.

For more details visit www.kaufland.ro.

About the Foundation for the Development of Civil Society

The Foundation for the Development of Civil Society (FDSC) is a non-governmental, independent organization, established in 1994, which promotes a strong and sustainable civil society, which contributes to the defense of democratic values by supporting civil society actors, mobilizing resources, encouraging a favorable environment and strengthening cooperation with other sectors.

More details are available at www.fdsc.ro.

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