

# Dorcas Romania

## *Strategic Plan 2022-2025*

Helping people to  
stand side-by-side





**Publishing Information**

**Dorcas** – Strategic Plan Romania  
Published September 2022

**Design:** Paper & Pages  
**Photographs:** Dorcas

*The boundaries used on maps do not imply  
official endorsement or acceptance by Dorcas.*

**Stichting Dorcas Aid International**  
PO Box 1500, 1300 BM Almere, the Netherlands  
Telephone: +31 (0)88 050 2800  
E-mail: [info@dorcas.nl](mailto:info@dorcas.nl)  
Website: [dorcas.org](http://dorcas.org)  
IBAN: NL04 RABO 0106 2500 00

**in** [linkedin.com/company/dorcas-nederland](https://www.linkedin.com/company/dorcas-nederland)  
**tw** [twitter.com/DorcasRomania](https://twitter.com/DorcasRomania)  
**f** [facebook.com/DorcasRomania](https://facebook.com/DorcasRomania)  
**@** [instagram.com/dorcasromania](https://instagram.com/dorcasromania)

# Our Identity

We fight poverty, exclusion and crisis. We empower marginalised people and communities to flourish. This is how we follow Jesus Christ.

**What we believe**  
We believe in the value and God-given potential of every single person. We are called to demonstrate God’s love for those in need. This is how we follow Jesus Christ.

**What we see**  
We see a world where poverty, exclusion and crisis marginalise people. We also see the potential of these people and their communities to flourish despite their difficult circumstances.

**What we do**

We empower people who are marginalised to develop their talents. And we enable disadvantaged communities to flourish. We equip individuals and communities to promote and ensure participation of all.

We create hope and long-term perspectives in volatile and complex situations. We meet people’s basic needs in times of crisis and increase their ability to overcome poverty

and exclusion. We persist despite frequent setbacks and invest in durable relationships to realise sustainable change.

We are part of a global movement of individuals and organisations working for a just and fair world. We recognise and appreciate everybody who supports our work. And we actively partner with others to create synergy and amplify our impact.

**Theory of Change in short**  
Dorcas works towards change on three levels. We create opportunities for people to develop themselves further, and if necessary, we provide for their basic needs. We invest in resilient, self-organising communities that work together to solve their problems. Lastly, we contribute to a just society in which everyone has the opportunity to participate.



Dorcas Romania seeks to remove barriers and do away with stigmatisation. Helping people stand side-by-side with each other is our duty to God.



# Dorcas Romania

## History

The work of Dorcas in Romania started in the 1980s with advocacy and social support for persecuted Christians in Eastern Europe. When Ceausescu's totalitarian dictatorship ended in December 1989, the country faced serious poverty and social inequality. During the 1990s, the work of Dorcas in Romania shifted towards poverty alleviation through social care programmes, and it established care facilities for orphans, street children, young people leaving institutions, abused women and single mothers, and older persons.

Dorcas Romania was founded in 1990 and formally registered in 1993. Its central office and depot are located in Cluj Napoca in northwest Romania. Since the late 1990s, Dorcas Romania has successfully adapted its programmes to the country's needs with a strong emphasis on the most vulnerable. It successfully combines social care with sustainable development and the empowerment and mobilisation of individuals and communities.

## Context

When Romania joined the EU in 2007, many people thought that the country's social and economic problems would be miraculously solved. Today, however, Romania is still one of the poorest countries in the EU. One in three Romanians is still at risk of poverty or social exclusion, especially in rural areas.



Although social conditions continue to improve, vulnerable groups, such as low-income families with children, the unemployed, Roma, older women and people with disabilities, still face substantial challenges. Escaping poverty is increasingly difficult due to the high level of intergenerational poverty transmission and inefficient labour activation measures. Severe material and social deprivation is among the highest in the EU. Nearly half of Romanians are unable to face unexpected expenses and access to essential services, such as energy, remains a challenge. Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed and exacerbated many existing problems, with the vulnerable being the hardest hit. The pandemic confirmed the need for more support and interventions to tackle socioeconomic issues and a greater need for collaboration and localisation in such interventions.

Dorcas Romania has a clear added value in this context and is further sharpening and developing its profile in Romania with programmes focused on community safety nets, Roma inclusion and economic empowerment. We are also developing strong, relevant and complementary partnerships, improving the fundability of our operations, increasing the capacity of our staff and strengthening our internal systems. These efforts will make Dorcas Romania a desired and reliable partner in sustainable socioeconomic development and a relevant resource organisation for education and training.



# Strategic Ambitions

For over forty years, Dorcas has reached out to people in need. We have learned how to contribute to the desired impact so that people and communities flourish. For the Strategic Period 2022-2025, we will focus on people who are marginalised, develop coherent and community-based programmes, achieve more scale by engaging and collaborating with thousands of individuals, partners, networks, and other agencies, and increase our agility. These main policy choices are worked out in six concrete ambitions for our Country Offices.



- We will increase our focus on **including people who are marginalised and socially excluded**.
- We will improve **the cohesion and integration of our community-based programmes**, monitor these more accurately and learn from those outcomes. We will also expand our influence on authorities and policymakers.
- We will **increase the scale and effectiveness of our work** through constructive partnerships that tackle today's complex challenges.
- We will **mobilise resources and engage communities** by increasing the number of foundations, groups and individuals who support our work.
- We will strengthen the position of our country offices, as well as the role of Dorcas as an organisation, so that they can serve as an **agile catalyst for change and a ConnActor** of various stakeholders.
- We will bolster and align our **regional strategies, cross-country learning and cooperation**.

How Dorcas Romania will work out these strategic ambitions is now described.



## Include People who are Marginalised and Socially Excluded

Dorcas Romania continues to focus on geographical areas where there is either large-scale poverty (East Romania) or specific groups of poor and vulnerable people (West and Central Romania). Vulnerable groups are marginalised children, Roma families, young residents from marginalised communities with limited access to jobs, the self-employed in rural areas and older persons, especially single older women in rural areas.



## Realise Coherent and Community-based Programmes

Our ultimate goal is to see flourishing communities that look after the most vulnerable. This will be realised through a participatory, integrated and inclusive process where the goals and ambitions are established in consultation with local people and the local community realises the process.

We are strengthening the organisational foundation of our work through track-record building and the introduction of new systems related to monitoring learning and evaluation. These steps will increase our impact at the individual, community and society levels and facilitate the capacity building of our staff. As an organisation, Dorcas Romania is also committed to adaptive learning. Dorcas Romania's programming is based on the leading concepts of Social Empowerment and Protection driven by social inclusion and empowerment and Inclusive Entrepreneurship driven by economic inclusion. Our programming focuses on community safety net development, Roma inclusion and rural economic empowerment and inclusion.





## Increase the Scale and Effectiveness of our Work

Dorcas Romania is upscaling its programmes in two ways. First, through human resources development such as continuous learning, adequate staffing in programme management and training. And second, through partnership development by seeking potential partners, building complementary coalitions and cooperating with Dorcas regional and international offices.

Three types of partnerships are needed to implement Dorcas Romania's strategy: local project/programme level partnerships for programme implementation, partnerships for advocacy, learning and sharing experience, and partnerships for mobilising funds.

For local partnerships, we increase the sustainability of our work by ensuring that every programme is implemented by a local multistakeholder partnership. We enable these partnerships to assume full responsibility for the intervention, including the mobilisation of funds.

Dorcas Romania is developing strategic partnerships for advocacy, learning and sharing experiences by strengthening its position and participation in various Romanian networks. These networks cover the themes of development NGOs, anti-poverty, Roma inclusion, social economy and child trafficking. These efforts might also help us to access funds.

Finally, in collaboration with the International Office, we are developing and implementing plans on corporate positioning and partnering with public administration, (international) NGOs, relevant networks, the Dutch Embassy, private sector actors and the EU. We will use these partnerships as a starting point when new funding opportunities are found and created.



## Mobilise Resources and Engage Communities

Resource mobilisation is a vital chapter in Dorcas Romania's strategy. Due to our role and expertise, we focus on community-level local resource mobilisation and resource mobilisation of Dorcas Romania. Clear strategic goals have been established for both areas, and there are obvious opportunities. Local capacity building and support and collaboration with the International Office are crucial for the success of our efforts.

For community-level local resource mobilisation, we ensure that all projects fall under the full responsibility of a local multistakeholder partnership. This is realised through an Asset Based Community Development approach in all of our programmes, where our role is training, facilitating and connecting. We are strengthening and formalising Multi Stakeholder Partnerships to increase their



## Become an Agile Catalyst and ConnActor

Dorcas Romania is growing towards its envisioned "three pillars". Pillar one is co-creating and supporting models of social and economic development. The working modality is significantly shifting from co- and self-implementation to facilitation. Pillar two is education and training. For this, we are developing a training and resource centre. Pillar three is advocating and connActing. We are realising this in communities and wider society for multistakeholder programmes by increasing our visibility in networks, linking actors, bringing relevant knowledge and expertise to the table and realising advocacy campaigns.

Furthermore, we are catalysing the development of our work. Besides facilitating the development of multistakeholder programmes and resource mobilisation, we are increasing our capacity and expertise in community safety networks, local resource mobilisation and inclusive economic development.



## Effect Regional Priorities, Cross-Country Learning and Cooperation

In Eastern Europe, Dorcas is well placed to develop a relevant regional profile and cooperation model. Important commonalities and opportunities exist related to capacity building and learning, local resources and partner development (LRPD), corporate positioning, programme development, and organisation and support.

Capacity building and learning focus on acquiring more expertise in key programme concepts and applying these in the field. Representatives from each Country Office are being trained as trainers in local resource mobilisation to activate local partners in this area. Regional learning events and exchange visits will be held, and certain concepts will be simultaneously tested in two or more countries to facilitate the development of best practices.

For the themes LRPD and corporate positioning, we are jointly building a track record in elderly care and community safety net development, agribusiness development, small business development and social enterprise development. We are also collaborating across borders on Roma inclusion and social enterprise development. Furthermore, we are strengthening our corporate position by jointly organising international campaigns, actively looking for joint international funding opportunities and working on common advocacy issues, such as the rights of the older people, Roma inclusion and social economy. In the area of programming, we jointly test and develop regional programmes. Candidate programmes are community safety net development, economic inclusion and Roma inclusion.

Finally, in the area of organisation and support, we are strengthening our regional expertise and role. For example, we are developing regional thematic experts for issues such as community safety net development, local resource mobilisation, visibility campaigns and (participatory) assessments.

## Meet our Country Director



### Attila Daray - Country Director Romania

'I grew up in north-western Romania. My family belonged to a minority group; we were oppressed and lived in poverty. Today, many minorities face the same problems. Officially, 800,000 Roma live in Romania, but in reality, I know that figure is in the millions. And yet, poverty rates for Roma range between four and five times that of non-Roma. Dorcas works on removing barriers and doing away with stigmatisation. Our programmes see Roma and Romanian women work together so that they can form bonds and discover that their prejudices about each other are often misinformed. Helping people stand side-by-side with each other is our duty to God.'

### Contact Dorcas Romania

**Address**

Str. Blajului 27  
Cluj Napoca  
Romania

**Phone number**

+40 0264 416336

**Email**

[office@romania.dorcas.org](mailto:office@romania.dorcas.org)

**Website**

[Dorcas.org/romania](http://Dorcas.org/romania)



We fight poverty, exclusion  
and crisis. We empower  
marginalised people and  
communities to flourish.  
This is how we follow  
Jesus Christ.