

From humble beginnings to major milestones | Harom Galamb's inspirational journey so far

Harom Galamb, is a Romanian based charity with connections to Camphill Communities throughout the UK, with their vision being to build up a small but diverse social care provision which provides vulnerable young adults with necessary elements in life which help them with the transition into adulthood - meaningful work and work experience, social integration and a sense of belonging, increased independence, skills and confidence.

Having witnessed the work done by the founders during their time with communities in Camphill Scotland - demonstrating their expertise, love and commitment for this group of vulnerable people, the Camphill Foundation UK & Ireland was keen to support them financially in their wish to carry the seed further afield to Transylvania, where such services are not available.

The Camphill Foundation UK and Ireland seed funded the early stages of this project by providing a grant of £8,063 in 2020/2021 for an architectural design brief for their purpose-built Day Centre. This was the first stepping-stone in striving toward their objective of creating a day service provision for young adults with learning disabilities in Romania. With further funding received from the Michael Foundation (Germany), building work began on the foundations of the new Day Centre in the Autumn of 2022.

Although there has been a positive change in Romania over the last 30 years, unfortunately adverse views towards people with disabilities remain largely deeply rooted in Romanian society and they remain low priority for the Romanian Government, which currently only provides a social assistance service to a very small percentage of people with disabilities.

Harom Galamb has become one of the new services offering help to these people and their emphasis on meaningful work recognises that people with disabilities have a much lower employment rate than other people, and well below the average of other EU countries.

Their work, together with other social service providers, expects to make an impact on poverty levels in Romania by enriching lives, unfolding potential, and enabling people with disabilities to become active citizens.

Despite different challenges along the way, Harom Galamb has made remarkable progress and in December 2023, they charity underwent an official inspection from licensing authorities and received full approval to continue operating its Day Centre. This is a significant achievement, as the inspection confirmed the high quality of care and services provided to its young adults.

Furthermore, since February 2024, Harom Galamb has begun receiving per capita funding from the Government - whilst this funding does not cover all operational costs, it has considerably reduced the pressure to rely solely on fundraising efforts and demonstrates a shift towards a more inclusive society for people with disabilities and learning support needs by the Government. The positive feedback from inspectors, who praised Harom Galamb's innovative approach and dedication to the well-being of the people they support, highlights the success of their unique working model. With a monthly inspection process now in place, Harom Galamb's commitment to quality continues to be monitored and celebrated by licensing authorities.

Harom Galamb's work has not gone unnoticed within the local community. Parents, professionals, and members of the public have provided very positive feedback. Comments such as, "We have heard a lot of good things about you" have become common, reflecting the growing awareness and respect for the charity's mission. Parents, in particular, have expressed immense gratitude for the services provided by Harom Galamb. For many, it is the first time their children have had access to such meaningful opportunities in their region. One parent describing Harom Galamb as "the best thing that has ever happened to us," recognising the positive impact on their child's development through their attendance of their day service.

A crucial factor in the success of this project is the growing financial support Harom Galamb has secured. The Ministry of Labour has granted €400,000 to help build the new Day Centre which is a clear recognition of the high quality of Harom Galamb's services, especially

considering the charity's modest beginnings as a rural initiative. With this new facility, Harom Galamb will be able to expand its capacity, offering services to even more young adults within a 50-kilometer radius. In addition to the state funding, Harom Galamb has received financial support from two German foundations: €70,000 from the Michael Stiftung and €120,000 from SAGST AG Stiftung. These grants are crucial milestones that reflect the growing confidence in the charity's ability to provide essential care and support for vulnerable young adults.

The new funding and growing recognition mean that Harom Galamb is now on track to become a self-sustaining service provider. The charity's plans include increasing its number of beneficiaries from 18 to an even larger group once the new Day Centre is complete. This expansion will allow Harom Galamb to broaden its impact, giving more young adults the opportunity to access meaningful work, social activities, and therapeutic support.

To further enhance the service quality, Harom Galamb is preparing to host Laurence and Vibeke Alfred, who will lead a special training and workshop on "Nurturing Body, Soul, and Spirit in a Therapeutic Environment." This initiative is another example of Harom Galamb's commitment to providing holistic care that meets the diverse needs of the people they support. Their success story is an inspiring example of how a small, community-focused charity can create lasting change. Through successful inspections, increased local awareness, growing parent support, and vital funding from both state and international sources, Harom Galamb is now in a strong position to expand its services and continue enriching the lives of young adults with learning disabilities. As they move forward with the construction of the new Day Centre and increase their capacity, Harom Galamb remains a beacon of hope for individuals and families in Romania who previously had little access to such services.

It is very rewarding for us to witness the growth and development of this wonderful initiative. From their humble beginnings, the founders of Harom Galamb have worked tirelessly to achieve such huge milestones and The Camphill Foundation UK & Ireland would like to take this opportunity to thank those who kindly make regular donations which allow us to support such initiatives. Our work is only possible due to these donations and this progress report from Harom Galamb really highlights the life-changing work that can be done to improve the lives of many.

Niki Cormack (from the Camphill Foundation UK and Ireland)

To learn more about Harom Galamb and their inspirational journey: <https://www.haromgalamb.com/>