

## Children's Rights Issues Analysis in Romanian NGOs

In 2009, R. Rogers, F. Jansen, M. Stevenson and E. Weltevrede conducted a study in which they used the Web as a tool to look at how different types of rights are ranked across nations.<sup>1</sup> According to their findings, a significant part of Romania's concerns lie in *children's rights*, as these rank second only to *human rights*. My own query using the same tools and methods as the ones presented in the study show slightly different results. After harvesting the top 100 results from the query "drepturi" in Google.ro and inserting the URLs in the Google Scraper tool to query for "children's rights", "author's rights" and "copyrights", author's rights seem to be getting a little more attention (see Annex 1). However, the sample of sites used in my investigation is smaller than that used by Rogers et al., so this is not necessarily an indicator of the fact that in the past year the attention has shifted away from children's rights. Nonetheless, having worked for one year for a Romanian children's rights organization and having dealt with the lack of cooperation from both the government and the public opinion during this time, I was intrigued by the findings of the study. Therefore, I set off to do a micro-study on the discourses of children's rights NGOs in Romania, also using the Web as a research tool in my endeavor.

The aim of this study is to see what issues show up more frequently on their websites and are getting the most attention from these NGOs and which are considered to be of lesser importance. I will also look at the differences in the agendas of bigger NGOs, which have more funding and publicity, compared to smaller, local organizations and foundations.

### Method

#### Tools used

Apart from the Google.ro search engine, the following tools are of importance: the Google Harvester tool, the Google Scraper tool and the Tag Cloud Generator tool, all provided on the Digital Methods Initiative website.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Rogers, F. Jansen, M. Stevenson and E. Weltevrede, "Social Research with the Web," *Global Information Society Watch* 2009, Association for Progressive Communications and Hivos, 2009.

## **Building the set of URLs**

In building a list of URLs to be queried in the later stage of the research, I cross-referenced the lists of NGOs provided on the General Bureau for Child Protection website ([www.copii.ro](http://www.copii.ro)) and the website of the Federation for Nongovernmental Organizations for Children- Romania ([www.fonpc.ro](http://www.fonpc.ro)). I then analyzed the contents of the resulting URLs and chose the organizations that had more recent projects and clearly stated goals and domains of interest and action. A list of 16 websites was generated from this process; the list can be consulted in Annex 2a.

## **Building the set of key words and phrases**

The investigation includes a list of 37 key words and phrases. These were collected from the websites of the researched NGOs. The issues that are apparently relevant to these organizations range from helping children with diseases or disabilities, to offering financial support or different types of counseling. For a full list of the Romanian terms and their English translation, please consult Annex 2b. Some considerations of linguistic nature need to be taken into account when analyzing the list and interpreting the results. “Seropozitive children” and “children with HIV/AIDS” make up the same target group, but were queried separately and show up as such in the results. When asserting the degree of importance that NGOs give to the problem of the spreading of the HIV virus in children, we should however see these as linked. Also, the query “prevention of abandonment” is related to the abandonment of children (in the Romanian language, one would not usually use “child abandonment”, but rather the generic term “abandonment”). Because of the word order typology, the results for “prevention of abandonment” will also index results for “prevention of school abandonment” and “prevention of family abandonment”. We must be careful of these distinctions when analyzing the results.

## **Results and Discussion**

As expected, more general issues of interest, such as offering psychological and social counseling or social assistance show up higher in the ranking by host, as these are services that must be provided to those in need, regardless of the nature of their hardships (disease, poverty or violence and abuse). An interesting finding is that only two organizations offer grants for studies, yet in the URL analysis grants show up most frequently. The reason for this is most probably that the two organizations, Bethany Foundation and World Vision Romania

are mainly financed from international sources and can afford to offer financial support for studies and still set up projects, while smaller, locally funded NGOs must focus on specific areas of interest and action and direct all their resources towards those. This is the case with children with HIV/AIDS, which show up as areas of interest for four organizations (seropositive children included). Apart from World Vision Romania and UK-funded Holt Foundation, the two other organizations that deal with the problem of HIV in children (Asocatia Speranta and Societatea pentru Copii si Parinti) have rather narrow areas of action and only offer counseling and social assistance for children and youth infected with the HIV virus.

One of the issues in which the researched NGOs seem to stand united is that of prevention of child abandonment, which is also a national problem in Romania, strongly linked to cases of abuse and lack of social and professional integration. More than half of the NGOs state that lowering the number of institutionalized children is a priority and the more important organizations that try to prevent child abandonment also engage in projects that attempt to prevent school and family abandonment, in an effort to give children a normal childhood, attending school, growing up with both parents (for which they also offer family support) and being integrated into society.

For a list of the most relevant issues and their frequency in the analysis, both in Romanian and English, see Annex 3a (URL analysis) and 3b (hosts analysis).

## **Conclusion**

The analysis shows that there are significant differences in defining “relevant action areas” for big and small NGOs. While better funded organizations can focus on more issues and aim to help solve a broader spectrum of social problems related to children’s rights, smaller organizations that depend on local sponsoring must be more selective and include fewer ambitions in their stated mission and goals. The consequence of this is that there are very few issues in which the public opinion is presented with a coherent discourse from children’s rights NGOs, so serious problems that require public and government involvement and solving, such as child abuse, tend to get less attention and public debate.

The limits of this research (small sample of URLs and key terms for query) should be taken into account and further research should be conducted in order to get a clear image of children’s rights discourses in Romania, as advanced by NGOs.

**Bibliography:**

F. Jansen, R. Rogers, M. Stevenson and E. Weltevrede. "Social Research with the Web". *Global Informaton Society Watch 2009*, Association for Progressive Communications and Hivos, 2009. Web. 16.11.2010

R. Rogers. "The Googlization Question, and the Inculpable Engine". K.Becker and F. Stalder (eds.). *Deep Search: The Politics of Search Engines beyond Google*. Edison, NJ: Transaction, 2009, 173-184.

Websites:

"Membri FONPC". *FONCP.ro*. n.d. Web. 17.11.2010

"Parteneri O.N.G.". *copii.ro*. n.d. Web. 17.11.2010

**Annex 1.**

drepturile copilului (1190) drepturile copiilor (652) **drepturi de autor**  
**(2668)** drepturi de copyright (48)

**Drepturi Romania Issue cloud (URLs) Digital Methods Initiative**

drepturile copilului (29) drepturile copiilor (22) **drepturi de**  
**autor (48)** drepturi de copyright (9)

**Drepturi Romania Issue cloud (hosts) Digital Methods Initiative**

Translation:

Drepturile copilului: Child's rights

Drepturile copiilor: Children's rights

Drepturi de autor: Author's rights

**Annex 2.a**

## Websites

Asociatia Speranta	<a href="http://asperanta.ro/">http://asperanta.ro/</a>
Fundatia Copiii Nostri	<a href="http://www.fcn.org.ro/">http://www.fcn.org.ro/</a>
Fundatia Internationala pentru Copil si Familie (FICF)	<a href="http://ficf-romania.ro/">http://ficf-romania.ro/</a>
Societatea pentru Copii si Parinti (SCOP)	<a href="http://www.scop.org.ro">http://www.scop.org.ro</a>
Asociatia de sprijin a copiilor cu handicap fizic (ASCHF-R)	<a href="http://www.aschfr.ro/">http://www.aschfr.ro/</a>
Fundatia SERA	<a href="http://www.sera.ro">http://www.sera.ro</a>
Organizatia pentru Copii si Adultii cu Nevoi Special "Trebuie!"	<a href="http://www.trebuie-bucuresti.ro/">http://www.trebuie-bucuresti.ro/</a>
Holt Romania	<a href="http://www.holt.ro">http://www.holt.ro</a>
Fundatia Familia si Ocrotirea Copilului (FOC)	<a href="http://www.fundatiafoc.ro">http://www.fundatiafoc.ro</a>
Fundatia Romana pentru Copii, Comunitate si Familie (FRCCF)	<a href="http://www.frccf.org.ro">http://www.frccf.org.ro</a>
Fundatia Serviciilor Sociale Bethany	<a href="http://www.bethany.ro">http://www.bethany.ro</a>
Asociatia "Sprijinirea Integrarii Sociale" ASIS	<a href="http://www.asis-ong.ro">http://www.asis-ong.ro</a>
Fundatia "Un copil, o speranta" UCOS	<a href="http://www.ucos.ro">http://www.ucos.ro</a>
Asociatia Incluziunea	<a href="http://incluziunea.ro">http://incluziunea.ro</a>
Fundatia Archway	<a href="http://fundatiaarchway.ro">http://fundatiaarchway.ro</a>
Fundatia World Vision Romania	<a href="http://www.worldvision.ro/">http://www.worldvision.ro/</a>

**Annex 2.b**

## Key Words and Phrases

<b>Romanian</b>	<b>English</b>
Consiliere sociala	Social counseling
Consiliere psihologica	Psychological counseling
Prevenirea abandonului	Abandonment prevention
Formare profesionala	Professional training
Integrarea sociala	Social integration
Copii cu dizabilitati	Children with disabilities
Dezvoltare comunitara	Community development
Asistenta sociala	Social assistance
Prevenirea abandonului scolar	School abandonment prevention
Servicii medicale	Medical care
Promovarea drepturilor copilului	Children's rights promotion
Asistenta maternala	Maternal assistance
Copii seropozitivi	Seropositive children
Support material	Material support
Orientare profesionala	Professional guidance
Burse	Grants
Interventie pluridisciplinara	Pluridisciplinary intervention
Consiliere juridica	Law counseling
Integrarea scolara a copiilor	School integration of children
Violenta in familie	Family violence
Socializare, petrecerea timpului liber	Socializing and leisure time
Dezinstitutionalizare	Deinstitutionalization
Ajutor umanitar	Humanitarian help
Prevenirea abandonului familial	Family abandonment prevention
Integrare a tinerilor	Youth integration
Tineri in tranzitie	Youth in transition
Prevenirea si combaterea violentei domestice	Prevention and control of domestic violence
Abuzul impotriva copilului	Children abuse
Integrarea socio-profesionala	Social and professional integration
Schimbarea mentalitatii comunitatii	Community mentality change
Primire si gazduire	Hosting and accommodation
Informare, educare si instruire	Information, education and instruction
Sprijin in continuarea studiilor	Support for studies
Informarea familiei	Family education
Reintegrare familiala si comunitara	Family and community reintegration
Ingrijire si suport	Care and support
Copii cu HIV/SIDA	Children with HIV/AIDS

### Annex 3.a

#### Romanian:

**Burse (79) Consiliere sociala (73) Prevenirea abandonului (55) Dezvoltare comunitara (51) Asistenta sociala (49) Copii cu dizabilitati (37) Consiliere psihologica (36) Ajutor umanitar (32) Tineri in tranzitie (32) Copii cu hiv/sida (28) Integrarea sociala (19) Asistenta maternala (19) Formare profesionala (17) Promovarea drepturilor copilului (14) Prevenirea abandonului scolar (13) Copii seropozitivi (9) Integrarea scolara a copiilor (8) Orientare profesionala (6) Servicii medicale (6) Interventie pluridisciplinara (5) Consiliere juridica (3) Socializare, petrecerea timpului liber (3) Violenta in familie (3) Suport material (3) Dezinstitutionalizare (3) Abuzul impotriva copilului (2) Prevenirea abandonului familial (2) Schimbarea mentalitatii comunitatii (1) Integrarea socio-profesionala (1) Prevenirea si combaterea violentei domestice (1) Sprijin in continuarea studiilor (1) Integrare a tinerilor (1) Informarea familiei (1) Ingrijire si suport (1) Reintegrare familiala si comunitara (1) Primire si gazduire (1) Informare, educare si instruire (1)**

#### Children's Rights Romanian NGOs Issue Cloud (URLs) Digital Methods Initiative

#### English:

**Grants (79) Social counseling (73) Abandonment prevention (55) Community development (51) Social assistance (49) Children with disabilities (37) Psychological counseling (36) Humanitarian help (32) Youth in transition (32) Children with HIV/AIDS (28) Maternal assistance (19) Social integration (19) Professional training (17) Children's rights promotion (14) School abandonment prevention (13) Seropositive children (9) School integration of children (8) Medical care (6) Professional guidance (6) Pluridisciplinary intervention (5) Law counseling (3) Socializing and leisure time (3) Family violence (3) Deinstitutionalization (3) Material support (3) Children abuse (2) Family abandonment prevention (2) Community mentality change (1) Social and professional integration (1) Information, education and instruction (1) Youth integration (1) Hosting and accommodation (1) Family education (1) Family and community reintegration (1) Care and support (1) Support for studies (1) Prevention and control of domestic violence (1)**

#### Children's Rights Romanian NGOs Issue Cloud (URLs-EN) Digital Methods Initiative



### Annex 3.b

#### Romanian:

**Consiliere sociala (13) Consiliere psihologica (11) Prevenirea abandonului (9) Formare profesionala (7) Integrarea sociala (7) Copii cu dizabilitati (6) Dezvoltare comunitara (5) Asistenta sociala (5) Prevenirea abandonului scolar (5) Promovarea drepturilor copilului (4) Servicii medicale (4) Copii seropozitivi (4) Asistenta maternală (4) Suport material (3) Orientare profesionala (3) Integrarea scolara a copiilor (2) Consiliere juridica (2) interventie pluridisciplinara. (2) Burse (2) Dezinstitutionalizare (2) Ajutor umanitar (2) Violenta in familie (2) Socializare, petrecerea timpului liber (2) Prevenirea abandonului familial (1) Integrare a tinerilor (1) Tineri in tranzitie (1) Abuzul impotriva copilului (1) Schimbarea mentalitatii comunitatii (1) Integrarea socio-profesionala (1) Prevenirea si combaterea violentei domestice (1) Primire si gazduire (1) Informare, educare si instruire (1) Sprijin in continuarea studiilor (1) Informarea familiei (1) Ingrijire si suport (1) Copii cu hiv/sida (1) Reintegrare familiala si comunitara (1)**

### Children's Rights Romanian NGOs Issue Cloud (hosts) Digital Methods Initiative

#### English:

**Social counseling (13) Psychological counseling (11) Abandonment prevention (9) Professional training (7) Social integration (7) Children with disabilities (6) School abandonment prevention (5) Community development (5) Social assistance (5) Medical care (4) Children's rights promotion (4) Maternal assistance (4) Seropositive children (4) Material support (3) Professional guidance (3) Law counseling (2) Pluridisciplinary intervention (2) Grants (2) School integration of children (2) Socializing and leisure time (2) Family violence (2) Deinstitutionalization (2) Youth integration (1) Humanitarian help (1) Youth in transition (1) Prevention and control of domestic violence (1) Community mentality change (1) Family abandonment prevention (1) Social and professional integration (1) Hosting and accommodation (1) Information, education and instruction (1) Support for studies (1) Family education (1) Care and support (1) Family and community reintegration (1) Children with HIV/AIDS (1) Children abuse (1)**

### Children's Rights Romanian NGOs Issue Cloud (hosts- EN) Digital Methods Initiative