

Huda lui Papară · Arieș Valley

ANIMA MUNDI

Aqua Mater

Aqua Mater. The essential role of water in the ecosystem.
A project rooted in local action, with a global outlook.

Organisation: Anima Mundi, a non-governmental association.
Location: the Arieș Valley, Apuseni Mountains.

The idea and the mission



Water and forest

The central idea: water connects and nourishes the planet’s entire web of life. It brings together the ecosystem, health, climate and economy, and its relationship with mountains and forests is the most tangible expression of this bond.

The mission: Anima Mundi promotes water’s essential role for the planet’s entire web of life, including humanity, and cultivates an appreciation of water as a substance indispensable to existence: real respect, not merely professed respect.

The water crisis



Sfântu Gheorghe, Danube Delta

The hydrological crisis caused by climate change deepens an existing crisis: we fail to respect water, polluting it excessively and wasting it.

2024 The World Meteorological Organization reports that 2024 was the sixth consecutive year in which most of the planet's river basins experienced conditions outside the normal range.

2026 In 2026, the crisis deepened.

On the Arieș, the authorities restricted water use, and some tributaries ran dry. In September, the Danube's flow at Baziaș fell to 1,250 cubic metres per second, a new record low for that month. Drought affected half the territory of the EU and the United Kingdom.

Sources 01 02 03 04 05

How we treat water

We treat water as a cheap commodity rather than the resource on which all forms of life depend.

And against this backdrop, we waste a large share of it. Public water networks worldwide lose 30% of the water supplied to them; in Romania, the figure is almost half.

Nor do we care enough for forests and mountains, the planet’s water towers. Deforestation destroys 10.9 million hectares of forest each year.

Sources 01 02 03



Vintgar Gorge · 2021



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Local action

Through information panels placed at 13 springs in the Arieș Valley, we convey to the community a continuous message of respect for water, which we reinforce through tailored brochures for children in schools along the river.

Together with some of the children, we are creating the NaturAma Club, which regularly carries out educational and artistic activities, field observations and clean-up sessions.

It is involved in organising a festival, Arieș Day and camps through which the message of respect for water and biodiversity becomes national and, gradually, international.

In time, some club members will become guardians of the Arieș Valley through their chosen professions and their passions.

The book and the multimedia centre

Through the book ‘The Wisdom of Water’ and the multimedia centre of the future Aqua Mater Centre, we carry water’s message across the country and around the world.

The book also serves as a source for brochures and a guide dedicated to respect for water and biodiversity.

The multimedia centre creates written, audio and video materials in Romanian and English, develops a digital platform containing an online mini-encyclopaedia about water and biodiversity, and regularly broadcasts programmes dedicated to water and nature.



Light on the water

The Aqua Mater Centre



The Aqua Mater Centre, which we will build from the ground up, is the bond that unites all the project's activities. It is a space for ongoing study and observation of water and biodiversity.

The multimedia centre operates within it, and socio-cultural events and themed camps take place there. It also hosts visitors as it develops.

The centre contributes to the area's cultural and economic development, and through its functions, local action becomes a message shared nationally and globally. In this way, an appreciation of water and biodiversity reaches as many people as possible.

From local to global

Amid today’s climate crisis, every local action has global implications, because everything within the ecosystem is connected. Water evaporating in the Arieș Valley may fall as rain thousands of kilometres away. And the Aqua Mater model can be replicated in any valley in the Carpathians.

The main beneficiaries are the people of the Arieș Valley and those who take part directly in the project’s activities.

Yet the ultimate beneficiaries may be all the people of the planet, because climate and water know no borders and are not local phenomena, but global ones that call for our attention, especially in these hot times.

By acting intelligently at a local level, we send positive ripples around the world. Everything is connected.



Danube Delta

What we have done

So far, Anima Mundi:

- has, through Petrea Ciortan, written a third of the book ‘The Wisdom of Water’;
- has carried out field research and observation in the Arieș Valley;
- has rented a house in Sălciua, very close to Huda lui Papară, which serves as an interim centre for the study of water;
- has formed a partnership with the ITI Moții Țara de Piatră Intercommunity Development Association;
- organises educational hikes in the Apuseni Mountains twice a month.



Water Celebration, Samothraki

What we will do

In 2027, we intend to:

- begin installing panels at the 13 springs and create brochures for children;
- rent premises for the NaturAma Club;
- organise the first NaturAma festival, the first camp and Arieș Day;
- complete and publish ‘The Wisdom of Water’;
- begin developing the digital platform and shaping the multimedia centre;
- create the first themed trails dedicated to water and biodiversity;
- identify a site for the centre and prepare the architectural design.

In 2028, we intend to:

- begin building the centre;
- promote the book;
- continue the regular activities: the festival, camps, Arieș Day, the NaturAma Club’s work and more.

Operating budget

Estimated operating budget for 2027

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Local action: panels, brochures, the NaturAma Club, themed trails and clean-ups	31,000
Events: the NaturAma festival, camp and Arieș Day	30,000
The book, digital platform and multimedia centre	18,000
Off-road vehicle, fuel and water-monitoring equipment	38,000
Team and administration	43,000
Total: approximately	**160,000**

The budget is indicative and is adjusted according to the workload, number of employees, scale of events and changes in prices.

Investment in the centre

The Aqua Mater Centre: estimated investment

	€
Land, once identified, together with architectural design, permits and utility connections	115,000
Phase 1: the main building, approximately 250 m^2, with study spaces, an events room, multimedia studio and library, including equipment and furnishings	440,000
Phase 2: accommodation for camps and visitors, and outdoor works	330,000
Total: approximately	**885,000**

Costs are estimates and are adjusted according to the land, final design and changes in prices.

The team

- Petrea Ciortan, President of Anima Mundi and Project Manager;
- Iulian Barbu, funding adviser and the person responsible for the digital platform.

The team is complemented by volunteers:

- Manuela Matesoi, legal advice and attracting donations and sponsorships;
- Radu Stoica, from Apuseni Spirit, knowledge of the Arieș Valley;
- Laura Vasi, advice on human rights and the relationship between people and nature.

The core team is taking shape and will grow as the project develops and funding is secured.

Continuity



Waterfalls and clear water

The Aqua Mater Centre is designed to gradually generate a growing share of the income it needs to operate.

Its own income comes from camps, festivals, hosting visitors and the sale of promotional materials.

In addition, Anima Mundi ensures the project’s continuity through fundraising campaigns and grants. The diversity of sources protects the project from dependence on a single source of funding.

Join us

Water is essential to the planet’s entire ecosystem. Wherever there is life, there is always water.

Healthy water is essential to every living organism on the planet and vital to the functioning and preservation of the natural environment.

Council of the European Union, water policy

Developing and maintaining a secure and equitable water future underpins prosperity and peace for all.

United Nations World Water Development Report, 2024

Anima Mundi invites you to join this journey of respect for the planet’s entire web of life.

Every contribution matters. You can support the whole project or one part of it through money, goods or services: measuring equipment, materials for panels, transport, architectural services or accommodation for camps.

Support through funding or a donation · Work with us as a partner · Take part as a volunteer

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Sources 01 02