

acsis

Association for a United Community
and Social Intervention

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

www.acsis.ro/en



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The Starfish Story

Today, the sun rises peacefully after a rough night at sea. Ferocious waves rushed to shore, as if determined to bring everything out to the surface. When the storm quieted down, as fast as it had started, the water calmed down and withdrew. The beach was all covered with mud and thousands of starfish were squirming in agony. There were so many, that the beach seemed to have become rosy. The starfish were almost motionless. They were about to die.

In the crowd, hand in hand with his father, there was a child looking sadly at the tiny starfish. They were all just looking at them, without doing anything. Suddenly, the child took his shoes off and ran to the beach. He picked three starfish in his tiny hands and ran to the sea to release them into the water. Then he turned back and did the same again.

A man shouted at him: "What are you doing there, boy?" "I throw the starfish into the water. Otherwise, they will all die on the beach", the boy replied without stopping from running. "But there are thousands of starfish on this beach: you will definitely not be able to save them all. There are too many", cried out the man.

Not to mention that there are hundreds of other beaches along the coast. You cannot change things."

The child smiled, picked another starfish and, while throwing it into the water, responded: "Here - we did change things for this one."

The man remained silent for a moment, then he bent down, removed his shoes and socks and went down to the beach. He started to collect starfish and threw them into the sea. One moment later, two more girls joined them and so there were already four people throwing starfish into the sea. After a few more minutes there were fifty, then one hundred, two hundreds, thousands of people throwing starfish into the water.

Hence, all the starfish were saved.

Author: Bruno Ferrero



FOREWORD

We turn again and again to the starfishes' story whenever we feel we can do too little for those who turn to us, when we feel overwhelmed by the multitude of pressures that single mothers face in the struggle to keep their children, whenever the number of those who ask us for help exceeds our resources and powers to intervene. And this year, marked by the health crisis, major changes in all areas of our lives, of all of us, we had moments of discouragement, insecurity that led us to return to this story and to understand that we cannot do everything for all who come to us, but we can do as much as possible for the few, and we can inspire other good people to join us. And so we did, we went to the community and the positive answers came and people with big hearts did not hesitate to lend a helping hand.

The pandemic period, dominated by uncertainties and fear, hit hard on the families already living in poverty, and for the families consisting of mother and child/children it brought situations to the limit of survival. This year we have seen an increase in the number of requests for support, women who have approached us at the limit of their powers, in situations that could not have been foreseen, such as the death of a husband, loss or suspension of employment, the impossibility to provide food and all the necessary for the children. The closure of the educational institutions has made many of them unable to find a job or work, having to supervise their children at home and having no one to entrust their care to.

We have managed this year to improve the lives of 488 children and 59 disadvantaged adults, to continue to offer social counseling services, psychological counseling, support in socio-professional integration/reintegration, material and financial support, counseling on self-protection methods against the phenomenon of human trafficking. In the most difficult situations, we have collaborated with other organizations and institutions to cover the needs of families, trying to create a support network around them, to help them regain hope and confidence in a better future with their children and to prevent the separation of children from their families. We thank with full hearts of gratitude and appreciation to all those who joined our efforts this year as well: donors, funders, sponsors, collaborators, volunteers, who made our projects possible!

ACSIS Team



WHO WE ARE?

THE ASSOCIATION FOR A UNITED COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL INTERVENTION - ACSIS

is a non-governmental organization, non-profit, without any political or religious character, which develops programs meant to maintain the cohesion of the most vulnerable families, since 2004.

The VISION,

we actively strive to since 2004, is of a society that functions as a living organism, a body made up of diverse communities, each with its specific contribution in social life; communities acting jointly, educative and preventive for each of their members.

Our MISSION

is sustainable development of family and community through education and specialized intervention for prevention of harmful social phenomena such as maternal abandonment, trafficking in persons or school dropouts. We achieve this through the development of education programs for a healthy life, psycho-social support, social and professional inclusion of vulnerable persons.

Our VALUES

We deeply believe in **Solidarity** that we translate in all our projects, through implementation of pro-awareness activities, proactive prevention and action against situations of vulnerability of community members and by increasing social cohesion, as a consequence of these synergistic activities.

We cherish and manifest Responsibility in our projects: ours, as an organization, toward results of our projects and interventions;

Responsibility of communities toward vulnerable members, as well as **Responsibility** of parents toward their children. We believe in **Continuing Education**; through formal and non-formal education, in childhood or adulthood, a community increases the autonomy of its members, but also their ability to contribute to social development. And last but not least, we believe in Uniqueness; we intervene through activities adapted to the communities and individuals, leaving aside preconceptions. Believing in **uniqueness** of individual and community makes us flexible and easily adaptable as organization.



TARGET GROUPS

Who do we work with?

Single-parent families being in socio-psycho-economical, difficulty vulnerable children, young people and adolescents.



SERVICES PROVIDED:

- Social counseling
- Psychological counseling
- Information and education
- Emotional support
- Assistance and support in socio-professional integration/reintegration
- Financial/material support
- Socializing and leisure activities
- Advice on risks, consequences and ways of self-defense against human trafficking



RESULTS 2020

488

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
BENEFICIARIES OF DIRECT SERVICES

59

ADULTS SUPPORTED IN ACSIS
PROJECTS

10

VOLUNTEERS

8

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS
AND INSTITUTIONS

3

PROJECTS
CARRIED OUT

CENTER OF COUNSELING AND SUPPORT FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN - ACSIS

supports and assists parents/potential parents to deal with psychosocial difficulties affecting family relationships, to develop parenting skills, to prevent the separation of the child from his family, and to support children when problems arise in their development.

The following projects were carried out within the CENTER OF COUNSELING AND SUPPORT FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN:

PREVENTING THE SEPARATION OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES



CREATIVE WORKSHOP



PREVENTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING



PREVENTING THE SEPARATION OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES PROJECT

141 beneficiaries, children and single mothers

One thousand children are abandoned by their mothers, annually, in Romanian hospitals, lately. The health and economic crisis has exacerbated the problems that disadvantaged families face, leading to an increase in the number of those who cannot raise and care for their children and who are forced to entrust them to the state. The project is aimed to provide social, psychological and economical support to disadvantaged single mothers in Bucharest and surrounding areas, in order to prevent children abandonment.



PREVENTING THE SEPARATION OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES PROJECT



Main activities:

- Social counseling in order to solve and improve the problems that put the family at risk of separation from the child
- Counseling and emotional support aimed at: developing a positive parent-child attachment relationship, improving parent-child communication methods; learning healthy behaviors and practices for raising and caring for the child; improving the emotional state, increasing the self-esteem, self-confidence, developing the skills to solve life problems
- Support in formation and development of the necessary skills for the children care and education, in mediation of the family relations, in development of the social skills
- Accompaniment and support in school and professional (re)integration
- Assistance and support for obtaining social benefits from the authorities, support and accompaniment in order to access them
- Health education and facilitating access to health services
- Counseling aimed at making mothers responsible for the importance of educating their children and providing tools and guidance in the process of educating children;
- Monthly material support (food and hygiene products, supplies, clothing), individualized financial support to cover costs such as rent, utilities, for a limited period of time, in order to overcome the difficult situation

PREVENTING THE SEPARATION OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES PROJECT

Main results:

- 36 children in difficulty/risk of family separation remained with their mothers and were taken care of appropriate to their age and needs, as result of the received support. 25 of them benefited from psychosocial assistance and monthly material/financial support, and 11 children were punctually supported, depending on the identified needs.
- 21 disadvantaged single mothers benefited from psycho-social counseling services, support activities and parental education, material support (food, hygiene products, clothing) and/or financial support to overcome the difficult situation.
- 25 children were assisted with school supplies, school articles, tablets, in order to prevent school dropout
- 6 beneficiary mothers have obtained and kept a job and support themselves from their own resources, as a result of the sustained assistance of our team
- 38 mothers with 46 children benefited from counseling and guidance to services for their needs (maternal center, counseling centers for victims of domestic violence, social canteen)

During the emergency state, when the Center was closed, we provided remotely counseling, information and emotional support, by phone and online. We have also intensified efforts to provide basic food and hygiene products to beneficiary mothers, financial support in order to cover rent costs and avoid evictions, costs associated with home maintenance and utilities.



PREVENTING THE SEPARATION OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES PROJECT

With the support of the U.S. Embassy in Romania, between October 2020 and March 2021, we carry out activities aimed at the socio-professional integration of single mothers, through:

- Monthly sessions on the labor market (how to access the right job offer, support for finding a job: hands-on sessions on writing a CV, preparation for a job interview, guidance towards vacant jobs, labor legislation information, support for identifying and following qualification courses)
- Support in acquiring basic tailoring and craft skills within the creative workshop of the association
- Mentoring activities: mediation of mutual relations and solidarity between mothers who have overcome difficult life situations with the support of the association and mothers who are going through similar situations at present

Main results:

- 10 beneficiary mothers acquired skills necessary to access a job, were assisted in a CV drafting and in finding a job
- 3 workshops to present the labor market, support in acquiring skills needed to access a job, in CV drafting, were held near the end of the year, in small groups, respecting protection from Covid-19 measures
- 3 training hands-on practical sessions in which mothers learned basic tailoring and craft skills, how to make textile toys, small decorative objects, cards, aprons and others. Skill building was combined with knowledge and habit formation: punctuality, respect for co-workers, responsibility for the work done, respecting rules at a workplace, teamwork.
- 4 mothers were involved in mentoring activities - mothers who benefited from our support and overcame difficult life situations also offer help and support to mothers who are currently facing hard difficulties



THE CAMPAIGN "12 MOTHERS WHO RAISE ALONE THEIR OWN CHILDREN NEED HELP"

In April, during the beginning of the pandemic, we launched a call for support for single mothers integrated in the program of the Center of Counseling and Support for Parents and Children, who were in extremely difficult life situations, in isolation, facing with hard difficulties in providing food and care for children, difficulties in covering the costs associated with rent, utilities.

We are grateful to the generous volunteers who responded to our call for support launched within the Ziuav (Day V) program, a volunteer program developed by BRD - Groupe Société Générale for its employees. Good people, people who have chosen to contribute, to lend a helping hand to those in need, have donated to us, helped us to send food packages, hygiene products, school supplies, to financially support part of them in order to cover costs such as: rent, maintenance, utilities.



The screenshot shows a landing page for a campaign. At the top left is the ZIUAV logo with the tagline 'nevoii BRD pentru tine'. At the top right are navigation links: 'Inregistrare | autentificare', 'despre noi | lucrati la crestere | contact', and social media icons for Facebook and BRD. The main heading reads '12 mame care își cresc copiii singure au nevoie de ajutor'. Below this is a 'descriere proiect' section with a photo of a pregnant woman. To the left, there is a sidebar with details: 'BRD Groupe Societe Generale', 'Durata proiectului: 30.04.2020 - 31.12.2021', 'Data limită pentru aplicații: 31.12.2021', 'Locul desfășurării: TOATĂ ȚARA', 'Postat: 30.04.2020', and 'Locuri disponibile: 34 locuri disponibile'. The main content area contains a 'Domeniul de activitate' section, a 'Profilul voluntarului dorit' section, a 'DESCRIEREA VOLUNTARULUI' section with a paragraph about the project's goal, a 'RESPONSABILITĂȚILE VOLUNTARULUI' section with a list of responsibilities, and a 'Rezultate ale Invățărilor' section with a list of learning outcomes.





We thank to all those who have joined our efforts: Dr. Lorelei Nassar Implantology Clinic, Geocon Global Consulting, Rotary Club Bucharest Victory, The House PR Agency, Derzelas PAX SRL, Iele-sanziene Association, Dutescu & Partners, Mentor in Romania and to all people with big hearts, individuals, who came to help!



Testimonials



I would not be able to pass this period of quarantine, of pandemic, without the help of ACSIS. I am grateful for the time, advice, closeness and support I have received. I felt respected, listened to with soul, appreciated, but more than anything helped, both materially (the food and everything we received, month after month, were very helpful) and spiritually.

I was reminded that I am not alone, I received competent advice, I was encouraged, guided when I needed it most. You told me a word that strengthened me enormously: "We go through this together." I have felt you people for people, heart to heart, remain friends and people dear to my soul and I pray to the Lord to reward you for everything you mean for a single mother in a delicate situation"

D.D., beneficiary mother



I didn't think that some strangers would help me so much, I was used to carrying my burdens and difficulties on my own, but now I had to seek and ask for help. During the emergency state and after that, an extremely difficult period for me and my little girls, it was very important to receive food and hygiene, but more than that to know that there are people who care about us ... Talking to someone about my problems and getting help and advice mattered a lot and helped me regain my strength.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything!

S.S., beneficiary mother



“

At the beginning of the pandemic, I was announced that I would be evicted from the house where I was renting, together with the 3 children I raise alone. I hadn't been able to pay the last few months and they clearly told me that I had to leave. The news came at a time when we were already terrified of what was happening, with the emergency state and what followed. The commitments I had to do housekeeping for few families in the neighborhood were no longer valid during the quarantine, I could not go and we lost the only money from which we could support ourselves. I asked ACSIS for help and they helped me pay the rent and not go out on the street with the children, they sent us food, they helped me get through a very difficult time for me and the children.

”

E.S., beneficiary mother



PREVENTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROJECT

447 beneficiaries, high school students, parents, children

Main activities:

During the school year 2019-2020, 16 students from the “Mircea Vulcanescu” Technological High School Bucharest were trained through the method of peer to peer education to transmit to their colleagues information on human trafficking and ways of self-protection against this phenomenon. Peer educators held presentation sessions and moderated discussions in classroom about human trafficking, involving 390 students, colleagues from their school, with the support of ACSIS representatives and teachers.

A drawing competition was also organized, where students were invited to participate with thematic works, illustrating their opinion on the phenomenon of human trafficking. The most inspired work was transformed into a poster promoting the activities of peer to peer educators in the school. The closure of schools at the beginning of March, due to the health crisis, determined us to prematurely end the project and to reschedule some of the activities.



PREVENTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROJECT

During and immediately after the emergency state, given the signals regarding the exposure of children to an increased risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence, on the ground of intensified isolation measures in the context of Covid19, we initiated, with the support of Samilia Foundation, actions designed to prevent situations that endanger safety and increase the risk of exploitation of disadvantaged children and single mothers integrated into our projects.



14 disadvantaged single mothers and their 27 children received counseling and information on: online safety rules for children, the importance of supervising children's online activities in an age-appropriate manner, safety measures and parental control; counseling in order to create, strengthen a positive relationship with children, based on communication, respect and mutual trust; information on methods and strategies of positive discipline, educational and recreational activities, healthy alternatives to spending time in front of the TV or the screen with online games; emotional support in order to overcome the states of helplessness, uncertainty, anxiety, depression, felt acutely during the period of isolation, by offering ways and techniques to manage emotions, increase the resilience of both beneficiary mothers and their children.

CREATIVE WORKSHOP PROJECT

The aim of the project is to provide a framework for learning, socializing and acquiring work skills, organized and adapted to mothers in social difficulty, who raise their children alone.

Single disadvantaged mothers encounter many difficulties such as lack of support from their partners or families in raising their children, prejudices and rejection from the community, lack of income, emotional overload, and often depression and anxiety regarding the future. These difficulties can lead to behaviors of social isolation and learned helplessness that we have witnessed over and over in our more than 16 years of working with this population. We provided a safe framework for them to overcome the pattern of isolation, to receive the support of other women in similar situations, receive the support of community, and have the opportunity of meaningful work of contributing and creating while learning basic skills in tailoring and manufacturing.

5 volunteers joined the project activities, in an open atmosphere, favorable to the exchange of experiences and communication, solidarity and contribution, sending mothers the message that they have community support, that they have a support network on which they can rely on, that they are not isolated and forced to rely only on their own strength in the fight for a better future for themselves and for their children.



CREATIVE WORKSHOP PROJECT

Main results:

- 10 single mothers being in high social risk participated in the workshop activities
- 12 organized meetings, during which mothers and volunteers learned to make different products: greeting cards, textile toys, March trinkets, ornaments and decorative objects associated with the winter holidays
- 400 products were created during the activities, with the support of a tailoring instructor
- 5 volunteers were with us in this project, participating along mothers in creating various products
- The products were promoted online, but also in various events: March trinket charity fairs, organized by BRD Groupe Societe Generale and KPMG Romania, online Christmas charity fairs dedicated to employees organized by the same companies, exhibitions for sale at the headquarters of the association's collaborators
- The raised funds were used to support single beneficiary mothers (material support consisting of food, hygiene and financial support to cover the urgent needs of the families)





“

At the workshop, I learned how to make felt Christmas tree ornaments and textile toys - I was very proud to see that I could make beautiful things with my hands and to know that this way I help as little as possible. Ever since we started meeting in groups again, after quarantine, it helps me a lot. I feel more optimistic about the future and more confident that I will find a job, I felt welcome at every meeting, as among friends. It's good to be able to talk here with other moms who, like me, are fighting for their children

L.S., beneficiary mother

”

THE CAMPAIGN “DONATE KILOGRAMS FOR A GOOD CAUSE!”

We are grateful for the contribution of **Kilostop Nutrition Clinic**, which has been supporting our actions to prevent the separation of children from their families, for more than 7 years.

As part of the “**Donate kilograms for a good cause!**” Campaign, for each kilogram lost by its patients, the clinic donates 2 lei to humanitarian organizations, ACSIS being one of them.

Starting in 2019, Kilostop Junior Clinic has joined the campaign, and children and adolescents facing eating disorders, patients of the clinic, may help in the same way, a child to stay with his mother!

The raised funds were used in providing material and financial aid to the families in the greatest need integrated in our projects.



CAMPAIGN “SUPPORTING DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN”

LORELE NASSAR IMPLANTOLOGY CLINIC, sponsor and constant partner of our association for the last 6 years, carries out the Campaign “**Let’s support disadvantaged children**” through which, for each intervention, a percentage of the proceeds are directed for the benefit of the children supported by ACSIS.

We thank Dr. Lorelei Nassar, who also supported our cause during this year, with dedication, generosity and determination, in numerous events, fighting next to us to make known in the community the issue of the single-parent families, the difficulties that single disadvantaged mothers face.



Impreuna ajutam copiii defavorizati

Pentru fiecare obturatie sau implant realizat la clinica noastra, contribui cu 2, respectiv 5 lei la ajutorul dat copiilor defavorizati de la Fundatia ACSIS. *

Mulumim pentru suportul tau!
Lorelei Nassar & Echipa



Over 200 greeting cards and products made during the creative workshop were purchased by the Implantology Clinic Lorelei Nassar and AB Dental Romania, who chose to bring joy in this way to both loved ones and those in difficulty.

THANK YOU!

FUNDERS AND SPONSORS



Derzelas Pax S.R.L.



S.C. Geocon Global Consulting S.R.L.

DUȚESCU & ASOCIAȚII
SOCIETATE CIVILĂ DE AVOCAȚI

CONTRIBUTE WITH US TO CHANGE THE DESTINIES OF SOME INNOCENT CHILDREN!

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Individuals:

- Access <https://acsis.ro/en/donate-online/> and donate via PayPal
- Donate via bank transfer
<https://acsis.ro/en/donate-via-bank-transfer/>
- Order and purchase products created within ACSIS creative workshop

Legal entities:

- Organize internal campaigns to involve employees for the benefit of our cause

THANK YOU!



For additional information,
you can write to us at the email address acsis@acsis.ro



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