

acsis

ASSOCIATION FOR A UNITED
COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL INTERVENTION

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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FOREWORD

In all our actions throughout this year, we set out to maintain the cohesion of families and facilitate change for the better in the lives of disadvantaged single mothers, vulnerable young people and children, despite the difficult economic context.

For some of the beneficiary mothers, the support received over an average of 10-12 months of assistance brings major changes with long-term impact in their lives. Irina graduated from a qualification course that she wanted to take for a long time, but she could not cover the costs, and the two children she is raising alone were too young. This time, with input from the association and support, she was able to attend and successfully complete the course, even if it meant sometimes taking her little 5-year-old boy with her to class. The diploma obtained **opens a new path for her and for the children**, and we are glad that we could also contribute to it.

For other mothers, the change is not so obvious for the observer who does not know their path.

The vast majority come from disorganized families, they have the experience of conflictual relationships with the family, with the partner, their life history is marked by multiple types of violence, each of them facing the harsh judgment of the community at the same time. At the beginning of assistance, they feel overwhelmed, lonely and isolated, they feel helpless in the face of an uncertain future.

The change in these cases is visible over time, gradually, as they are received in an environment where they are met with acceptance, understanding, feel included, seen and supported. We, those who work in the association have the unique privilege of witnessing their process of growth, openness, discovery of personal strength and courage. There are situations in which mothers initially ask for material, financial support, food, and during the assistance they tell us how much they need people with whom they can have harmonious relations, who listen and understand them and helps them make sense of their life experiences.

One of the mothers told us: "Here, at group meetings, I feel different than anywhere else in my life. I do not know how to explain. I just know that I feel good, it's like home for me and every time I leave with things in my mind that I think about and that give me strength". I.L., beneficiary mother. Whether we are talking about the change for the better brought by a professional qualification or a job, or about the change in the inner alchemy of each of the mothers upon contact with a **nurturing, secure, inclusive environment, or about the joy of children** at modeling, painting or personal development activities or receiving new backpacks and supplies, or finding a residential center for the mother who was about to be evicted with her child from the rented house, or the mother's gratitude and tears when receiving financial support for wood to heat the house in the winter months - this year we served **135 people: 46 mothers and 89 children**, remaining dedicated to our mission, that of **catalysts of change for the better in the lives of vulnerable people**.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who supported our cause this year - sponsors, donors, volunteers, partners - by staying close to us, contributing generously and making all our actions possible!

THANK YOU! ACSIS TEAM



The ACSIS mission

ASSOCIATION FOR A SOLIDARY COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL INTERVENTION - ACSIS is a non-governmental, non-profit organization, without a political or religious character, which, since 2004, has been carrying out programs aimed at maintaining the cohesion of the most vulnerable families.

THE ACSIS MISSION is the sustainable development of the family and the community, through education and specialized intervention for the prevention of harmful social phenomena such as: maternal abandonment, human trafficking or school dropout. We achieve this by developing programs aimed at education for a healthy life, psycho-social assistance, social and professional inclusion of vulnerable people.



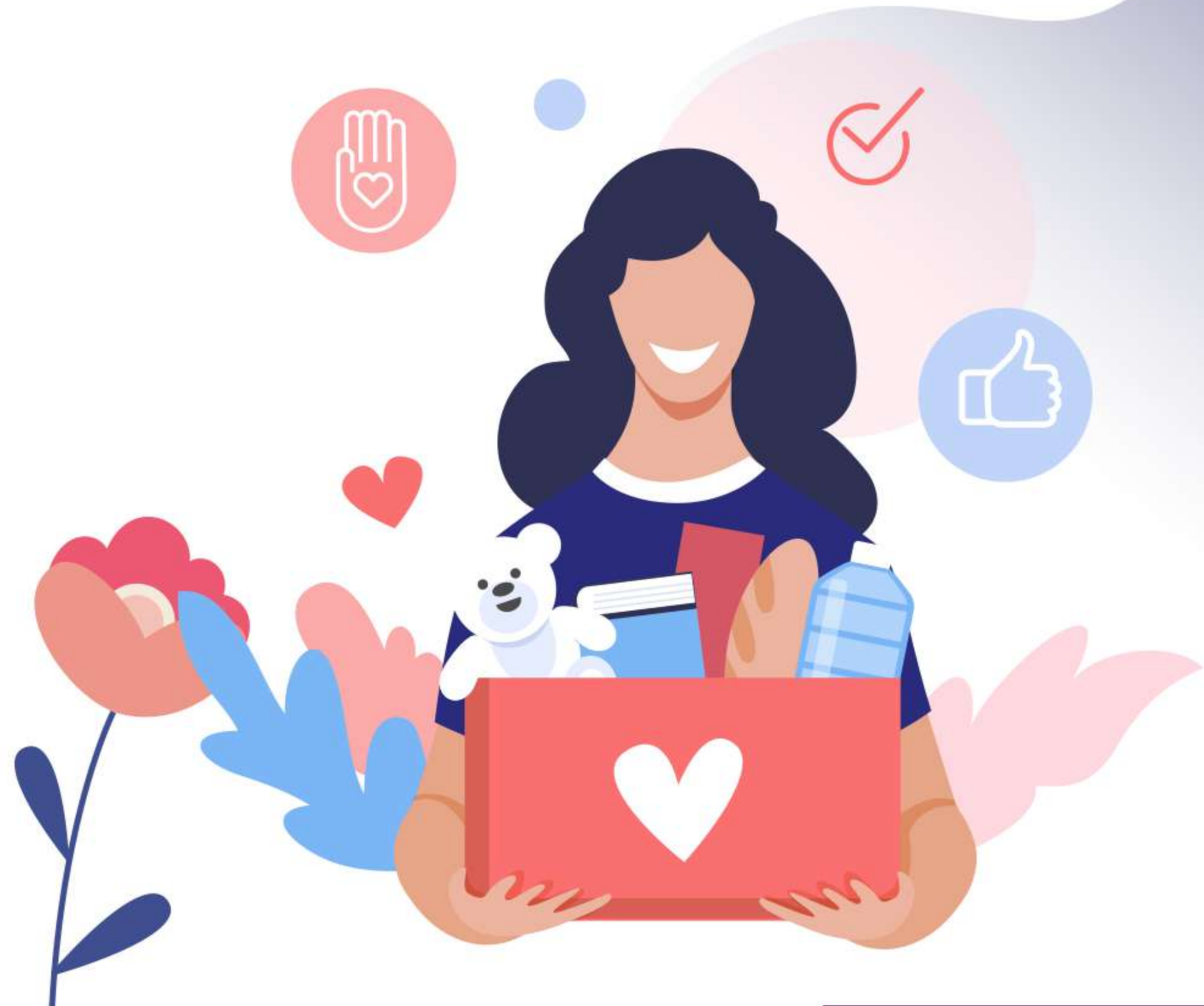
WE BELIEVE that every parent is a unique person and every child is unique. For this reason, we provide individualized assistance and sustained support, adapted to the extremely difficult life situations that single mothers at social risk face - poverty, lack of support from the community, often blame from it, lack of support from the life partner in raising the child, low level of education, lack of housing security. The mentioned situations constitute risk factors that make families vulnerable and favor the situations of separation of the child from his own family. Through our services, we intervene on them, supporting families in identifying and accessing new resources, in building a future together. It is important for us to keep the children in their own family. Equally, we support and believe it is important that every child receives the care and education they need to realize their full potential.

WHO ARE WE ADDRESSING? - TARGET GROUPS:

- ✓ Single-parent families in socio-psycho-economic difficulty
- ✓ Children, teenagers and vulnerable young people

WHAT ARE WE DOING? - SERVICES PROVIDED

- ✓ Social counseling
- ✓ Psychological counseling
- ✓ Information and education
- ✓ Accompanying and mediating relations with the authorities
- ✓ Support for continuing studies
- ✓ Parental education and support groups
- ✓ Educational programs for children
- ✓ Assistance and support in socio-professional integration/reintegration
- ✓ Financial/material support
- ✓ Social and recreational activities



PREVENTING THE SEPARATION OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES PROJECT

Currently worldwide, **single-parent families represent almost a quarter of all families.**

In Romania, 84.5% of single-parent families are of the "mothers with one or more children" type, the remaining 15.5% being "fathers with children". Of the total number of families with children (4,260,609), single-parent families represent more than a fifth (20.1%).

In this project, we proposed the socio-psycho-economic support of disadvantaged single mothers from Bucharest and neighboring areas, in order to keep their children in their own family. Through the social services offered: psycho-social counseling, information on social assistance benefits and support in order to obtain them, support groups and parental education, personal development, labor market presentation sessions, support in finding a job and /or in the continuation of studies, we sought to respond to the attachment and safety needs of the children, emotional rebalancing and increasing the self-confidence of the beneficiary mothers, **increasing resilience and awareness of the ability to influence one's own life.**



PREVENTING THE SEPARATION OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES PROJECT

We also supported families in obtaining social benefits offered by the state and in accessing educational services for children (kindergartens, day care centers). The team established with each mother a professional path, and depending on their professional skills and competences, either qualification courses or jobs were sought, the assistance period being limited in time and aiming at empowering the mother to assume responsibility for herself and for the child by obtaining emotional and financial autonomy.

Modalities of material/financial support were very diverse including: basic food and hygiene products, clothing, supplies, partial coverage of rent costs, utilities for a fixed period, to avoid eviction, coverage of qualification courses costs. Through all our actions we strived to create a safe, supportive and warm frame, a space where, with patience, reflection and help they could regain strengths, discover new perspectives, access new resources and balance, feel included and valued..



PREVENTING THE SEPARATION OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES PROJECT

MAIN RESULTS



135 people, adults and children, benefited from support within the project as follows:

51 children in difficulty/at risk of family separation have remained with their mothers and benefit from care appropriate to their age and needs, as a result of the support received:

- ✓ 28 children benefited from psycho-social assistance and monthly material/financial support throughout the year-
- ✓ 23 children were supported in a timely manner, depending on the identified needs.-
- ✓ 21 children were supported to continue their studies and improve their school results, they benefited from support in doing school homework, support consisting of supplies, school bags, school articles, in order to prevent school dropout
- ✓ 21 children benefited from recreational and personal development activities-
- ✓ 7 children aged 0-3 years have benefited by hygiene products and basic food (diapers, milk powder)

25 disadvantaged single mothers benefited from social services:

- ✓ 17 single mothers benefited from psycho-social counseling services, support in socio-professional integration, parental education, support in obtaining social benefits, monthly material support (food products, hygienic products, clothing) and/or financial support to overcome the situation of difficulty, throughout the year
- ✓ 8 single mothers benefited from punctual help to cover urgent needs
- ✓ 15 beneficiary mothers acquired skills necessary to access a job, were assisted in building a CV and in identifying a job
- ✓ 1 mother followed and graduated a qualification course, with financial support from the association
- ✓ 11 beneficiary mothers obtained and kept a job and support themselves from their own resources, as a result of the sustained assistance of our team.
- ✓ 5 beneficiary mothers were involved in mentoring activities - mothers who benefited from our support and overcame difficult life situations offer help and support to mothers who are currently facing socio-psycho-economic difficulties

21 mothers with 38 children benefited from counseling and guidance to services appropriate to their needs (maternal center, counseling centers for victims of domestic violence, social canteen)

PREVENTING THE SEPARATION OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES PROJECT

GROUP COUNSELING



During the year, we organized 12 group meetings involving beneficiary mothers. We have addressed topics associated with **socio-professional integration/reintegration** (e.g. "Labor market. How to find a suitable job", "Building a CV", "Job interview. How to prepare, mistakes to avoid)", "Soft skills: positive attitude, teamwork, problem solving, effective communication. Why they are important") as well as topics associated with **increasing resilience, parenting and personal development** ("Strategies for managing emotions", "The image of self and limiting beliefs", "Setting goals - a tool for increasing self-esteem", "Strategies for positive discipline of children", "Positive parent-child communication", "Gratitude and the importance of practicing it")

Testimonials

"It's hard for me to put into words how much help I've received at the group meetings. At first, I was hesitant to talk, but after meeting other mothers with similar problems to mine, with children older than mine, it was easier for me. I made friends with some mothers, we talk on the phone, we go out to the park together with the children. What I like most about groups is that nobody judges you, doesn't condemn you for mistakes, there's a lot of understanding."

B.R., beneficiary mother

"At home I made a notebook in which I write every night the good things in my life, the things I am grateful for. I learned this at one of the group meetings, you told us it will help and I decided to try. It helps me counting my blessings instead of focusing on things I lack in my life. It helps, indeed."

M.I., beneficiary mother

While the individual self- exploration and self- expression was encouraged, the power of group dynamic was highly appreciated by mothers, as they felt empowered and less isolated, meeting other persons facing similar situations. The project activities have been greatly appreciated by the disadvantaged single mothers participant, all activities were designed to provide useful and practical information and new skills in a friendly, open nonjudgmental environment, all in all a positive experience to help them grow more confident and better equipped to make a good change in their lives.

SUPPORT FOR MOTHERS AND CHILDREN FROM UKRAINE

With the support of generous donors, we expanded our actions earlier this year to mothers and children coming in our country, running from the war in Ukraine. We managed to provide support consisting of counseling and information on rights, emotional support, food and basic hygiene products for 6 mothers with 10 children.

Also, for 20 Ukrainian mothers and 20 children, hosted in the Ferdinand I Refugee Center in sector 2, Bucharest, we offered hygiene and personal care products, sleeping mattresses, educational materials for children.



PREVENTING THE SEPARATION OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES PROJECT

A HEROINE STORY

Maria*, 41 years old, is a single mother of two girls: E., 5 years old and R., 17 years old. Maria was abandoned by her mother when she was 3 years old and she grew up in an orphanage. Her mother visited her during a few holidays; she never met her biological father. She confesses that, as an adult, she visited her mother and she asked her why she abandoned her and her other 3 brothers, talking about her suffering while being raised among strangers. The mother responded that she was not able to cope raising 4 children, after her husband left home, yet expressed no remorse or empathy. Maria confesses she understood then that her path is different than her mother, that she will do everything in her power to not end up like her mother and not inflict the same pain on her children. When she addressed to ACSIS, she was working as a housekeeper, in an informal manner, obtaining a small income, insufficient to cover all costs for her and her daughters.

Despite her traumatic background and the absence of the support from the children's father, she is attached by her children and presents an impressive determination to keep them with her, to raise and support their education and care, to help them not to pass through the difficulties she had to face in her life. In the same time, when she asked for our support, she was overwhelmed by financial problems and difficulties in the relationship with her teenage daughter. Maria received both individual and group counseling, support in building a CV and applying for cleaning operator jobs. The ACSIS social worker guided her, explained the advantages of a working contract, provided help in each step of the process and she succeeded to identify and get a job, with working contract, as a cleaning operator, obtaining a significantly improved income. In the same time, Maria received support in understanding the challenges of adolescence, the particular changes and needs of this specific age, she learned to focus on the positive behaviors displayed by her teenage daughter, to increase communication and acceptance, genuine curiosity for the daughter's concerns, negotiate and establish mutually agreed upon rules. By the end of the assistance period (12 months) she declared: *"I am more patient now with my daughter, before I was focused only on her negative behaviors, now I am more attentive to her needs, I feel that by gradually knowing more about what she thinks and lives I can be more acceptant, I feel closer to her"*. Also: *"Participating at the workshops and meet other mothers in situations similar with mine gave me strength and courage, I said to myself: if others can do it, I can do it. I am grateful, I can have a good job and better take care of my daughters."* *Names have been anonymized.

CREATIVE WORKSHOP PROJECT

Through the Creative Workshop, we set out to create a safe environment, characterized by trust, mutual respect, acceptance, in which single mothers can feel included and supported, which provide opportunities to communicate, learn, acquire basic skills in tailoring, work-related responsibilities, to carry out meaningful work and contribute.

We organized weekly sessions during which the mothers, with the support of a tailoring instructor, learned to make textile toys, various products associated with the holidays, decorative items, greeting cards. The therapeutic nature of work and practical activities has been recognized for a very long time.

Occupational therapy activities are ways to **develop attention and initiative, increase self-confidence, bring the possibility of personal expression, develop group responsibility and cooperation, support the discovery of personal vocations.** By facilitating the acquisition of manual skills, we aim to develop respect for the results of their work, strengthen the ability to complete the work started, educate patience, respect the rules, cooperate with other people in order to achieve group work.

The sessions were also opportunities for socializing, sharing experiences and helping each other, the participating mothers often managing to develop friendships that extended beyond the activities organized by the association.



CREATIVE WORKSHOP PROJECT

MAIN RESULTS:

- ✓ 15 single disadvantaged mothers participated in the workshop activities, acquired basic tailoring and craft skills
- ✓ over 400 products were created within the activities
- ✓ 5 volunteers joined us in this project, participating alongside the mothers in the creation of various products
- ✓ The products were promoted in the online media, but also in various events: charity fairs, sales exhibitions within partner companies
- ✓ The funds obtained from the valorization of the products were used to support the beneficiary single mothers (material support consisting of food, hygienic products and financial support in order to cover the urgent needs of families)



CAMPAIGN "MOTHERS RAISING THEIR CHILDREN ALONE NEED HELP"



Within the Day V volunteering program, developed by BRD - Groupe Société Générale, the company's employees are encouraged to get involved in the Campaign "Mothers who raise their children alone need help".

Some of them, people who chose to lend a helping hand to those in need, donated to us, helped us provide monthly packages with food and basic hygiene products for the beneficiary mothers and their children, to financially support part of the families in order to partially cover some costs such as: rent, maintenance, utilities.



THE CAMPAIGN "DONATE KILOGRAMS FOR A GOOD CAUSE!"

KILOSTOP NUTRITION CLINIC supports our actions to prevent the separation of children from their families for more than 10 years. As part of the "Donate kilograms for a good cause!" campaign, for every kilogram lost by its patients, the clinic donates 2 lei to humanitarian organizations, ACSIS being one of them.

Starting from 2019, the **KILOSTOP JUNIOR CLINIC**, the only clinic specialized in nutrition for children and teenagers in Romania, joined the campaign, and children and teenagers who face eating disorders, patients of the clinic, can in the same way help a child to stay with his mother! Along with the support through donations in the campaign, the Kilostop Junior Clinic hosts a permanent exhibition with products made by mothers within the creative workshop, bringing to the knowledge of the patients the activities carried out by ACSIS.



CAMPAIGN "SUPPORT FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN"

IMPLANTOLOGY CLINIC DR. LORELEI NASSAR, sponsor and constant partner of our association over the last 10 years, carried out the "SUPPORT FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN" Campaign through which, for each intervention, a percentage of the proceeds were directed to the benefit of children supported by ACSIS.

The clinic also offers free dental treatment for children included in our programs. **IMPLANTOLOGY CLINIC DR. LORELEI NASSAR** also hosted a permanent exhibition of products made by mothers in the workshop, supporting our projects, bringing them to the knowledge of patients and inspiring collaborators and patients to contribute to the association's efforts to support vulnerable children and mothers.



MONTERRA CREȘTEM MONTESSORI – MONTESSORI SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN, with which we share the mission of creating solidary communities with the child at the center of their activity, joined our cause this year.



Through the campaign to collect funds and gifts for children from the ACSIS program initiated in December, Monterra Montessori School and Kindergarten chose to teach children about generosity, kindness, unconditional giving. The funds collected and the gifts prepared with love and care brought smiles and holiday joy to the children integrated in our projects.



"BEYOND FAILURE" event organized by BIZILIVETV

We are grateful to **BIZILIVETV**, who joined our cause this year, choosing to inspire, contribute and support our activities to prevent child separation. Through the generosity of the organizers, all proceeds from the "**BEYOND FAILURE**" event were donated to the benefit of mothers and children supported by ACSIS.

We gladly attended the event, where we learned about: how to turn failures into a personal or professional growth experience, to identify more precisely the causes of failures so that we do not repeat them, to apply techniques and methods by which we can overcome failures and challenging moments in life. Special Guests: Anca Maftai - Psychotherapist, Oreste Teodorescu - Journalist, Cerasela Rogen - Life Coach.



We happily participated in fairs and events with products produced in the creative workshop:

- "FLOWERS COME WITH THE SUN AND THE SUN WITH FLOWERS!" EVENT organized by National Museum of the Village "Dimitrie Gusti"

- "SAINT MARIA FAIR", organized by National Museum of the Village "Dimitrie Gusti"

- CHRISTMAS FAIRS organized by KPMG Romania and BRD Groupe Société Générale



"J'AI CHRISTMAS MARKET" organized by J'ai Bistrot Bucharest

The garden of J'ai Bistrot Bucharest was transformed for two days into the land of Santa Claus, becoming the warmest place in the city, where every participant could find gifts for their loved ones. Some of them chose toys and ornaments made by mothers at our workshop for this purpose.



JUNE 1'st - CHILDREN'S DAY

Great was the joy of the children at the Modeling Workshop, at the face painting, when receiving the gifts, celebrating together their day, June 1'st! They learned techniques of working with dough, trained their creativity and inspiration, proudly displayed their successful works. The face painting brought a lot of joy, playfully guiding us into the magical realm of imagination.



SANTA CLAUS AT ACSIS

We celebrated the end of the year together in a group meeting with the mothers and children supported in our projects, we sang carols, we discussed the importance of practicing gratitude, talked about things we are grateful for this year, about wishes for next year and we met Santa Claus who brought generous gifts for children and mothers!





Our warm THANKS goes to all the wonderful, generous people who have joined our cause – funders, sponsors, volunteers, partners – for the extremely valuable contribution of energy, time, abilities and resources who made our projects possible!



FUNDERS AND SPONSORS

U.S. EMBASSY IN ROMANIA

ASOCIAȚIA LUMEA PITICILOR

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BIZILIVETV

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CLINICA DE NUTRIȚIE KILOSTOP

CLINICA DE IMPLANTOLOGIE DR. LORELEI NASSAR

DENTISTS INTERNATIONAL S.R.L.

KILOSTOP JUNIOR S.R.L.

MONTERRA CREȘTEM MONTESSORI -ȘCOALA ȘI GRĂDINIȚA MONTESSORI

S.C. DIDEPIPE S.R.L.

SOCIETATEA CIVILĂ DE AVOCAȚI DUȚESCU ȘI ASOCIAȚII



**CONTRIBUTE WITH US, SUPPORT A CHILD TO GROW UP WITH HIS MOTHER!
HOW YOU CAN HELP:**

Individuals:

- Access <https://acsis.ro/en/donate-online/> and donate via PayPal
- Order and purchase products created within the ACSIS creative workshop
- Talk about us and inspire other people to contribute to our cause

Legal entities:

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



THANK YOU!

For additional information, you can write to us here:

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