

# INTEGRATED INTERVENTIONS TO FIGHT CHILD POVERTY IN ROMANIA

BY MARTINA RAYTCHINOVA



# CONCORDIA ROMANIA



We are an independent, international non-governmental organisation that has taken on the mission of supporting children, young people and families in need, towards a more independent and responsible life. In Romania, our projects are based in Bucharest, Ilfov, Prahova County (Ploiești and Ariceștii Rahtivani and in Dambovită (Odobesti).

In 30 years of activity in Romania, we have brought together specialists, donors, volunteers, initiative groups, we have developed new programmes and services to fulfill our mission and objectives.

We currently provide the following social programmes and services:

- ☐ care and education for children and youth in 5 **family houses** in Ploiești and Ariceștii Rahtivani;
- ☐ vocational education and vocational training (a **trade school**);
- ☐ **counseling** and **professional orientation** and **social housing** (51 places) in Ploiești and Bucharest;
- ☐ 1 **sheltered housing** and **workshops** for learning the skills of independent living in Bucharest;
- ☐ 3 **day centres** for children and **community services** in Ploiești and Odobesti;
- ☐ 2 **social enterprises** (one hostel in Bucharest and a bakery in Ploiești).
- ☐ **Primary School CONCORDIA**
- ☐ **CONCORDIA ACADEMIA** – professional training for practitioners in social field.

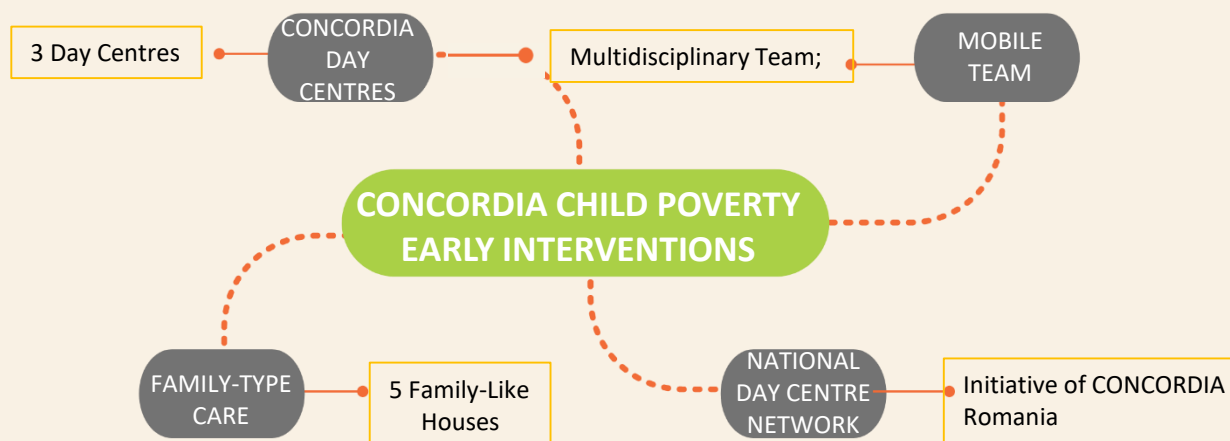


# CONCORDIA ROMANIA



## Children living in extreme poverty: Day Care Center Intervention

- prevention and reduction of family separation risk factors;
- focus on the individual basic competences (reading, writing, the competence to count and learn);
- tackling learning obstacles (insufficient access to food, clothes, supplies and support and a place to do homework), motivation to attend school regularly and developing a school perspective;
- supporting personal interests and abilities and capitalising on cultural resources (ethnic identity, language, traditions and history) through extracurricular activities;
- supporting children and parents in accessing health services;
- involvement of parents and expanding the possibilities of participation in the development of their children;
- strengthening parental resources to overcome problems by advising parents and therapeutic offers, and preventing the separation of children from their parents;
- developing professional perspectives with parents and young adults in employment services;
- reduction of absenteeism of participating children.



## Care leavers: The Wings 4 Youth Project

Has systematised for young people transitioning out of care towards independent life the social work instruments and the intervention. The W4Y project is an indicator of the need and importance of early intervention programs



## Wings4Youth Project Context

Acest Proiect Wings4Youth  
este finanțat prin Programul Drepturi, Egalitate  
și Cetățenie al Uniunii Europene (2014-2020)



- Research constantly shows that young people in the care system or leaving the system are **vulnerable** in many ways; many young people who grow up in residential care and leave care, start their lives on their own, unprepared.
- A study released in 2020 on young people exiting care between 2014-2017, in Romania reflected that 65.9% do not have a job when they leave care, 51% have unqualified jobs; 31% are not prepared/know how to identify an accommodation and 22% do not know how to find a job. 45.4 % exited care at the age of 18 and 21.9% at the age of 19 years old.

[\(http://andpdca.gov.ro/w/primul-studiu-national-despre-situatia-tinerilor-care-au-parasit-sistemul-de-protectie-speciala-din-romania/\)](http://andpdca.gov.ro/w/primul-studiu-national-despre-situatia-tinerilor-care-au-parasit-sistemul-de-protectie-speciala-din-romania/)

Wings4Youth Project is based on the fact that care leavers' chance to successful independence is built on the appropriate, timely and customized help received from various highly prepared professionals, employers' representatives and other care leavers. It highlights the need for early intervention and constant communication between youth, service providers and employers to ensure that young people are fully prepared to make the transition in a positive and sustainable way.

Parteneri:



## Wings4Youth Project

### Lessons learnt

Acest Proiect Wings4Youth  
este finanțat prin Programul Drepturi, Egalitate  
și Cetățenie al Uniunii Europene (2014-2020)



- Child and young people **participation** has a vital role in care network system and in the evolution of services;
- For successful youth, **well-trained care professionals** are required. They need to be focused on preparing young people specifically on life-skills, mentoring and job coaching, starting as soon as possible, no latest than 16 years old.
- SMEs become an extension of social services by creating a **mainstream practice** where young people can visit, doing practice placement, before exit care.

Wings4Youth Project proposed a joint venture between young people, professionals and SMEs which encourage and empower youth to participate and increase youth-friendly working environment. This will generate independent care leavers, who will successfully embrace labour market and independent life.

Parteneri:



# DAY CARE CENTERS

## An Early Intervention Model

%

### Context:

- In 2019, 36% of children in Romania were on the verge of poverty. It is the largest percentage in the UE;
- In Romania, 1 in 11 children go to bed hungry in the evening, while only 6% sometimes have enough food, and 3% never have enough food;
- Belonging to the Roma ethnic group increases by 37% the risk of a child being poor;
- The participation of Roma children in pre-school education is almost twice as low as that of other children (37 % compared to 63%).

Children face a **higher risk of poverty** and low or inexistent prospects for future. There is a clear need to interrupt the vicious circle of poverty by developing projects that can address simultaneously both child poverty and their access to quality education, additional support services and activities that strengthen relationships with parents, school performance and also to facilitate social integration. The Day Care Centres provide all this, while also offering support to their families.

### DAY CARE CENTRE INTERVENTION

Quality (early) Education;  
(Pre-) School education

Support the child in its  
family (Supporting the  
families as primary carers)

Support the parents to  
be good parents

We are currently working on The Impact Study on Day Centres, it will be published in December, 2021.

As this is a strategic development direction, we are now working on creating a National Day Centres Network.



# CONCORDIA'S DAY CENTER MODEL



## What is it That We Do & How we Work

- > Integrated strategy focused on care, educative and social support for children (3 y.+ ) during the day, counselling & support for their parents (parenting, job, health, housing);
- > Multidisciplinary team: nurse, social worker, speech therapist, pedagogue, social pedagogue, psychologist, child care provider, program director, art teachers, administration, vocational counselor.

- 3 CONCORDIA Day Centres;
- address a target group of over 130 children at risk of family separation, aged between 3 and 16, of which at least 60 Roma;
- More than 600 family members receive support annually through:

### Integrated services for children and their families:

- educational programs;
- leisure activities;
- medical assistance;
- job coaching and counselling;
- information sessions;
- psychological support and speech therapy;
- direct support in the community;
- one cooked meal daily;
- emergency support.

**Parent's school** – started in 2017, addressing children's parents that are involved in the day care centres; activities related to how to give their children time and understanding their educational and schooling activities; how to have a level of communication appropriate to the child's level.



# CONCORDIA'S DAY CENTER MODEL



## What is it That We Do & How we Work

The interventions are tailored according to the target group needs & interests:

1. Each child and their family are individually evaluated by the pedagogue and psychologist.

2. Established specific:

- intervention objectives
- detailed guidance on how to achieve them
- the intervention period;
- the responsible team.

3. The child is explained the role that each person has in carrying out the intervention and the next steps.

## How We Reach Out to Families & children in Need

By using a combination of on-site services and mobile teams.

## How We Cooperate With Them

- ✓ Through constant dialogue;
- ✓ By engaging them in all our efforts.



# NATIONAL DAY CENTER NETWORK



## For Children at Risk of Poverty

The National Network of Day Centres for Children at Risk of Poverty is a project initiated by the CONCORDIA Humanitarian Organisation and is undertaken at the level of the General Assembly of the CONCORDIA Humanitarian Organisation. Social & educational support in day centres for children and families is an important part of CONCORDIA Romania's activity and is also an engine for innovation and expansion.

Through this initiative, CONCORDIA empowers local authorities and NGOs to implement Day Centres that we can operate in partnership. Each partner will play his role and will have clear responsibilities. Our goal is to create a solid network that will truly make a difference in fighting poverty.

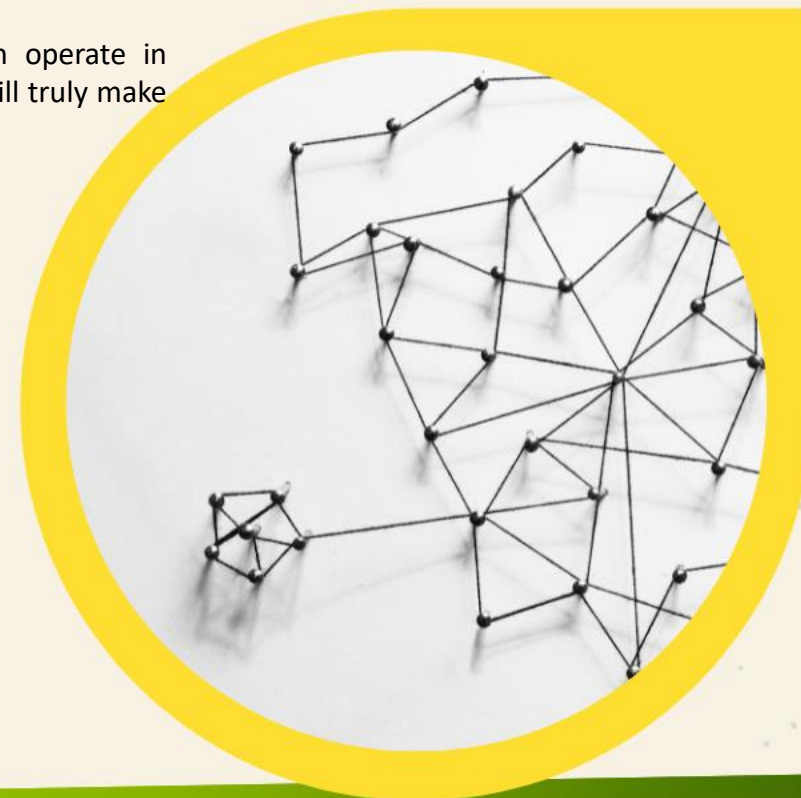
This project directly contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals:



The need for services for children and families at risk is estimated at national level at 25.6% of the total need for services (the second most important).

This project capitalizes on and builds upon the work of the previously funded CONCORDIA projects:

- Day Centres for Children and Family working in the poor neighborhoods of Ploiesti and in the rural area - Odobești Dâmbovița;
- Social franchise for day centres, as a potential future direction for the extension of the CONCORDIA model in Romania and outside Romania;
- Impact study developed by CONCORDIA on its own day centres;
- Theory of Change for Day Centres for children and family;
- CONCORDIA Academy with professional training programs for managers and practitioners.



# Q & A

Do You Have Any Questions?



# Thank You!

**Mag. Martina RAYTCHINOVA**  
**CONCORDIA Sozialprojekte**  
**International Programme Director**

`martina.raytchinova@concordia.or.at` |  
`www.concordia.or.at`