



IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF CONCORDIA'S DAY-CARE CENTERS IN ROMANIA

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This report concretizes the analysis of the impact of the day-care centers **Casa Alexandra** and **Casa Cristina**, implemented by **CONCORDIA Humanitarian Organization** in Romania.

The analysis refers to the impact on the first generations of beneficiaries (2013-2016) and aims to identify potential ways to improve the activity of the day-care centers. The text focuses on describing what was observed and develops some action recommendations for ongoing monitoring and impact assessments using the system of records we suggest.



CONTENT

1. Introduction

04

2. Description of CONCORDIA's intervention model within day-centres for children and families in need

06

Distinctive elements of the intervention of CONCORDIA Day-Care Centres **06**

The Intervention Model of the CONCORDIA Day-Centres for children and families in difficulty **07**

Key data regarding the activity of CONCORDIA Day-Centres **08**

Theory of Change for CONCORDIA's Day-Care Centres **10**

12

3. Methodology

Objectives **12**

Evaluation questions **12**

Principles **13**

Ethical aspects **14**

Limits **14**

16

4. Results

Context indicators **16**

Direct beneficiaries of the day-care centres **19**

Representations of beneficiaries and local actors **20**

- Educational impact educational **21**

- Impact on vocational level **27**

- Impact on social relationships **29**

- Impact on family relationships **31**

- Transversal impact at personal development level **36**

- Collaboration with local actors **39**

Transversal evaluations of the organization **40**

- Relevance - Sustainability - Effectiveness

46

5. General conclusions

6. Recommendations

50

General recommendations **50**

General recommendations matrix **51**

List of specific recommendations **52**

55

7. List of abbreviations

8. Glossary of terms

56

1

Introduction

H.O. CONCORDIA has developed two day-care centres in Ploiesti (Casa Cristina and Casa Alexandra) that target the local school-age population, especially from neighbourhoods with people at risk (such as Mimiui, Bereasca, Radu de la Afumați, Dallas, Bariera Bucharest, Bariera Unirii, Dorobanțu, Ghighiu, Nord Ploiesti, Obor, Rudului, Bolovan Cemetery). Day-care centres provide supervision and care to their direct beneficiaries, providing them with educational programs, health care, psychological counselling, personal development, leisure activities, vocational and academic guidance, etc. both to them and to their families (parents, legal guardians). The two day-care centres became functional in 2013 and 2015, respectively. A third day-care centre was opened in 2021 in Odobești (Dâmbovița). The activities of the two existing centres are detailed in the Inception Report, part of this set of reports that we provided to H.O. CONCORDIA.

The present report seeks to evaluate the impact of the day-care centres of the Humanitarian Organization CONCORDIA in Ploiesti. On the one hand, we are investigating the evolution of day-care centre beneficiaries from the first generations (from 2013-2016, for Casa Cristina and 2015-2017 for Casa Alexandra) - using personalized interviews and their files from CONCORDIA day-care centres, we document the process of assisting them with opinions of CONCORDIA staff and some local social actors involved in the processes relevant to CONCORDIA actions (stakeholders), adding also data illustrating the dynamics of the local context between 2013 and 2021.

Using this set of data sources, we put everything into the analysis model that includes the Theory of Change for Day-Care Centres used by the O.U. CONCORDIA and we arrive at five major conclusions, which are presented below synthetically, being detailed throughout the report and reinterpreted at the end of it:

→ **The overall impact of CONCORDIA day centres is positive** for the direct beneficiaries and increases with the extension of the period in which the assistance is present.

→ **The impact affects all spheres of life**, but the actions of CONCORDIA produce differentiated effects, more important in terms of education, professional route, health status, and less important in terms of the child's social relations.

→ **The positive impact is largely due to the integrated and personalized approach**, which is the key element of the intervention.

→ **The flexibility and adaptability of the interventions** to the needs of the beneficiaries is extremely important in ensuring the success of CONCORDIA day centres' activities.

→ It is practically impossible to quantify the level of impact and differentiate between the specific contribution of each of the actions and programs of CONCORDIA's day centres: **systematic monitoring is needed, including more careful recording of data on beneficiaries and their progress.** In the recommendations section, a monitoring tool is proposed, at the level of principles but also including indicators to be recorded permanently/periodically and specific ways of recording, whose integration can be achieved in any chosen IT solution.

→ **The impact of CONCORDIA goes beyond the beneficiaries**, their families and immediate communities, being probably present at the level of the entire Ploiești municipality, both at the institutional and community level.



The language used in this report seeks to avoid technical language. But sometimes they are necessary. The most concrete example is related to the impact assessment itself. We see CONCORDIA's day-care centres as a system of measures that serve the needs of the beneficiaries. Any system can be defined by its input and output parameters. This dry definition does not dehumanize the beneficiaries of CONCORDIA day-care centres, but only helps to communicate more quickly. Even though we use terms like "entries", we don't forget that we are dealing with people, with their preferences, needs and wants, that everyone is truly unique and has personalized needs.

However, in order to sometimes simplify the discourse and manage to get closer to the desired impact analysis, we sometimes discuss the beneficiaries of CONCORDIA day centres as "entries" into the system, who receive a series of "treatments" and present at the entrance and at the end certain "characteristics". For example, a child in a risk situation receives as treatment in CONCORDIA's day centre various educational services, psychological counselling, health education, professional guidance, etc.

According to the theory of change, all these "treatments" contribute to an "end state" that is better than the "end state" likely in the absence of the treatments. "Treatment" or "intervention", "initial state", "end state", "input" are essential elements of impact analysis and are established terms in organizational analysis, impact analysis and several other fields. We use them as such throughout the report.

The observed results are aggregated in the penultimate chapter in a series of conclusions by areas of the beneficiaries' lives and by areas of the intervention. The last chapter builds recommendations starting from the mentioned conclusions. The recommendations aim at ways to improve H.O. CONCORDIA's programs in accordance with the theory of change used and the benefits in terms of the development of those assisted (children, their families, the community), as well as the organizational development of CONCORDIA day-care centres.

For most of the chapters and subchapters that include results, we have included at their beginning, highlighted with a light blue background, some key conclusions. These are not detailed in that little summary, but are thoroughly explained in the body of the chapter or subchapter in which they are at the beginning.



2

Description

of CONCORDIA's intervention model within day-centres for children and families in need

2.1. Distinctive elements of the intervention of CONCORDIA Day-Care Centres

The intervention carried out within CONCORDIA's day-care centres has several characteristics that differentiate it from similar ones:

- **The integrated and personalized approach** – the proposed interventions target all the child's needs in terms of education, social protection, health, housing.
- **Intervention on three levels to improve the situation of children** - at the individual level (of the children), of their families and communities. The intervention is an integrated one with the child at the centre as an agent of change not only at the individual level, but also at the family and community level. The integrated intervention targets the child with all dimensions of his quality of life - education, health, social protection, family, social relations, standard of living.
- **Volunteering by former day-care centres' beneficiaries** is helping them develop civic skills and social capital.
- **Flexibility in the intervention** so that it can be changed according to new needs or opportunities identified.



2.2. The Intervention Model of the CONCORDIA Day-Centres for children and families in difficulty

01. Social

- A hot meal for the children in the center
- Housing support
- Food packages for families
- Support to obtain documents
- Support accessing social assistance facilities or rights

02. Educational

- Early education support
- Remedial education
- After school programs
- Artistic activities
- Sport activities
- Other recreational activities

04. Family

- Integrated approach based on identified needs
- Daily presence in the community
- School for Parents

03. Vocational

- Professional training for parents
- Support the access to basic education for parents and other adults in the community (**Second Chance** programs)
- Vocational counseling for children
- Vocational counseling for parents
- Placement on the labor market and job-coaching



Psychological / Speech therapy

- Counseling parents
- Counseling children



Medico-Sanitary

- Children's health education
- Parent health education
- Health monitoring
- Information campaigns

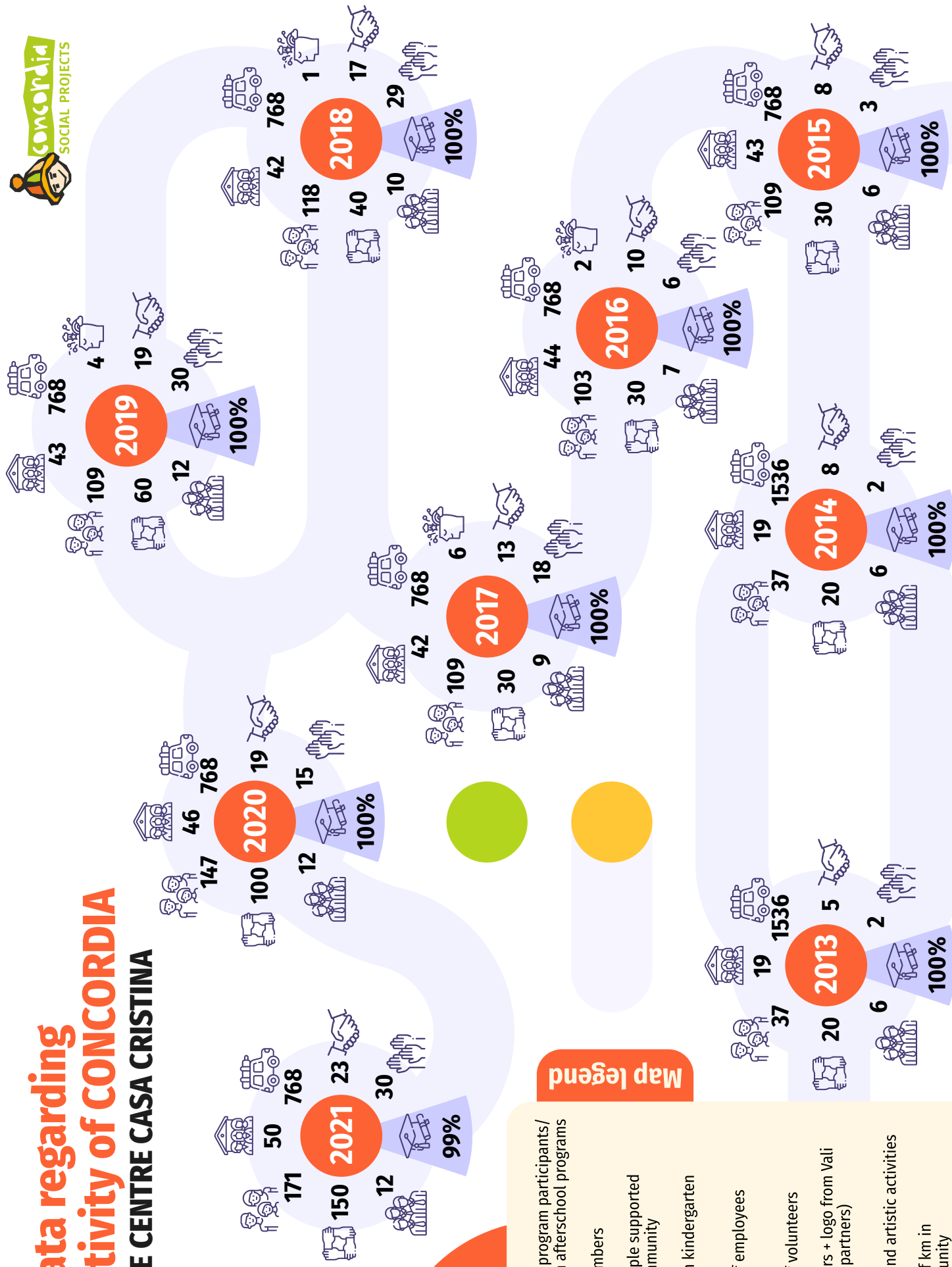


Community

- Support kindergartens and schools
- Partnerships with local authorities in the social field
- Mobile teams to identify needs

Key data regarding the activity of CONCORDIA

DAY-CARE CENTRE CASA CRISTINA

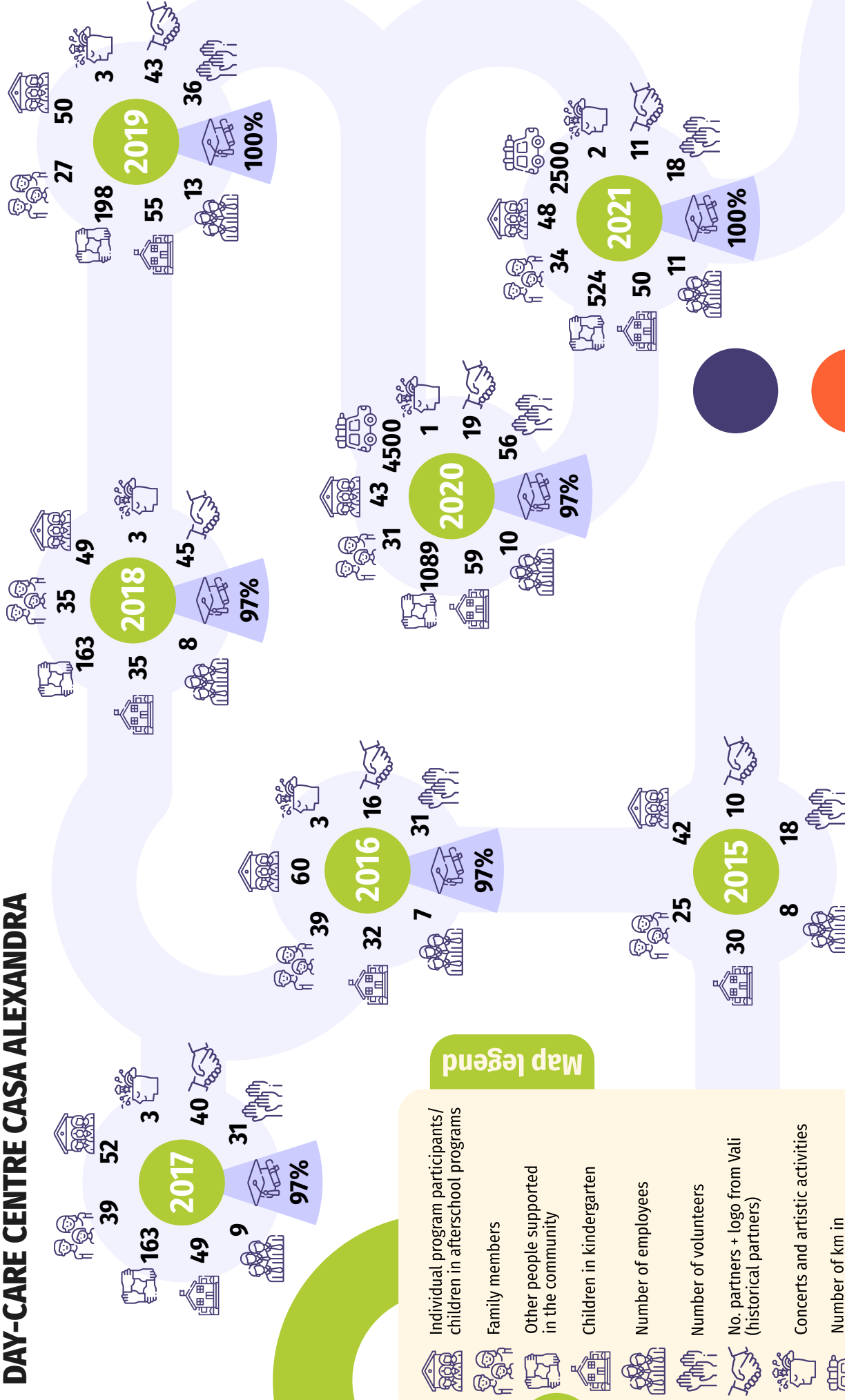


Map legend

- Individual program participants/children in afterschool programs
- Family members
- Other people supported in the community
- Children in kindergarten
- Number of employees
- Number of volunteers
- No. partners + logo from Vali (historical partners)
- Concerts and artistic activities
- Number of km in the community
- Graduation rate

Key data regarding the activity of CONCORDIA

DAY-CARE CENTRE CASA ALEXANDRA



Map legend

- Individual program participants/children in afterschool programs
- Family members
- Other people supported in the community
- Children in kindergarten
- Number of employees
- Number of volunteers
- No. partners + logo from Vali (historical partners)
- Concerts and artistic activities
- Number of km in the community
- Graduation rate

2.4. Theory of Change for CONCORDIA's Day-Care Centres

The whole process is subject to an approach dependent on the Theory of Change used by CONCORDIA day-care centres. We have discussed at length the premises and how to refine the theory of change of CONCORDIA's day-care centres in one of the previous reports dedicated to this purpose. Figure 1 illustrates the flows within CONCORDIA's day-care centres, graphically depicting the essential elements of the theory of change.

A few key findings summarize the knowledge about day-care centres our team has accumulated through direct and repeated interaction with H.O. CONCORDIA's staff:

- The project behind the day centres is a dynamic one, in the sense that its basic principles change over time, following, on the one hand, the changing philosophy of social services provided in contemporary societies and, on the other hand, the direct experience with the beneficiaries.
- The mechanisms of change are consistent with the organization's philosophy, which combines reactive and proactive positioning. This means that the H.O. CONCORDIA has a clear mission, but the methods of achieving the objectives are in perpetual adaptation to the existing conditions and to the way the staff perceives the social reality through direct contact with the beneficiaries and the existing ideas in society.
- Adaptation is driven by trends in the individualization of social service provision in contemporary Europe, by the postmodern conception of social policy, and by the use and pursuit of opportunities resulting from legislation and programs designed by public authorities. In most cases, the two sources are convergent, even if sometimes diachronic.
- There is a participatory approach, with a well-designed vision that beneficiaries are part of the intervention, and children, families and the community are involved at different stages of service delivery.
- The expected impact should be seen beyond the standard quantitative indicators.
- The expected impact should be assessed in terms of families and communities, not only in terms of children.
- The impact assessment must consider the two day-care centres in Ploiești as a whole, because the intervention is in fact shared.

Theory of change

Figure 1. Visualization of main flows implied by the theory of change



3 Methodology

3.1. Objectives

The objectives of the impact assessment of the two CONCORDIA day-care centres in Ploiesti - Casa Cristina and Casa Alexandra aim at:

01. Identifying activities and their elements that produce change for beneficiaries, groups or communities;

02. Identifying the key elements that contribute to the success of the day-care centres, as well as the main blockages and obstacles in implementation;

03. Formulation of recommendations for future actions in order to ensure the sustainability and replication of the activity of the day-care centres;

04. Identification of performance indicators to ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the progress of the activities carried out.

3.2. Evaluation questions

The evaluation of the activity of the day-care centres of H.O. CONCORDIA from Ploiești focused on effectiveness, relevance, sustainability and impact. For each of these criteria, a series of evaluation questions were established.



Relevance

→ Are the activities and immediate results of the day centres consistent with the original purpose and contribute to the achievement of the assumed objectives?

→ Do CONCORDIA's day-care centres respect all the processes for protecting the rights of the child? Are age and gender considerations considered in the provision of services?



Impact

→ Care sunt efectele activității centrelor de zi asupra integrării educaționale, vocaționale, sociale și familiale a copiilor beneficiari?

→ Care sunt schimbările înregistrate la nivelul familiei și comunității din care copiii beneficiari provin ca urmare a serviciilor oferite?



Effectiveness

→ What are the factors that explain success? Is there an added value of the integrated approach and what are the factors influencing the implementation of the activities? Which components of the activity carried out are the most (less) effective?

→ To what extent were the originally set objectives achieved?

→ What are the main factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?

→ Are there unplanned outcomes worth considering to address challenges in implementing the activity or to pursue in opening new locations?



Sustainability

→ Is the activity of the day-care centres replicable? Can it be fully replicated or only certain components? At what level (local, county, national) can this scaling be ensured? Are changes to the activity required so that it can be replicated?

→ What are the lessons learned at each level of intervention that should be considered for further implementation and replication of day-care centres?

3.3. Principles

The analysis focuses on (1) the direct beneficiaries, but also (2) the effects on families and the immediate community. We consider intended effects and unintended effects.

The initial intention was to use as a control group of children at risk from the communities where the beneficiaries are and those supported through other local initiatives, run by other NGOs. As we did not identify such initiatives, we focused on the comparison with those in the immediate community. In this sense, in the description of the results, we evaluate the views of relevant local actors about those who receive CONCORDIA's intervention through the day-care centres and those who do not access these services. The representations of the relevant social actors at the local level (social workers, teaching staff) allow a subjective comparison, but sufficiently informed to understand the difference between those who benefited from the services of the day centres and those who did not, even though they were in similar situations.

We add some factual data related to the evolution of schools and the city of Ploiesti during the time period covered by our analysis.

We documented the evolution of the beneficiaries as follows:

- 01.** We first chose a sample of beneficiaries from the years 2013-2016 of the two day-care centres.
- 02.** We selected 40 beneficiaries, 20 from each centre. Of them, we dropped 2, who turned out to be actually parents of other beneficiaries already included in the sample.
- 03.** For the 38 randomly selected beneficiaries, we studied in detail the files prepared by CONCORDIA.
- 04.** Then we resorted to discussions with CONCORDIA's staff that knows the situation of these beneficiaries.
- 05.** Where there were valid contact details and acceptance of discussion from beneficiaries or guardians of minor beneficiaries, we spoke with either the beneficiaries themselves or their guardians (parents).

The triangulation of the information allows the observation of the real evolution of the beneficiaries, which we can then compare with the data on the general evolution of children at risk from the reference communities.

We add the discussions with key actors in which we also addressed the situation of those who accessed the day-care centres for a very short period, to the extent that the key actors have such information. Similar information was collected from CONCORDIA's staff.

In order to evaluate the impact of the day-care centres at the city level, we studied the articles published in the local press in Ploiești between 2013-2021 and which refer to H.O. CONCORDIA. This analysis allows establishing the extent to which CONCORDIA day-care centres are present in the media's attention, either as a specific media interest or as a result of CONCORDIA's communication effort.

The impact at the community level and the replicability of the proposed models depend on the level of knowledge, and the mass media has the dual role of informant and mirror of topics of interest to the local community.



3.4. Ethical aspects

In all the interviews conducted, we ensured the anonymity of the interviewees, without prejudice to personal interests. This report does not disclose personal data, and does not make value judgments related to a specific beneficiary. The interview guides respected the ethical standards in force, formalized in laws or ethical codes. The research team ensured that all information about the research process and its results was fully understood by the participants. Throughout data collection, the researchers took an ongoing approach to consent issues, answering any questions from participants during/outside the interview. All the standards stated in the Statement of Commitment for "CONCORDIA Social Projects" partners regarding CONCORDIA's Child Protection Policy, as reflected in the Operational Manual of the Day-care Centres, have been respected.

The presentation of the results is done in such a way that the identity of the interviewees cannot be related to their statements, regardless of whether they are CONCORDIA staff, local actors or beneficiaries interviewed. In the case of the beneficiaries, when references are made to their words, we use acronyms that cannot be associated with the real name and avoid providing concrete details that could link the case to the exact identity of the people we are writing about.



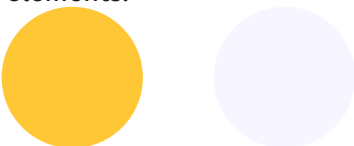
3.5. Limits

The impact assessment, as we have already stated, is a partial one, given that not all factors that could influence the beneficiaries can be controlled. In the absence of a study at the beginning of the activity of the two centres, and in the conditions where the records on the evolution of the beneficiaries are only partially systematic and to a large extent not digitized, the impact assessment uses methods to approximate the actual situation and, therefore, can lead to the estimation of an impact smaller than the actual one.

In the following, we briefly present the main methodological limitations of the present study.

These are also detailed throughout the report in the relevant sections, along with recommendations for overcoming them and more accurately determining the impact of the day-care centres.

The main limitations are grouped around four elements:



01. Lack of control groups, necessary to evaluate the added value of the program. Since the program does not have a basic study and we have not identified another service provider to carry out similar initiatives in Ploiești, we have adopted a series of complementary strategies based on comparing the evolution of key indicators with those of cities or counties with a similar level of development, analysis of retrospective representations of CONCORDIA staff, discussions with local stakeholders, drawing up a random sample of Day-care Centres' beneficiaries, analysis of individual beneficiary files. These strategies are detailed in the subchapter *Estimation in the absence of the study of base and control group* of this report.

02. The predominantly qualitative character of the present evaluation, which allows the identification of the overall impact of the programs of CONCORDIA's day-care centres, but not the differentiation of the added value of each program (e.g. job-coaching, psychological counselling, School for parents, etc.).

03. Timing of assessment: shortly after the intervention itself and when a large proportion of beneficiaries have not reached adulthood. This is a challenge for two main reasons: on the one hand, because it is difficult to assess the long-term impact and, on the other hand, through the lens of information mediation by the children's guardians (e.g. in the case of interviews).

04. Lack of information on beneficiaries. Among these we mention the information on:

- a. the trajectories of the beneficiaries after leaving the day-care centres, which makes it extremely difficult or even impossible to follow the graduates and, implicitly, to observe the effects of the intervention in the long term;
- b. school results. Their lack makes it difficult to evaluate the history of the beneficiaries and the progress made;
- c. the children's general state of health (aspects such as height, body weight, existing diseases, vaccinations);
- d. psychological assessment of children. These usually include information from the time children enter the day-care centres, and records of children's progress and development until they leave day-care centres are less detailed, which makes it difficult to quantify the apparently positive impact of psychological counselling.
- e. relationships outside the family, analyses of satisfaction among children and their families.
- f. last but not least, contact details not being updated, which meant that a significant number of beneficiaries could not be contacted.



Beyond the possibility of accessing the information about the beneficiaries at any time, another important advantage of the systematic, digital registration is the avoidance of the dependence on the human resource and its ability to remember the situation of each beneficiary even after leaving the centre, as well as the risk that this information becomes unavailable with a possible departure of the staff.

4 Results

4.1. Context indicators

- For the analysed period, there are no major fluctuations in the situation of the beneficiaries themselves and the area they come from. The increase in income observed at the local level is unlikely to have been massively reflected in the incomes of the families of origin.
- However, it is likely that, soon, the beneficiaries of CONCORDIA's day-care centres will present a relatively more pronounced risk situation than the beneficiaries of the past: the increase in social and income inequalities places the social blanket from which they come at a greater distance from the rest of society than in the case of past beneficiaries.
- Prahova is the county that has experienced a fairly sharp drop in school dropouts during the analysed period. It is possible that part of this decline comes from the multiplier effects of the actions of CONCORDIA.

The aggregated indicators describe the context in which the action of CONCORDIA day centres occurs. We thus have information on the dynamics of a set of relevant indicators, in Ploiești/Prahova and in comparable areas, in order to be able to identify the potential impact of CONCORDIA and understand the action of day centres in the societal context in which they evolve.

We considered what is happening in Prahova compared to Brașov, Cluj, Argeș and Sibiu. Similarly, we compared Ploiești with Pitești, Sibiu, Cluj and Brașov. The normally privileged comparison is the one at locality level, but the availability of figures means that, in fact, we have rather a comparison of the county context. For two of the counties that we consider as control counties (Cluj and Brașov), the county residence groups more than half of the resident population, the dynamics at the county level being most likely a fairly faithful reflection of what is happening in the capital city. In Argeș and Sibiu, the situation is similar to Prahova, with the municipality housing approximately a quarter (slightly more in Sibiu) of the county's population. The greatest similarity is between Prahova and Argeș, but in terms of the size of the cities, Ploiești is more similar to Sibiu, and in terms of economic development, Prahova is closer to Brașov and Cluj.



It is important to take the county into account anyway, because everything that happens in the municipality of residence is also determined by the county context, just as what happens in CONCORDIA's day-care centres is also influenced by what happens in the locality and the county in where they are located.

The context elements that interest us are related to the dynamics of the child population, the standard indicators that define the economic stability of society (unemployment, income level), school results and schooling itself (which is the focus of the O.U. CONCORDIA intervention), the dynamics of benefits / social benefits related to the child, as well as income inequality (indicator for the need for intervention). In this section we avoid giving many concrete figures, but we describe the main trends observed in the context surrounding the day-care centres and discuss the consequences that the observed context has on the beneficiaries of O. U. CONCORDIA and the activity of the day centres as a whole.

The two day-care centres have as their fundamental object of interest the children, whom they support in their development. As explained in the introduction to this report, they constitute "inputs" to the system. But they are only part of the possible "inputs". Like them, other at-risk children who either do not apply, or who apply but are not accepted in the day-care centres due to a lack of places, can enter the day-care centres.

The dynamics of potential entries is the first aspect of interest to understand the positioning of CONCORDIA centres in the context in which they operate. If we imagine day-care centres as a place where services are provided for a flow of beneficiaries, we are primarily interested in having an overview of the dynamics of those who might come to the day-care centres. Ideally, we would have a more accurate estimate of the number of children at risk at neighbourhood level. This will be possible following the 2022 Population Census, being therefore useful in the subsequent monitoring carried out by CONCORDIA's day-care centres. The 2022 census, even if at a later date than the analysed period, would also be useful to estimate the population of children per neighbourhood in previous years. As these data are not currently available, in order to estimate the dynamics during the period of interest for this report (2013-2021), we use the available data and first look at the number of children in the entire municipality of Ploiești and the corresponding figures for Prahova, considering their dynamics.

The observations deriving from the available figures emphasize a relative constancy of the number of children in the county, a trend common to the four counties used for comparison.

From this point of view, if the structure of the child population remained unchanged, there was no additional pressure to help children at risk or a decrease in the number of children who could have been helped.

The observations deriving from the available figures emphasize a relative constancy of the number of children in the county, a trend common to the four counties used for comparison. From this point of view, if the structure of the child population remained unchanged, there was no additional pressure to help children at risk or a decrease in the number of children who could have been helped. The observation is important to explain the dynamics of the number of requests to CONCORDIA day-care centres. According to the staff of the two day-care centres, the analysed period is characterized by an influx of registration requests coming to Casa Cristina and then to Casa Alexandra. As the number of children in the county/ municipality remains constant, this influx cannot be generated by simple changes in the volume of the population of potential entries. Therefore, it is most likely an effect of the good management of the image of the two day-care centres in the local communities and the increase in their notoriety, probably also based on the efficiency of the two. Obviously, visibility, efficiency and local recognition must be proven. However, anticipating the results in the following chapters, they are and were present throughout the analysed period.



The next step for estimating some transformations in potential inputs consists in identifying possible changes in the structure of the population of children. Without having information broken down within reference counties, it is difficult to estimate an exact answer to this question. A few collateral clues, however, allow us to draw a general conclusion. On the one hand, we are dealing with an increase in salary income. This happens in all 4 control counties as well as in Prahova, keeping these counties among the richest in Romania, except for Bucharest and Ilfov (Lupu, 2018, graph 2, page 406)¹. This aspect is also reflected in the evolution of the number of employees, which remain practically the same in counties and municipalities, with the exception of Cluj, where the respective figure is increasing.

At the same time, the relative poverty rate is increasing (INS, 2019, p. 167, fig. 6.8)². The phenomenon is observed in the regions that include Argeş, Braşov, Sibiu and Prahova, but not in the North-West, where Cluj County is located.

In other words, incomes rise for those who work, but remain low and perhaps even fall for those at the bottom of society.

Under these conditions, it is most likely that, although the number of potential beneficiaries of CONCORDIA day-care centres does not vary over time, the distance between them and the rest of society deepens. For the analysis of the impact of the day-care centres on the original beneficiaries, this does not bring fundamental changes, because it cannot retroactively change their situation.

The implications are, however, related to the current beneficiaries, against whom CONCORDIA's effort needs to be bigger, given that they are further away from the rest of society.

In other words, the distance between the current beneficiaries and the rest of society is greater than it was between the 2013-2016 beneficiaries and society back then. Hence the need for greater effort in supporting current beneficiaries.

In addition, we are witnessing a decrease in the number of children in recent years, as well as in the marriage rate. In other words, it is expected that in a few years, **the potential beneficiaries of CONCORDIA to be slightly fewer in number, but in a more serious risk situation.** The decrease in the number of potential beneficiaries does not change things from the point of view of the intervention, nor of the services' capacity, since the number of applications exceeds the current capacity anyway.

Combined with the deepening of the distance between social strata, however, we have a signal that the staff of CONCORDIA will soon have to deal with children in a slightly more difficult situation than the beneficiaries of the past.

¹ Lupu, L. (2018). DISTRIBUȚIA SPAȚIALĂ A SĂRĂCIEI ÎN ROMÂNIA ASPECTE ȘI INEGALITĂȚI SOCIOECONOMICE. *Revista Română de Sociologie*, 29.

² INS. (2019) Tendințe Sociale, insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/field/publicatii/tendinte_sociale.pdf.

Moving the discussion to the sphere of school results, it is worth noting that, among the analysed counties, Prahova is the only one that has experienced a substantial drop in premature school dropouts. During this time, the teaching staff at the secondary level remains practically constant, but steadily increases at the primary level. In other words, incomes increase, the number of teachers increases, dropouts decrease. Apparently, the decrease in dropouts could be attributed to the other two phenomena (increase in income and the number of teaching staff). However, in all other control counties relatively similar to Prahova, incomes increase, the number of teaching staff increases, but dropout does not decrease. It is likely that in Prahova there is something that changes the abandonment. We chose the four control counties so that they were similar to Prahova, but not having an intervention similar to the one carried out by O.U. CONCORDIA in Ploiesti. Therefore, it is likely that the decrease in school dropouts is also at least partially caused by CONCORDIA's day-care centres.

4.2. Direct beneficiaries of the day-care centres

According to CONCORDIA reports, **between 2013 and 2020, the day-care centres had a total number of 604 child beneficiaries in the activities carried out, and 255 families (with almost 1000 members) were supported through direct long-term services.** CONCORDIA's day-care centres provide access to social services annually for 72 children aged between 6 and 16 (36 in each centre) and their families (approx. 49 families). In addition to the socio-educational services offered to the children who attend the activities of the Day Centres and their families, the mobile team also offers services to other families in the respective communities, serving approximately 800 beneficiaries annually. (CONCORDIA, 2020)

Based on the reconstituted information, made available by CONCORDIA's day-care centres team, during 2013-2016, we identified 308 unique beneficiaries (children). We rebuilt the database so that for each of these unique beneficiaries we have on record the month of entry into the day-care centre, the month they were last registered, the number of months they appear to be on record in the database, the age at entry into the day-care centre, gender (boy/girl).

However, the decrease in school dropouts is accompanied by a decrease in the graduation rate in the national assessments, much more pronounced than that observed in the control counties. It is not impossible that the latter is precisely due to the decrease in school dropouts. Testing the hypothesis, however, exceeds the scope of this report (requires extensive research work). For this report, it is important to remember that we have to judge the results of students from CONCORDIA day-care centres in the context of a general decrease in dropouts in the county, but also a decrease in graduation in national assessments. In the chapter where we discuss educational impact, these two processes are considered in the evaluations made.

Table 1 illustrates the dynamics of the basic indicators of the population of beneficiaries of the day-care centres. The average age at entry remained practically unchanged, but with a slight tendency to decrease³. There are lower lengths of time spent in day-care centres by the 2014 and 2015 cohorts (and here some records may actually be missing). Girls generally enter the system at younger ages than boys and spend more months in day care centres.

³ The higher average in 2019 is due to entries that are likely of very young parents or erroneous entries in the monthly slips. We kept the information in the database, without correcting it by confronting CONCORDIA's staff, because otherwise all the nearly 8800 records would have had to be confronted manually.

THE YEAR OF THE 1ST REGISTRATION IN THE DAY-CARE CENTRE	AVERAGE AGE AT ENTRY	AVERAGE AGE AT EXIT	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF YEARS SPENT IN THE DAY-CARE CENTRE
2013	10	18	approx. 5 years & 5 months
2014	10	14	approx. 2 years & 8 months
2015	10	15	approx. 2 years & 7 months
2016	6	12	approx. 3 years & 5 months
2017	9	13	approx. 3 years
2018	9	12	approx. 2 years
2019	14	16	approx. 8 months
2020	10	11	4 months

Table 1. Estimates of age at entry into CONCORDIA day-care centres, age at exit* and length of time spent in CONCORDIA day-care centres

* "exit" is the age at the most recent record. For beneficiaries who had not yet left the day-care centre in December 2020, the estimates indicate how long they had actually been within the system. That is why the time spent in the system is underestimated, and the underestimate is greater for beneficiaries who entered the day-care centre more recently.

4.3. Representations of beneficiaries and local actors

In what follows, we combine the representations of the social actors with whom we spoke with those of the beneficiaries and with the analysis of the files of the latter. On the one hand, we extract from the interviews with local actors' elements that provide information about the impact of CONCORDIA and about the way the day-care centres programs are run. On the other hand, we describe the trajectories of several beneficiaries. For reasons of respect for their confidentiality, we have chosen to anonymize their real names in the following presentation.

To illustrate the impact brought by CONCORDIA's programs, we have organized the material into life stories that deal one by one with the evolution from the point of view of the educational route, professional integration, social relations and family life, the main axes

considered by this impact study. Then we look at the transversal impact, addressing psychological, medical-sanitary and life satisfaction aspects, in other words those aspects that contribute to the integration of all areas of life and which constitute, at an integrative level, the development of individuals as independent beings, biologically functional and viewed through the lens of happiness, of the subjective well-being that they experience.

For some of the case studies considered, the sources include their files at CONCORDIA, backed up by accounts of CONCORDIA staff. For a quarter (9 beneficiaries), we also conducted direct interviews with the beneficiaries themselves (3 cases) or with their family (the rest of them).

The subchapter is organized by types of impact, to highlight CONCORDIA's action in distinct areas. In the chapters dedicated to conclusions and recommendations, we adopt a perspective that also allows the overall evaluation of CONCORDIA's intervention.



Educational impact

It can be noted:

- A substantial impact of CONCORDIA's day-care centres on school dropout.
- A higher impact among beneficiaries who spent a longer time in CONCORDIA's day-care centres.
- The need for a better recording and systematization of available information about the beneficiaries of day-care centres.

The impact of the educational services offered in CONCORDIA's day-care centres is perceived on all three levels of the intervention:



AT INDIVIDUAL LEVEL (CHILDREN): by reducing school dropout and early school leaving, improving school results;



AT FAMILY LEVEL: by making parents more responsible and more involved in the school life of children, raising awareness of the importance of education and offering desirable models to the younger members of the family;



AT COMMUNITY LEVEL: educational units benefited from support for improving the infrastructure and the quality of the educational act, as well as for working with children with educational deficiencies and/or communication disorders, managing to reduce the marginalization and discrimination of children from vulnerable groups, the incidence of cases of school violence. At the same time, there was an increase in participation in preschool education.

The impact of the educational services offered in CONCORDIA day-care centres is considered by the teaching staff to be relatively important, especially in the case of children with educational deficiencies, those with delays in mental development, with difficulties in understanding and speaking. Although we are talking about small steps, they are big in relation to the initial state of the children, proving a visible impact at their level. In other words, although developmental delays remain, they are smaller than they would be without CONCORDIA's intervention.

The teachers interviewed positively evaluated the role of the staff and volunteers of CONCORDIA's day-care centres in supporting the beneficiaries to complete their homework and fix certain notions. The aforementioned teachers believe that **the activities in the day-care centres are very useful for children with learning difficulties**, especially since there is no time in the classroom to work individually with these students and there are no support teachers.



It is a great support for the family. The fact that the child is being supervised while doing the homework, in learning ... it helps. Most of those who come from underprivileged families cannot benefit from effective support at home, constant help. The parents are also outdated."

- TEACHER

The teachers interviewed appreciate that the participation of children with learning difficulties/ less developed intellect in the activities of CONCORDIA's day-care centres contributes to **increasing their promotability** and keeping them in mainstream education.

”

Regarding the child who has been attending since the preparatory class, he has a limited intellect, but with the support of the teachers (from Casa Alexandra) he succeeded and knows now how to read...I would say...cursive. He manages to write from dictation relatively correctly. Not doing so good at math, at making correlations and having logical thinking. But compared to how it would have been if unsupervised, there are improvements. At the end of first grade he partially knew the alphabet.”

- TEACHER

Box 1. **Educational impact -** **Case studies (1)**



The DOT family enrolled several children in the day-care centre. Large family, with just a few parents, living at the limit of subsistence, in a space that can be described as precarious housing. The starting level of the children in our sample, i.e. the level at day-care entry, was generally below the average for their age in terms of both educational attainment and psychological development.

During the period of participation in CONCORDIA services, the progress recorded and documented in the "educational plan" is constant, but for two of the brothers, the gap with their co-generational peers has been maintained. Existing records retain almost no third-party records of educational progress, such as school indicators associated with grades. Also, there are no indications regarding the subsequent trajectory of those who left the day-care centre (upon graduation from the 8th grade). It is remarkable, however, that all three members of the DOT family that we included in the reference sample graduated the 8th grade.

The reconstruction of their academic route was achieved by studying the media and administrative sources that could be identified and the accounts from the interview with a family member. One of the brothers is enrolled in one of the technological high schools in the city, on the short-term professional route (three-year education). Another managed to graduate high school and enrol in tertiary education, benefiting from the advantage of affirmative policies for the disadvantaged category he belongs to. Its evolution is an obvious case of success in the material conditions of the family and with the history of parents without school education. Moreover, the educational success was in fact decisively generated by CONCORDIA: according to his own words, he did not intend to register for the baccalaureate exam, but intended to go work abroad. The change of option took place at the insistence of the day-care centre staff, with whom he was in contact and with whom he still maintains permanent contact. Besides, today, his main regret in life is that he didn't learn more at the right time. The third brother did not go to school to upper secondary. The followed route is a professional one, prioritizing the need to help the family financially.




ELA comes from a modest family with 4 children, with a brother with a criminal record (for robbery). Until 2017, the family's income sources were represented by the father's salary and children's allowances, and from 2017 the mother's salary was also added. The social survey notes that the house had running water and electricity, but there was no bathroom. The father was more involved in the activities of the day-care centre.

ELA took part in the activities of the day-care centre, standing out in the extracurricular activities (dances, choir), recorded a positive evolution materialized in the completion of the gymnasium cycle and enrolment in the high school education, which she is going to complete. ELA's participation in the activities of CONCORDIA day-care centre motivated the parents of a cousin (EMA; both primary school graduates, employed) to also enrol her in the day-care centre as an alternative to the preparation activities for the aptitude test.

She passed the national assessment, attended the high school courses she graduated from and is currently employed at a factory in Ploiesti.

CAM is a young man about whom we could not gather complete information. His case appears to be an unsuccessful one and is worth relating in order to understand the difficulties faced by the day-care centres' teams. CAM was a beneficiary of one of CONCORDIA's day-care centres for two years. His family was poorly educated: the father had never attended school; the mother had completed 6 grades. The parents, moreover, never participated in the activities of the day-care centre. In addition, the social survey noted that they do not place much value on education, preferring to live on social assistance.

CAM came to CONCORDIA's day-care centre at an adolescent age, but with great deficiencies in terms of school preparation. After a year, when he was in the 7th grade, which he was repeating, he showed little interest and motivation for school and was unable to write, read or count. Leaving the day-care centre was determined by the high number of school absences. CAM and his family could not be reached (the contact phone was most likely outdated and we have not identified another). The lack of online records, including those from national tests, suggests that CAM did not complete 8 grades, but we cannot guarantee the accuracy of this estimate.



The analysis carried out in 2020 by CONCORDIA⁴ indicates the good academic results of children who benefit from the services of the day-care centres for the school year 2018/2019 and the first semester of the school year 2019/2020. Thus, 77% of primary school children finished the first semester of 2020 with Very Good and Good results. In the 2018/2019 school year, the percentage of primary school children with Very Good and Good grades was 68%. In the case of secondary school children, 71%, respectively 75% of them finished the first semester of 2020, respectively the 2018/2019 school year with grades higher than 8.

⁴ CONCORDIA Romania (2020). The social and economic situation of the beneficiaries of the CONCORDIA Day-Care Centers www.concordia.org.ro

Box 2.

Educational Impact – Case studies (2)



TIA's case takes us into another kind of family problem. The father has a disability due to illness and is bedridden. The mother is a housewife with little education. When accepted in CONCORDIA's day-care centre, TIA was already in the fifth grade. The school evaluations are recorded in her file in the form of copies of the grade book and only cover the 2nd, 6th and 8th grade. The information is sufficient to observe a downward trajectory of grades before entering the day-care programs, when ratings drop from Good/Very Good to Satisfactory/Good between 2nd Grade and 3rd (a trajectory that is not unnatural), and then to a generalized Satisfactory in 4th Grade, which constitutes already indicative of a strong downward trend.

After enrolling to CONCORDIA's day-care centre, we have the 5th grade assessments, at the end of which the overall average is around 6.50, dropping to about 6.30 in 6th grade and 5.90 in 8th grade. TIA completes secondary school, but no longer continues education in other forms of schooling. The information gathered about TIA leads to the conclusion that she did not integrate into the labour market, nor did she experience a marriage immediately after completing secondary school. The assessments made at the admission in CONCORDIA's day-care centre note that TIA has a reduced learning capacity. The personalized educational program seeks to close the gap with her peers, but annual reports note that TIA "sneaks" out of the activities at the day-care centre, and is reluctant to school orientation. The positive impact consists in the completion of secondary school studies avoiding repetition, but the acquisition of skills suffers, and further education does not take place. The usefulness of non-repetition is questionable. Perhaps a year of repetition could have helped her catch up with her peers, giving her a slight edge. On the other hand, the material state of the family and the conditions in which she grew up were factors favouring school dropout even earlier.

VIO comes from a large family. The parents are married, the mother is a housewife and takes care of the children and the household, and the father is employed, his salary representing the main source of income for the family, along with state allowances and supplementary allowance. The children have a good relationship and support each other, including in the day-care centre, in the activities of which 3 of the brothers participated - VIO attended CONCORDIA's day-care centre since its opening, and the other two brothers joined later and still participate in the activities.

Initial psychological assessment notes that VIO is age-appropriately developed, has a rich vocabulary, but a slight difficulty in understanding complex instructions and messages. The child is emotionally balanced, shows resistance to frustration and a generally good affective mood. The siblings joined the day-care centre with an age-specific developmental level, emotionally balanced and without behavioural disorders. The children participated in extracurricular activities (choir, karate, dances) and, thanks to their good school results, also went on trips. As the children's mother reports, the trips were a strong motivating factor for the children. At the same time, activities were carried out in which parents were also involved - making greeting cards, painting Easter eggs. According to the mother, the youngest girl "became more responsible, started to be more serious because the ladies told her that she was attentive and helped her" (..) "and she also improved her grades". The eldest girl consistently achieved good school results and the evolution of the school results in the 5th - 7th grades indicates an improvement of her knowledge. Thus, from an average in her grades of around 7.5 at the end of the 5th grade, she reached around 8.5 at the end of the 7th grade and got over 8 as an average in the national assessment. After passing the aptitude exam, she continued her studies at the high school level, and after completing the baccalaureate exam, she was accepted as a student in a university.

It is to be appreciated by all the local actors interviewed (teachers, social workers, social assistants) that the intervention of CONCORDIA's day-care centres has contributed to **the decrease in school dropout** in the case of children who attend their activities.

Incentives for beneficiaries to have good school attendance and results include the rewards offered (school trips, various items – e.g. bicycle) and the rule that the accumulation of absences can lead to the withdrawal of the support offered. The possibility of going on trips is conditioned by the school results and is an additional motivation for the beneficiaries of CONCORDIA's day-care centres. The withdrawal of support and the impossibility of participating in the activities of the day-care centres as a result of the high number of absences is a factor that determines many of the children to have **good school attendance**. For them, CONCORDIA's day-care centres mean another model, a getaway from the community, another kind of play, but also a hot meal, clean clothes, shoes. However, many of the day-care centres' departures before the completion of the secondary school cycle are caused by the accumulation of absences by the child⁵. For them, it is necessary to work harder and by using other methods to keep them in the system.

In the representation of the teachers interviewed, participation in the activities of CONCORDIA's day-care centres led to the **empowerment of parents**, most of them making efforts to take their children to the day care centre, some of them even from great distances. According to social workers, as a result of enrolling children in day-care centres, parents developed a closer relationship with the school and began to realize the importance of school education for the children's future.

”

School dropout has decreased for those who go to CONCORDIA day-care centres. Children moved out of the neighbourhood, families became more responsible. In Mimi, children go to school more often, the neighbourhood has developed, employability raised amongst parents”

- SOCIAL WORKERS, LOCAL LEVEL

The teachers interviewed and those from public institutions with responsibilities in social inclusion share the view that the involvement of parents in school life has increased also as a result of the requests regarding the monitoring of absences and school results from CONCORDIA's day-care centres. Monitoring of attendance and school results is done permanently by the day-care centres, but this was also thanks to the involvement of parents who must request these records from the educational units where the children are enrolled.

”

The mother is very involved. What impressed me so much was that every day or every 2 days she would wait for me as I was leading the children out of school and she would ask about how disciplined was her child on that day and how the child behaved during the lessons. They probably had a monitoring task from the home side, to keep in touch with the teaching staff and show an interest in the child's evolution. There was a condition: we offer support but also you as parents must show that you support the children and take interest in them.”

- TEACHER

⁵ The data in the Excel files and those in the beneficiary files do not include information on what happens to the beneficiary after leaving CONCORDIA's day-care centre and often not even the reasons for leaving the day-care centre.

The teaching staff and the children's parents believe that the activities carried out during the holidays had a beneficial impact on the children who stepped out of a family environment characterized by a combination of unfavourable factors: poor education, very low incomes, low-quality housing, strained family relationships, often marked by violence, etc. Participating in extracurricular activities during the holidays led to skills training and knowledge accumulation, while providing a safe and **constructive alternative to spending free time**.



Two years ago, they also carried activities during the holidays. A mother said to us: «You can see on her, ma'am, that she came to Alexandra all summer.»”

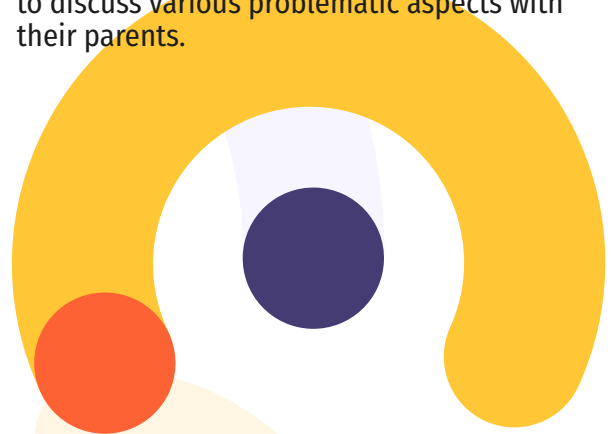
- TEACHING STAFF

According to the representatives of local public institutions with a role in social inclusion, the exposure to the model promoted by CONCORDIA day-care centres in which education plays a central role, the educational support given to the beneficiaries and the conditioning of its granting on participation and school results, made many of the children value a lot more the school. Participation in the activities of CONCORDIA's day-care centres showed them "another world" characterized by other values, behaviours to which they could only access if they had good participation and school results. The long exposure to education and the activities of CONCORDIA day-care centres had a positive impact on the number of years spent in the educational system, with many of the children completing the upper secondary level (high school/vocational school) and even the tertiary level (university).

“Some of the children began to see more than what they could see in the family and started to change. There are now more of them who go to high school/vocational school and even college.”

- SOCIAL WORKERS, LOCAL LEVEL

The teaching staff organized activities at CONCORDIA's day-care centres in which they involved the entire class of students (not only those who were direct beneficiaries of the day-care centre) but also other teaching staff. These had the role of **strengthening relationships between students and reducing the marginalization** of those who were direct beneficiaries of day-care centres. At the same time, there were also activities carried out within the Parents' School at which teachers were invited. These allowed teachers to get to know the children's family situation better and to discuss various problematic aspects with their parents.



“I think I talked with the child's mother about whether we can do an activity to make mărțișoare, we received a favourable response, we went there... I even trained my colleagues from other classes who do not have children at CONCORDIA. It was an activity with the whole class. She participated with her colleagues and mothers. It was a meeting between parents - teaching staff, about the difficulties they encounter at home - within the School of Parents.”

- TEACHER

CONCORDIA offers support to the kindergarten in Mimiștea through one of its employees who participates in the daily activities alongside the kindergarten teacher. Complementary, CONCORDIA provides support for the renovation of the kindergarten and the provision of school supplies. The set of these measures, in the opinion of CONCORDIA's staff, has contributed to increasing the number of children attending kindergarten and, in the long term, **increases children's chances of school integration**.



We don't have kindergarten children, but we send a specialist every day to Grădinita in Mimiui, who offers them support, including snacks, teaching materials. (...) It was necessary [to send this specialist] because since 2015 we realized that adapting to the school environment is very difficult because they did not go to kindergarten. From 4 children in 2015, now there are 28-29 children at the Kindergarten in Mimiui.”

- INTERVIEW WITH CONCORDIA'S MANAGEMENT STAFF



Impact on vocational level

→ The vocational impact is difficult to be seen at the level of the beneficiary children and quite little observed at the level of the parents.

→ There is an essential challenge that vocational counselling must face by adjusting to the immediate reality: the temptation to work abroad, often materialized through immigration.

One of the services of CONCORDIA's day-care centres is that of vocational counselling. Based on the evaluations from the educational activities and the children's preferences, they are advised about the professional route they can follow. The existing files at the day-care centres do not include records about the school, professional, and family history of the beneficiaries that would allow the identification of the socio-educational impact at their level. Vocational counselling has the role of indicating various opportunities for further employment.

Of the files analysed, of those who had left the system upon completion of general school and for whom we have information, the majority attended a high school or a

vocational school (in the case of Casa Alexandra, from the files analysed, of the 12 children who are over 14 years old, 7 attended/ are currently attending the courses of a high school / vocational school). Only a small number of those who benefited from the services of the day-care centres also attended tertiary education (university or post-secondary).

However, we must bear in mind that the day-care centres have been operating for 8 and 6 years, respectively, which means that many of the beneficiaries have not yet reached the age when they go to college, post-secondary school or vocational school. In addition, education being recurring⁶, some may return to education after internships spent outside it, as employees, entrepreneurs, housewives, volunteers, parents, etc.

⁶ In the contemporary world, educational paths are no longer linear, but involve permanent exits and returns to educational systems. (Voicu, B., 2001. Recurring education, pp. 298-299, in Luana Miruna Pop, ed., Dictionary of social policies, Bucharest: Expert.)

The application of a battery of tests to establish the child's vocational profile was not mentioned. These tests are important for the vocational counselling of children and the avoidance of school dropouts at the level of upper secondary education (Watkins & Campbell, 2012)⁷.

The social workers mentioned that, at least in the Mimi district, they noticed a greater interest of the children in going to high school or vocational school. The comprehensive support offered by CONCORDIA, including educational and professional guidance elements, contributes in this sense. The activities of CONCORDIA's day-care centres showed the children another model to succeed in life, formed other attitudes towards education and work, which helped to stimulate interest in further education.

Basically, CONCORDIA brought the beneficiaries into a context in which they have direct contact with realities outside the intra-community and usual development models in the environment in which they were socialized.

“In Mimi, children go to school more and there are more children who go to high school / vocational school and even college.”

- SOCIAL WORKER



Box 3.

Impact on Vocational Level – Case Studies

TIA's case has already been described in the section dedicated to education. With a stay-at-home mother, TIA (who is female) follows rather the maternal model and is reluctant in both vocational and school orientation. As for the vocational impact on the family, it is non-existent, for objective reasons in the case of the father (being unable to work due to health issues), for family model reasons in the case of the mother.

The DOT family does not know the vocational consequences of the intervention yet. On the one hand, not all children left the school system. One of them continues on the academic route into tertiary education, which indicates positive outcomes compared to expectations based on his situation upon entering the day centre. Two others abandoned their studies, considering that attracting financial resources is the priority. Working abroad is the chosen path, which indicates from the start one of the difficulties of vocational counselling in the day-care centre: imminent emigration. The parents are not aware of any spectacular changes in the employment structure from the point of view of the complexity of the jobs practiced or as a result of CONCORDIA's intervention. The mother remains a housewife, the father still takes unskilled jobs and with extremely low social prestige, but he moves from Romania to England, practically forced by two of the older children, to put an end to the domestic violence he generates. Later, some of the children from the new relationship also come to England, including some of CONCORDIA's beneficiaries. Employment remains in unskilled trades, but it exists and provides the family and each member with a living beyond initial expectations. It is difficult to say whether in the absence of the intervention the beneficiaries would have remained unemployed or would have had the same level of employment, but it is likely that the time spent in the day-care centre helped to increase the chances of integration into the labour market.

VIO is one of the beneficiaries who attended high school and wants to complete a college, even though the family model is one where the mother is a housewife and takes care of the children. Her sister also wants to go to high school after finishing the 8th grade, currently still a beneficiary of the services of CONCORDIA's day-care centre.

⁷ Watkins Jr, C. E., & Campbell, V. L. (2012). Testing and assessment in counselling practice. Routledge.



TEO was one of the first beneficiaries of Casa Alexandra and participated in the activities of the day-care centre in the 7th and 8th grades. He managed to complete secondary school and attended high school (technological profile) which he completed without passing the baccalaureate exam. He currently works with his father in construction.

The staff of CONCORDIA's day-care centres also presented us with convincing examples of increasing the employability of beneficiaries of job-coaching services.

Even if we did not encounter such cases among the interviewed beneficiaries, we believe that there is a reasonable impact in this direction as well, especially since the job-coaching services appeared later, and we studied cases from the first generations of beneficiaries of the day-care centres.



Impact on social relationships

- A weak but extremely important impact in terms of socialization outside the family.
- Little participation in civic social life.
- Increasing the level of hygiene creates premises for relationships outside the environment of origin and outside the family.

Accounts of beneficiaries and their families indicate sporadic participation in the formation of the public good, but also relatively little involvement in relationships outside the family. The more traditional character of the Romanian population in general and of the social stratum of the beneficiaries in particular (Voicu, 2010)⁸ explains this behaviour to a good extent. In this context, the fact that some of the beneficiaries' report relationships with former colleagues from CONCORDIA is proof of the positive impact of day-care centres.

The initial and subsequent psychological evaluations also monitor the child's ability to relate to others, and where problems were identified, activities were proposed to help the beneficiary improve his social relationships.

⁸Voicu, B. (2010). Social capital in Romania at the beginning of the Millennium: Journey to the land of those without friends? Lumen publishing house.

Box 4.

Impact on Social Relations – Case Studies



After leaving CONCORDIA day-care centre, **VIO** volunteered at the centre, supporting other children in carrying out various activities or completing homework. The initial evaluation shows that she is communicative, sociable, curious, expresses her dissatisfaction freely, asks for clarifications and does not show behavioural disorders. The child believes that "*at CONCORDIA they taught us to help each other*".

AVA (14 years old) lives in a single-parent family with a mother with mental health problems. The family lives in unsanitary housing conditions. CONCORDIA reports are stating that both mother and child were "always dirty, full of lice". As a result of the seriousness of the situation, the competent authorities were notified regarding the risk situation in which the minor is. The psychological assessment sheet mentions about AVA that she is a withdrawn child, ignored and shunned by other children due to her unkempt appearance. The interest in school activity, materialized in the very high number of absences and the drop-in school results, led over time to the removal from CONCORDIA's day-care centres programs. However, after her hygiene improved, AVA integrated better into the class and actively participated in day-care centre activities.

LIA (13 years old) as a result of participating in the activities of the Casa Alexandra's day-care centre "started to study more. Compared to how she was before, now she studies better, stopped cursing, is polite" (mother, 2 children beneficiaries of Casa Alexandra day-care centre services). Even though she is facing a series of problems in the family, being in the care of her maternal grandmother, she recovered some of the delays at the functional level, improved her body hygiene and self-image.

One of the children in **the DOT family**, now a young adult, describes himself as having few but good friends. The best of them is also a CONCORDIA beneficiary, but from another program. On the whole, however, our interviewee seems to be rather integrated in the family and not socially.



The poor hygiene of some of the beneficiaries of the day-care centres had a negative impact on their social integration, especially in the school environment, where they were marginalized or discriminated against. In some of the children's families, there were problems with ensuring proper hygiene, to a large extent as a result of poor living conditions (lack of utilities, lack of bathroom, running water, etc.)⁹. The activity of day-care centres also involves their sanitation. As a result, the beneficiaries were given the opportunity to shower and wash their clothes, they were "washed up" by CONCORDIA's staff, which made them integrate better into the school environment and beyond. The support provided by the day-care centres helped them stop being discriminated against and also gave them more confidence in themselves.

The volunteering of some of the former beneficiaries is a proof of the day-care centres' ability to increase the social capital of these children by forming attitudes and values different from those of the family. After completing their secondary school studies, the beneficiaries could participate as volunteers in the activities carried out by CONCORDIA. Voluntary activities include support for doing homework, organizing extracurricular activities, support for recreational activities, etc.

At the same time is worth noting the volunteering of some of the parents who helped/are helping with the various sanitation activities carried out at CONCORDIA's day-care centres.

To reduce the marginalization and better integration of the beneficiary children also contributed the organization of activities in the day-care centres together with the teaching staff and in which all their students participated, not only the beneficiaries of CONCORDIA.

⁹ As CONCORDIA's report also notes. CONCORDIA (2020), The social and economic situation of the beneficiaries of the CONCORDIA Day Centers.





Impact on family relationships

- Impact on the prevention of child separation from the family by providing educational and material support.
- Reducing the number of pregnancies to minors in the communities where CONCORDIA intervenes and also of the children abandonment in maternity hospitals.
- The intervention is an integrated one aimed at the well-being of the child and family.

- The main agent of change was the child, who managed to change his behaviour and adopt other values, and later tried to introduce them into the family environment.
- In the case of domestic violence, the intervention was quite restrained.
- Housing remains precarious for the beneficiaries, despite the small changes recorded.

The main mission of CONCORDIA's day-care centres was and is to prevent the child from being separated from the family. The establishment of day-care centres was realized in the context of the need for services for children at risk of institutionalization to prevent their entry into the protection system.

The vast experience of CONCORDIA with children in the protection system allowed the identification of their needs, and one of the most important is that of belonging to a family and parental affection. The main trauma for children in the protection system is that of abandonment, and day-care services try to prevent this by offering support services to families and children.

The services offered to the beneficiaries (educational support, social and psychological counselling, parental counselling, etc.), the activities in which they are involved helped to prevent the institutionalization of children from families at risk. In addition, for the children reintegrated into families who came from the family-type homes of CONCORDIA offered support in day-care centres to prevent their reinstitutionalization.

Day-care centres are considered an extremely useful tool in preventing the institutionalization of the child by the authorities with duties in the social field. They are useful both to the child and to the public institutions that relieve them of a series of cases at risk of institutionalization and of providing services in conditions where resources (human, financial, time) are limited and there is no high capacity to

implementation of child separation prevention services at the local level.

However, the capacity of day-care centres is limited. For this reason, is necessary more support from the authorities, to be able to increase the number of places, or for the local authorities to establish new day-care centres.

”

... I say that both come to the aid of the Directorate, not to mention of the community. It relieves you of a burden that you, as a county authority, could have at the county level, and through these services you prevent institutionalization or prevent the occurrence of difficult situations... they could end up in situations of violence, for example. These day-care centres serve the population from the disadvantaged area, which means that the number of those who would need and call on the services of DGASPC [local directorate for social assistance] decreases at a given time.”

- PUBLIC SERVANT, COUNTY LEVEL

The number of underage mothers in the communities where CONCORDIA intervenes has also decreased in the past years, as well as of those who abandon their children in maternity hospitals. This is also due to the child separation prevention services offered through the day-care centres, which showed mothers that there is support for raising children alongside them. The intervention of CONCORDIA in the communities included not only support offered to children through day-care centres, but also counselling for parents, job coaching services to increase the number of employees among the children's parents, offering food, hygiene products, clothing and shoes to those in the community (even if they had no children enrolled in day-care centres).

“But we are no longer talking about the abandonment of children in various places, in health facilities or maternity hospitals, we are no longer talking about a low standard of living that would put you in the position of ordering the child to be taken from the family in an emergency situation... It is very important that they also learned with us, ...it is a service that addresses that community... but automatically on a segment even with 36 children, the standard of living increases..”

- PUBLIC SERVANT, COUNTY LEVEL

The intervention of CONCORDIA at the community level showed that "it is possible" to do things differently and that an important vector of change is represented by the child. Even if the first interventions in the community were viewed with reluctance by its members, the support offered by CONCORDIA to families and especially, the fact that the little ones wanted to go to the day-care centres and participate in the activities, represent the factors that contributed to the increase of trust in the organization and to a greater openness to change. Over the time, through visits to the community, by supporting community members (with food, clothing, shoes, hygiene products, supplies for children, etc.), not only those who benefited from the services of the day-care centres, through the activities for adults (School for parents, the job-coaching service, support in the relationship with local authorities, etc.)

CONCORDIA's notoriety increased at the community level and, with it, community members' trust in the organization. In time, community members began to request CONCORDIA's support, they became more receptive to the idea of bringing their children to CONCORDIA's day-care centres and to the recommendations of CONCORDIA staff, but also in relation to local authorities. The latter recognize the fact that the intervention of CONCORDIA in the Mimiu neighbourhood facilitated the creation of better relationships with community members and changing their behaviours.

“A relationship has been built with Mimiu... we are no longer so afraid to enter there, they no longer surround us like they did before, they no longer lie to us, they have changed a bit their attitude towards the institutions. They're a little more open when they come in contact with us, it means they understand and hear us... We do referral plans with them, but the fact that they allow you to do a referral plan with them, and they sign it too, they know you go and check on them, I say that's a start.”

- PUBLIC SERVANT, COUNTY LEVEL

The analysis of the socio-economic situation of the beneficiaries of CONCORDIA's day-care centres revealed that in 2020 almost half of the beneficiaries (45%) came from families having more than 3 children, and 8 families even had more than 5 children. The living conditions of the beneficiary children's families were mostly poor: 40 of the families have only 1-2 rooms and only 7 have a separate bathroom.

If in the case of children, the changes are much more visible and easier to measure, at the level of the community and adults they are much more difficult to notice. However, things are starting to change at the community level, the children are the ones who are starting to introduce other behaviours consistent with what they have learned/seen at the day-care centres.

„There is an improvement if you refer to the services that CONCORDIA offers, it is first of all an increase in the standard of living for children and the family because when you spend a few hours somewhere, you are helped to do your homework, you are fed... it is clear that there was at least an increase in the degree of life satisfaction and the standard of living. Unfortunately, I don't know if I can say that the behaviours of the people in Mimiú have changed because I don't think you can do that just through a day-care centre. But the fact that they go to school is also an important thing, because they know that if they don't go to school and don't meet the conditions imposed by CONCORDIA, they lose the aid.... It becomes like a routine, a good routine...”

- PUBLIC SERVANT, COUNTY LEVEL



Box 5.
Family relationships -
Case studies (1)

The case of **the DOT family** is one marked by domestic violence. This leads over time to the deterioration of family relations, but is stopped by the decision of the older children to take the father to England, where they were already settled. It's the point where family life becomes more peaceful and also brings a surplus of around £200 a month to the flimsy household income (welfare and child benefits). CONCORDIA intervention is carried out mainly at the level of counselling the children and the mother regarding the relationship with the rest of the family members. It seems to bring relief, but there is no indication whether it is or it is not a factor of change in family life. From the housing point of view, the DOT family lives in a building that belongs to the mother, having been inherited by her from her parents, but it is at most at the limit of decent living conditions. When the children entered CONCORDIA's day-care centre, the building had one room and a hall, where the mother, the father (who were cohabiting), and the 7 children lived. The building was connected to electricity and running water. It was possible to cook when they had money to pay the outstanding electricity bills or when they

had money for a gas tank. The external migration of a good part of the family, including some former CONCORDIA beneficiaries, occurs in a group, keeping the family in fact close, although divided in transnational forms.

LIA comes from a divided/disorganized family, in a climate of parental neglect: the parents no longer live together and leave the child in the care of the maternal grandmother. Because her mother did not accompany her to the day-care centre, LIA was initially withdrawn from CONCORDIA activities, being later re-enrolled. When enrolling in the day-care centre, the child presented a poor state of hygiene, sometimes needing to be given clean clothes in order to be accepted by the other children. The family's main source of income is the grandmother's social allowance, and the house has no running water. In the care of the grandmother, the child manages to recover the delays to a functional level, attends school, participates in the activities of the day-care centre and improves her body hygiene. The initial evaluation mentions an unsatisfactory school situation in all subjects and with fluctuations in interest on school work, but with appropriate behaviour. The vocabulary is poorly developed in relation to the age, the child shows low resistance to frustration, emotional instability and affective deficiencies. At the same time, LIA is friendly, cheerful, optimistic and sociable.

The change for community development brought by CONCORDIA was based on an integrated approach, which targeted both the child and his family. The main agent of change in the case of the intervention of CONCORDIA through day-care centres was the child, who through the development of new skills, through exposure to learning experiences and new behaviour models, managed to form new values and attitudes. In this way, the child managed to improve the behaviour, and some of these changes were reflected in the family relationships (by bringing hygiene rules to the home as well, by asking the parents to build a bathroom, to put their clothes in the closet so they can look good when they leave the house) and in the community (by participating in volunteer activities at the kindergarten, at day-care centres, by becoming more respectful of others).

“In families where there are more children who go to CONCORDIA, the impact on the family was greater. The parents are more responsible, they are employed, the houses look better, they have better hygiene.”

- PUBLIC SERVANT, COUNTY LEVEL

There is a restrained approach of CONCORDIA regarding cases of domestic violence. From the reports of the staff, the observed cases are treated with caution, so as not to affect the presence of the beneficiaries in the day-care centres and CONCORDIA in the community. In addition, it is quite difficult to intervene when the mother or the child does not notice these violent acts. "The beating", at least in the case of children, is still seen as a form of education in these communities and not violent behaviour.

Almost the majority live in homes either owned by their parents or grandparents. However, their condition is at the limit of decency, often without continuous connection to utilities, with an extremely high housing density, with a small number of rooms for many siblings. Families develop relationships marked by domestic violence, often combined with alcoholism, sometimes with sexual violence. The landscape is completed by frequent reconciliations and separations, patchwork families¹⁰, a parent living abroad, acts at the limit of the law, sometimes legally sanctioned by sentences with deprivation of liberty.

¹⁰ Families resulting from the recombination of some family fragments and in which we meet two adults in a couple, together with children of both from previous relationships ended by separation, divorce or widowhood.





Box 5.

Case studies - Family relationships (2)

BIA comes from a single parent family and lived with her mother until the age of 11 when she was placed in emergency foster care. The mother is retired due to illness, suffering from cognitive and behavioural disorders that have caused difficulties in the mother-daughter relationship, favouring the development of maladaptive behaviours for the minor. The child presented difficulties relating to colleagues in the day-care centre due to conflicts in the family environment. Although the mother had problems communicating with others, she took care of the girl, bringing her and picking her up from the day-care centre. They lived in a house owned by the mother that had all the amenities. The girl evolved from "sufficient" and "good" in primary classes to 7, 8, 9, 10 as grades as she participated in the activities CONCORDIA's day-care centre. Amidst her mother's illness, BIA took on a number of responsibilities and sometimes felt embarrassed that her mother did not communicate well with others. There were signs of verbal abuse by the child towards the mother, on the background of the issues

previously presented. Both mother and daughter received counselling at CONCORDIA's day-care centre. Upon notification of some close family members, the girl was given to a foster carer in emergency foster care and stopped attending the day care centre. Unfortunately, according to the statements of CONCORDIA's day-care centres staff, the girl is not happy at the foster care and would like to return home.

TIA comes from a family with no major relationship difficulties within it. The mother takes care of the father disabled by a disease. They live in the same yard with a sister who is 12-14 years older, with her concubine and daughter. The family climate is repeatedly characterized by the reports of social workers (CONCORDIA and from the City Hall) as one in which parental love is present. The material condition is far from ideal in terms of income streams, consisting exclusively of the disability pension and social assistance allowance. Housing, on the other hand, is described as being decent, clean. The family receives counselling at CONCORDIA's day-care centre in other respects as well: the mother seeks and receives legal assistance on a land case in which she is being sued.

GEO comes from the residential system of CONCORDIA, from where he is reintegrated into the family and receives support through the day-care centre services. Upon entering the day-care centre, he had normal intellectual development, attended school classes, and showed care for family members. The family environment is characterized by domestic violence, the father being imprisoned for attempted murder against the mother, and after being released he tried to rape his daughter. As a result of family problems, GEO showed aggression towards children and the staff of the day-care centre, irritability, oppositionism, psycho-motor agitation with increased excitability. He had an overestimated self-image that led to a disinterest in building adaptive behaviours. He completed high school and is currently working in Germany.





Transversal impact at personal development level

PSYCHOLOGICAL

- The information available in the beneficiaries' files of the day-care centres is limited, rather formal and lacks details.
- Psychological counselling contributes to recording positive results in terms of children's social integration, development of new skills, increase in self-esteem, etc.
- More consistent results can be obtained by accompanying the psychological counselling of children with counselling for parents, especially in the case of family situations characterized by strong imbalances.

The cases in CONCORDIA's day-care centres are complicated from a material, educational, family, social point of view, and all these risk factors are usually accompanied by special psychological conditions. The problems in the family affect the children: we are talking about conflicts, single-parent families, disorganized families, parents with cognitive/behavioural disorders, difficulties relating to parents, neglect, early assumption of parental roles by children, etc.



Box 7. Psychological counselling - Case studies

In the case of **the DOT family**, the three children included in our sample undergo psychological assessment only upon entering the program. Initial assessment records one of three with speech problems and developmental delay associated with emotional instability and attention deficit disorder; the second is characterized as being normal for his age, but with affective deficiencies expressed mainly through the need for acceptance, support, encouragement; the third has a normal

situation, but has language delays, and is slightly introverted. The second is the only one who was given special recommendations, including group therapy, psychological counselling.

TIA joins CONCORDIA's day-care centre with reduced cognitive development compared to her age. Introverted and with low tolerance for frustration, she integrates with difficulty in the group of children. The cognitive and emotional regression is maintained, CONCORDIA's psychologist's report specifying "maladaptive behavioural manifestations".

AVA (14 years old) lives in a single-parent family with a mother with mental health problems. The father has not maintained contact with the child and does not provide financial support. The mother is a housewife, so the main sources of income for the household are the girl's allowance, the supplementary allowance and the social grant. The mother is not a decision-maker for the family, the burden of managing the household falling on the shoulders of the child who manages the family budget and mobilizes the mother in household tasks. Although the mother participated in the Parents' School, in the counselling activities at home regarding household tasks, in most of the workshops with the parents, the mother-daughter relationship remained tense. CONCORDIA reports that, "as the child grew older, the balance of power and control became even more unbalanced in the child's favour."

CAM (19 years old) began his two-year path in the day-care centre with a characterization noting large educational and knowledge deficits, poorly defined self-image, low frustration tolerance, indifference to the negative consequences of his actions.



Similar evaluations are present in the file of the following year as well. However, in the records received from the psychologist of the day-care centre, we did not find anything about CAM. It is natural that the distance in time and the large number of assistants do not allow the memory of the day-care centre staff to retain all these details. We use the example only as a pretext to reinforce the need to keep systematic, electronic records that are always immediately accessible. Otherwise, the remedial chances were extremely low in the case of CAM, with an uncooperative family, and at a rather old age in relation to other assistants of the day-care centre.

The initial evaluations carried out by the psychologist mention that part of the children from dysfunctional families join the day-care centres with low self-confidence, low resistance to frustration, adaptation difficulties, emotional instability. Thus, psychological counselling becomes essential, acting on the emotional and behavioural problems these children come with and influencing both the dynamics in the day-care centres and the way CONCORDIA's staff works with children, as well as their school integration, progress and social relations. And the school success of the children depends not only on the access to quality education, but also on their involvement in the school activity and their integration in the group of students, these constituting some of the central aspects of the counselling activity in which the children participate in the day-care centres.

The stages observed as documentation in CONCORDIA's files reveal a clear phasing of the psychological evaluations. These include the mandatory time of entry to the day-care centres. There is also periodic assessment of those joining the counselling programs. However, the descriptions in the files are relatively formal, using the specialized, standard language, but without providing too many additional details about the beneficiaries; systematic detailed records are virtually absent. This can be justified by the need to protect the privacy of each individual child. But CONCORDIA's staff assists each beneficiary through an integrated intervention, which by definition implies access to all relevant data of each beneficiary.



MEDICO-SANITARY

- The most relevant impact is that of familiarizing children with socially accepted personal hygiene norms and internalizing them for a positive social evolution.
- There is a lack of systematic records of some indicators of children's health status: height, weight, vaccinations, existing diseases.
- It is necessary to continuously monitor the children's health and help them in difficult moments through specialized staff.

It is obvious the positive impact of CONCORDIA in terms of preparation for life by paying special attention to hygiene issues. The beneficiaries' often poor hygiene had negative effects on their social integration and their health. In CONCORDIA's day-care centres, the beneficiaries were not only able to learn about the rules of hygiene and internalize them to use them in the family environment, but also to practice them because in many of the households of origin they could not do this regularly (they had the opportunity to take a daily shower, wash their clothes, brush their teeth, etc.). In the case of some of the beneficiaries, the staff of the day-care centres even deloused the children to ensure a good state of health both for them and for the other children participating in the activities. In addition, the children and their families were also given hygiene products to use in the household.

Local actors mentioned that some families in Mimiú built a bathroom in their house to be able to wash. It is not a generalized behaviour in the community, but rather isolated, but it is partly due to the pressure put on by the children who participated in the activities of CONCORDIA's day-care centres and wanted to have the possibility to take a bath/shower at home as well.



Box 8. Health Information - Case studies

The files of **the DOT family** children, as well as the descriptive report received from the medical staff, include only sketchy and general information about their health status. Simple but systematic records of weight and height, observations of initiation of sex life and or exposure to sex education are lacking. The three children make contact in the day-care centre with knowledge about health care and personal hygiene, and receive personal hygiene products. The descriptions of the children, received from CONCORDIA's staff, state that they are and have always been normal weight, without effective body mass index (BMI) assessments.

The same lack of information persists in the case of **TIA**.

Beyond this, issues related to the health status of the beneficiaries are also important. The social survey carried out at the beginning of the child's entry into the activities of the day-care centre also records their general state of health. It is, however, a general description of the state of health, without records of certain relevant aspects such as height, body weight, existing diseases, vaccinations. It is notable that there are no systematic records, even though CONCORDIA staff remember anecdotal incidents, extreme cases, or simple routine medical incidents with various beneficiaries.

Another important impact, also due to the activity of CONCORDIA's day-care centres in the community, is related to the decrease in the number of pregnancies among minors. This fact was noticed by local actors, especially with reference to the Mimiu community, where the intervention of CONCORDIA had several levels.

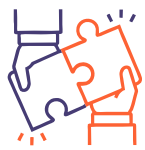
IMPACT ON LIFE SATISFACTION

- Life satisfaction information may be premature for those who have not yet become young adults.
- Overall, all interviewed beneficiaries and their families are satisfied with the activity of CONCORDIA's day-care centres.
- Where we have information, the dominant representation is that of a positive impact of CONCORDIA on everyone's subjective state of happiness.
- Day-care centres are a familiar environment, in which the beneficiaries feel comfortable, which is a positive premise for their development.

The voice of one of the beneficiaries interviewed, working abroad, opens up when we talk about CONCORDIA's day-care centre. Memories of a beautiful childhood are predominantly linked to CONCORDIA. He feels like a fulfilled man, beyond the hardships he went through, the initial family shortcomings, the unfavourable conditions at the beginning of life. He brings similar information about his brothers who were in the day-care centre. Overall, we are talking about socially integrated people, out of the poverty trap, who even if they are on the edge of it, have high potential for upward social mobility and high life satisfaction. It is especially remarkable the subjective reporting on achievements in relation to the initial possibilities.

For the other interviewees, things are more difficult to assess, given the fact that they have not yet reached a mature age and the information is mainly mediated by their guardians. Indeed, this is the essential difficulty of the present approach: assessing the long-term impact requires observing the beneficiaries as they reach adulthood. As young adults they are already beginning to know where they are heading in life and the role of CONCORDIA's day-care centres in their becoming independent persons can be assessed. Even so, the present review is useful as an evolving midpoint. Overall, we can observe a higher life satisfaction for those from the risk zone where the beneficiaries of CONCORDIA's day-care centres are placed.

In addition, there is a general attitude of satisfaction shown by the beneficiaries and their families regarding the services provided by CONCORDIA's day-care centres. Our direct observation on the spot also revealed beneficiaries showing signs of satisfaction. The state of tranquillity and comfort that we observed in the non-systematic interactions in the day-care centres, both with the children and with the parents that we studied on site, is remarkable. Undoubtedly, in the pandemic conditions in which this research took place, the number of directly observed beneficiaries is low, but this also had the advantage of being able to closely observe even those whom we saw from a distance, on our visits to Casa Cristina and Casa Alexandra. All the non-verbal and behavioural language indicated that those present felt at ease, and this level of comfort is a strong indication of the ability of CONCORDIA's day-care centres to provide a familiar environment conducive to the achievement of its mission and the development of those assisted.



Collaboration with local actors

→ We noticed good cooperation between CONCORDIA and local actors.

→ CONCORDIA is sometimes seen as a model for public presentation and there is a gradual transfer of good practices to social service providers in the area.

CONCORDIA has a good collaboration with local actors - the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPC), the Community Social Services Administration (ASSC) of Ploiești, educational units. The collaboration with the educational units implies not only the fact that some of the students are beneficiaries of the day-care centres or that some teaching staff recommend children with problems to "apply to CONCORDIA", but also activities carried out by the teaching staff at the day-care centres, volunteering carried out by some teaching staff, their involvement in the activities of the School for Parents.



We support each other, we are a handful of people who have the same interest: the good of children."

- TEACHER



In the case of DGASPC and ASSC, collaboration involves support for cases in which they do not have the capacity to intervene or the reporting of cases in which problems are observed that may endanger the child. Thus, CONCORDIA refers the cases of children where major problems have been observed to the GDSACP so that it can subsequently order measures that may include institutionalization.

"On the day-care centres we work with, in the sense of collaboration on the remedy of some problems that they identify in the children beneficiaries of their centres, in the idea that a child who benefits from the services of the day-care centre also needs other services that CONCORDIA does not provide. Then they refer the case to us or, when they consider that the situation is quite dramatic for that child, that case may come completely to our attention."

- PUBLIC SERVANT, COUNTY LEVEL



A remark of one of the interviewees revealed the fact that the presentation of CONCORDIA as an organization constituted a model of good practices that inspired some local actors in terms of presenting their own organization. In addition, it is worth noting that the positive image of CONCORDIA among those we spoke with actually facilitates the transfer of good practices to all social service providers in the area. Changes in this sense are incremental, which ensures their durability.

At the same time, the few staff exchange between CONCORDIA and other organizations in Ploiești, including the local administration, are likely to

strengthen the links between the day-care centres and the social environment in which they operate.

The main **recommendation** concerns maintaining ties with the local environment, and strengthening those with former employees. An informal meeting once a year can be beneficial in this regard. Former employees constitute an important capital of the organization. They usually also work in the field, in the community near the day-care centres. Therefore, they can serve as bridges to this community and lobbying factor for CONCORDIA.

4.4. Transversal evaluations of the organization



Relevance

- The results of the activities and services provided to the beneficiaries indicate a fulfilment of the main objectives established.
- In the absence of systematic monitoring, it is difficult to delimit the results of each action.
- The activities and services lead to ensuring and protecting the rights of the child.

The relevance of the activities/ services for the originally proposed objectives

The objectives of Casa Cristina and Casa Alexandra declared in 2018 (CONCORDIA Programmes Review, 2018), are:

- Supporting families for the educational integration of their children and school success / prevention of school dropout. •
- Acquiring life skills for children in the day-care centre to support their educational and social integration.



- Consolidation and development of the activity of the mobile team in the community for advising families, activating and involving them, improving collaboration with local institutions through the "School for parents" project.

As part of the Theory of Change and monitoring tools study carried out by ICCV in April 2021 for CONCORDIA, the specific objectives of the two day-care centres in Ploiești are those listed in **Table 2**, table taken as such from the mentioned report.







	OBJECTIVES	WITHIN DAY-CARE CENTRES	OUTSIDE DAY-CARE CENTRES (COMMUNITY WORK)
 CHILDREN	Short term 	<input type="checkbox"/> Increasing the school participation enrolment in formal education; <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing graduation rate/ Improving school results; <input type="checkbox"/> Decreasing the verbal and physical aggressivity and violence; <input type="checkbox"/> Improving the knowledge about personal hygiene and the level of hygiene.	
	Long term	<input type="checkbox"/> Preventing the separation of child from the family; <input type="checkbox"/> Reducing school dropout; <input type="checkbox"/> Acquiring independent life skills; <input type="checkbox"/> Development of human capital; <input type="checkbox"/> Educational, familial, social, vocational integration; <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing well-being and personal development.	
 FAMILY	Short term 	<input type="checkbox"/> Awareness of the importance of education; <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing parents' participation in school education in broader sense; <input type="checkbox"/> Reducing violence against the children; <input type="checkbox"/> Improving the quality of family relations; <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitating access to a job development of the competences required by the labour market; <input type="checkbox"/> Improving the hygiene level Improving the access to the social services.	
	Long term	<input type="checkbox"/> Preventing the separation of child from the family; <input type="checkbox"/> Development of human capital; <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting the families for an independent life; <input type="checkbox"/> Improving the life conditions; <input type="checkbox"/> Improving the quality of family life.	
 COMMUNITY	Short term 	<input type="checkbox"/> Improving the degree of relationship between the community members <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing the level of individuals families' implication participation at the community life <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing the children participation in early education	
	Long term	<input type="checkbox"/> Reducing the phenomenon of "children on streets"; <input type="checkbox"/> Decreasing marginalization; <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable development of local communities.	

Table 2. The operationalization of CONCORDIA's objectives at the moment of the study

The services offered by the two day-care centres are intended for children, their families and community members (*Theory of Change and monitoring tools, ICCV, 2021*):

CHILDREN

For each child, a personalized intervention plan is developed based on the initial assessment by an educator, a speech therapist and a psychologist. The intervention plan includes non-formal and informal learning activities, individual support activities (counselling, individual support, therapeutic activities, speech therapy), small group activities. In the day-care centres, children: participate in the "Together after school" program, have the opportunity to shower and change clothes, participate in sports / leisure, cultural / educational activities, therapy or health education, receive a warm meal. The "Together After School" program is scheduled from Monday to Friday between 08.00 and 16.00 in two stages: between 08.00 and 12.00 for secondary school students and between 12.00 and 16.00 for primary school students.

FAMILY

Education of parents to develop and strengthen a good parent-child relationship, psychological, social, medical and educational counselling as early intervention to prevent school dropout and family separation, training to support finding a job for parents or family members of children involved in the day-care centre activities. After the integration of a family member into the labour market, the counsellor and the psychologist support him/her to keep his/her job and adapt better to working conditions.

COMMUNITY

The day-care centre mobile team provides social services to young people and adults in the community as well, such as: early school education, school and career guidance, vocational training, labour market mediation, health and personal hygiene education, program enrolment support second chance or vocational training courses.

The analysis of the activities carried out and the services offered within the two CONCORDIA day-care centres on all three levels of intervention - children, families and community - are consistent with the proposed objectives and are relevant for their fulfilment. The impact mentioned in the previous section indicates a high relevance of the activities and services offered for the fulfilment of the three main objectives assumed, but in the absence of a systematic monitoring throughout the implementation of each activity it is impossible to separate the specific effect of each individual action.





Child rights. Age and gender aspects

Through the activities carried out, CONCORDIA day-care centres help ensure the rights of the child - education, protection and social welfare, health, freedom of expression and participation in making the decisions that concern them.

The educational services offered contribute to ensuring better access to education, reducing school discrimination of beneficiaries from vulnerable groups, but also access to early education for children from the Mimi community by increasing the quality of educational services in the kindergarten. At the same time, access to extracurricular and leisure activities with an impact on the child's education is ensured. Psychological counselling services have the role of reducing the violent behavioural manifestations of children who participate in day-care centre activities.

The right to well-being and social protection is ensured through the services offered to the family (counselling, "School for parents", job coaching, etc.), material support (supplies, clothing, footwear, food products, etc.), ensuring a hot meal for children participating in activities, services of preventing violence against children (through activities with parents). All these services have the role of keeping the child in the natural family and preventing its abandonment.

The activities and services that contribute to ensuring the right to health are: hygiene courses, ensuring access to personal hygiene in the day-care centre (shower, possibility to wash clothes), offering hygiene products to families, psychological counselling (also necessary to ensure health mental health of children), access to a doctor in case of need.

Freedom of expression and children's participation in making the decisions that affect them is promoted and implemented in CONCORDIA's day-care centres.

In the provision of services, age and gender aspects are considered, with each child receiving services according to the individual characteristics established in the service plan developed following the social survey carried out. The child's age category and gender are considered in determining the activities in which he/she participates or the services he/she benefits from.



Sustainability

→ CONCORDIA's day-care centre model has the prerequisites to become a model at the local and national level.

→ The current experience of CONCORDIA is also replicable within the organization, through the development of other day-care centres.

→ The lessons learned from the existing day-care centres can also be used in the activities of other actions and projects carried out by CONCORDIA, both in Romania and internationally.

The model developed by CONCORDIA through day-care centres is considered one that can be successfully replicated at the level of local administrative units, being recommended by the local directorate for social work (DGASPC) to representatives of local authorities. The fact that at the level of the local directorate for social work (DGASPC) there are employees who previously worked at CONCORDIA makes it easier to explain to local authorities how a day-care centre should be organized and run. These day-care centres represent an extremely useful tool in preventing the separation of the child from the family, identifying cases of children who are in a difficult situation, reducing early school dropout and improving school performance. For this reason, local actors appreciate that it would be useful to have a day-care centre in every community, and more would be needed in big cities.

CONCORDIA day-care centres, through the services offered in their locations and in the community (through the mobile team and those in the kindergarten), reduce the pressure placed on public institutions with responsibilities in the field of social inclusion.

“I think at the beginning of the year came to me the mayor of a commune here in Prahova where there was a large number of Roma people and a large number of children with behavioural disorders and school dropouts. The chief of police and the mayor also came. The mayor's idea - he wanted to partner with DGASPC [the local directorate for social work], they appointed 2 people who went there weekly to work with the town hall, with the school... Now they have a draft partnership with the town hall - to identify 50 families to participate in the activities of a day-care centre in the community to be established by the town hall. Not only is it necessary, but the municipality has understood that by developing such services it solves its problems over time.”

- PUBLIC SERVANT, COUNTY LEVEL



Effectiveness

→ The activities and services offered to the beneficiaries enabled the achievement of the main objectives. The best results are recorded at the level of those children for whom the intervention was direct (Children from the centre with whom the staff works every day).

→ The factors that contributed to the success of the intervention are the varied range of services offered, their permanent diversification according to the needs of children and their parents and the perseverance of the staff in overcoming all the obstacles encountered in the social integration of children.

CONCORDIA's day-care centres have had a positive impact on children, their families and even the community (including schools and public institutions with social responsibilities). The activity of CONCORDIA's day-care centres not only prevented the separation of the child from the family, but also ensured better school participation, facilitated the continuation of the educational path for many of the beneficiaries and the entry into the labour market of their parents and supported the teaching staff to integrate more easily children with educational deficiencies or special educational requirements.

It cannot be said that there are components considered less effective, because the three levels of intervention involve different activities and the length of time to estimate the impact varies. In addition, if in the case of children, the intervention is direct and the effects can be observed in a shorter period of time, in that of families and the community many of the changes occur through the children and the period of their registration is much longer. At the same time, in the case of the community, some effects are diffuse and may also be due to the intervention of other institutions. For example, the job coaching activities did not have the immediate impact of hiring a large number of people, but over time the number of people who got hired from the community increased as the workers and social workers working in Mimiou also observed. Less has been done to reduce family violence, which is a more difficult area to manage and requires specialized personnel. As previously stated, this reduced intervention to combat family violence was also due to a decision by day-care centres' staff to retain their hard-earned trust capital. In cases of violence that endanger the child's life, CONCORDIA's day-care centres have notified the competent institutions.

Among the factors that have contributed to the success of the activity of CONCORDIA's day-care centres are the varied range of services offered, their permanent diversification according to the needs of children and their parents and the perseverance of the staff in overcoming all the obstacles encountered in the social integration of children. Thus, the hot meal offered to the children, the educational support offered, the material support (clothing, shoes, supplies, hygiene products, etc.), the organized extracurricular activities, the psychological counselling, the speech therapy services are elements that contributed to ensuring the success of the intervention of CONCORDIA's day-care centres at the level of children, families and the community.

“The fact that someone has went in Mimiú and that they maintain a constant relationship with Mimiú is a win. It is CONCORDIA's credit after all. They come for the food, for the help they still give, but they spend some hours there, in which they don't do other nonsense. This also shows a persistence of CONCORDIA and some well thought out and targeted services, but also a change in the people who allow children to go there...”

- PUBLIC SERVANT, COUNTY LEVEL

“The perseverance of those at CONCORDIA because they don't give up easily; hot meal, support on all levels - clothing, shoes, supplies.”

- PUBLIC SERVANT, LOCAL LEVEL

One of the problematic aspects is related to the lack of transportation of children to and from the day-care centres. Transporting children to the day-care centres, especially in the case of Casa Alexandra, where the beneficiaries come from different areas of Ploiești, would facilitate better participation in the activities. At the same time, the number of those who leave the day-care centres before completing secondary school would be reduced.

“It would also be necessary to ensure the transportation of children to increase participation in the day-care centre activities. In the case of those from Mimiú, if they had transportation to the day-care centres, it would reduce school dropouts even more”.

- PUBLIC SERVANT, LOCAL LEVEL

“Activities should be done in communities to attract children. It would be good for them to be more visible and to do activities in other areas and with children.”

- PUBLIC SERVANT, LOCAL LEVEL





5 General conclusions

Table 3 summarizes the main results of this study. It brings together the aspects already discussed at length in the previous sections and provides an overview of CONCORDIA's day-care centre intervention.

Table 3. Matrix of effects and impact of CONCORDIA's intervention

AREA	EFFECTS. IMPACT
Education	<p>High impact, the beneficiaries as a whole achieve higher school performance than expected given the families of origin and the risk situations in which they find themselves. Early school leaving is substantially reduced.</p> <p>The impact is stronger among CONCORDIA's long-term beneficiaries.</p> <p>The documentation of this field in the files of CONCORDIA beneficiaries is incomplete.</p>
Vocational	<p>The vocational impact is not easy to capture, as it is necessary to reassess it when the beneficiaries will be young adults (18-29 years old).</p> <p>Professional orientation needs permanent adaptation to atypical forms of employment: work abroad, work from home, employer portfolios, etc.</p> <p>Anecdotal examples provided by CONCORDIA staff suggest beneficial effects of job coaching programs for adults.</p>
Social	<p>The focus on the involvement of beneficiaries in social life is reduced.</p> <p>Faithful to a traditionalist family model, the beneficiaries tend to rarely develop socialization and participation behaviours outside the family and kinship group, but are sometimes involved in neighbourhood relations and sometimes even civic action, through volunteering.</p>
Family	<p>The integrated intervention is effective as a whole.</p> <p>The job-coaching activities were of real benefit to some families.</p> <p>Activities carried out together with parents led to improvements in family relationships.</p> <p>CONCORDIA day-care centres have contributed to the prevention of child separation from the family and to the decrease in the number of underage mothers.</p> <p>CONCORDIA's intervention is shy about domestic violence.</p>
Psychological	<p>Psychological counselling is a constant concern, with beneficial effects, but the systematic recording of the observed progress and even of the activities carried out is deficient.</p>

Tabelul 3. Matricea efectelor și impactului intervenției CONCORDIA

AREA	EFFECTS. IMPACT
Medico-sanitary	<p>The most relevant impact is that of familiarizing children with socially accepted personal hygiene norms and internalizing them for a positive social evolution.</p> <p>There is a lack of systematic records of some indicators of children's health status: height, weight, vaccinations, existing diseases. It is necessary to continuously monitor the children's health and help them in difficult moments through specialized staff.</p>
Satisfaction with life	<p>Information on developing as independent persons and its ultimate outcome, being happy, is incomplete at this time, given that few of CONCORDIA's program participants have become young adults. However, starting from the current situation of the beneficiaries who have reached 20-21 years and from the observations regarding the way the beneficiaries feel that we observed in CONCORDIA, it can be stated that the beneficiaries are largely satisfied with their lives, more chosen after the intervention of the O.U. Concordia</p>
Societal impact	<p>CONCORDIA has a good image among local actors and is often cited as a model of good practice. The experience with other Romanian and European providers of social services and the international literature lead to the conclusion that the example of day-care centres is replicable locally and nationally, can generate lessons for other CONCORDIA programs and is generalizable in other countries. Media presence is low and self-promotion through social media is sporadic.</p>
Organization	<p>Beneficiary files are rich in information but difficult to use.</p> <p>However, they can become truly comprehensive at no cost to CONCORDIA and its staff.</p>



Overall, we discuss each CONCORDIA day-care centre as a set of tools and actions arranged to serve the interests of the beneficiaries. The conclusions above look at these actions as a whole, while the recommendations that follow also discuss details related to specific actions.

Considering the whole of what was found in all the analyses carried out, 4 clear answers to the objectives assumed by this study emerge (**Table 4**). In turn, the concise answers to the research questions reveal an overall positive impact of CONCORDIA's day-care centres (**Table 5**).



INITIAL SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE



RESULTS

Tabelul 4. . Rezultate succinte asociate obiectivelor asumate

Identifying the activities and their elements that produce change for beneficiaries, groups or communities;	All the activities of CONCORDIA's day-care centres contribute to positive change on the three levels of intervention - children, families, community.
Identifying the key elements that contribute to the success of the day-care centres, as well as the main blockages and obstacles in implementation;	The integrated approach and flexibility are the key to the effectiveness of the intervention.
Formulation of recommendations for future actions in order to ensure the sustainability and replication of the activity of the day-care centres;	The next chapter includes recommendations, as well as the proposed monitoring tool.
Identification of performance indicators to ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the progress of the activities carried out.	

Table 5. Answers to research questions



THE RESEARCH QUESTION



RESULTS

1. Are the activities and immediate results of the day-care centres consistent with the original purpose and contribute to the achievement of the assumed objectives?	We noticed consistency in the approach proposed by CONCORDIA's day-care centres.
2. To what extent were the originally set objectives achieved?	CONCORDIA's day-care centres have achieved their objectives originally set.
3. What are the main factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?	The integrated approach is the main coagulation factor of CONCORDIA actions and the key to the effectiveness of each intervention itself.
4. Do all processes respect the rights of the child? Are age and gender considerations taken into account in the provision of services?	We did not find any violations of the child's rights. CONCORDIA actions are adapted to the age and gender of the beneficiaries when such adaptation is useful.



THE RESEARCH QUESTION



RESULTS

5. Which components of the ongoing activity are the most (less) effective? What are the factors that explain success? Is there an added value of the integrated approach and what are the factors influencing the implementation of the activities?

In the absence of a permanent monitoring tool, it is practically impossible to distinguish the effect of each specific action. The set of CONCORDIA actions is likely to generate positive effects at the level of the beneficiaries. In order to be able to estimate the added value of each individual action, we recommend implementing the monitoring model proposed in the next section.

6. Is the activity of the day-care centres replicable? Can it be fully replicated or only certain components? At what level (local, county, national)? Are changes to the activity required so that it can be replicated?

The activity is replicable and can be used as a model for similar actions by CONCORDIA or other service providers, both in Romania and abroad.

7. What are the lessons learned at each level of the intervention that should be considered for further implementation and replication of the day-care centres?

Lessons learned can be found in the list of recommendations in the next section

8. Are there unplanned outcomes worth considering to address challenges in implementing the activity?

We did not identify any unplanned results. In fact, the option of adaptability to existing contextual conditions (both related to beneficiaries and potential funding sources), as well as the permanent, often anticipatory review of the action strategy, means that there can be no unplanned results and a positive adjustment of action strategies and activity implementation is constantly present.



6 Recommendations

6.1. General recommendations

Capacity expansion and multiplier effects

The overall impact of CONCORDIA, although difficult to assess, is certainly a positive one. Extending the experience of the day-care centres in Ploiești by replicating them in Odobești is therefore a natural step.

The positive experience can be developed in other areas as well, with the potential to transfer the accumulated knowledge to other social service providers (for children) through simple contact with the model offered by CONCORDIA or even programmatically (CONCORDIA intentionally offering the intervention model for replication). In other words, the two day-care centres in Ploiești can be used as a model for similar initiatives.

Recommendations by areas

We formulated specific recommendations in the text, which are synthetically systematized in **Figure 2**. They are exhaustively repeated in the next section of this report (**Table 6**).

The critical points towards which our recommendations go are three:

- more attention paid to the preparation for integration into social life
- developing and streamlining the existing system of monitoring, recording information, managing it and informing the beneficiaries
- continuing to attract former beneficiaries to the annual meetings and their involvement in volunteer activities related to the day-care centres

The first topic has already been addressed in the chapter dedicated to social life. The other two are transversal and have been mentioned in different sub-chapters and chapters. In what follows, we develop them, given their integrative character.

Permanent monitoring

A tool for systematic monitoring and recording of beneficiary data becomes absolutely necessary. Since the establishment of the day-care centres until today, the activity of the day-care centres has become more and more complex, integrating an impressive panoply of tools. Although there are individual files of the beneficiaries, the records in them are partial, many elements being retained mainly by CONCORDIA staff. As the number of assisted beneficiaries is quite large, and the time since the first contacts becomes long, it is difficult that all the details remain unaltered in the memory of CONCORDIA's staff, that the memories do not overlap, that the information continues to be extremely accurate.

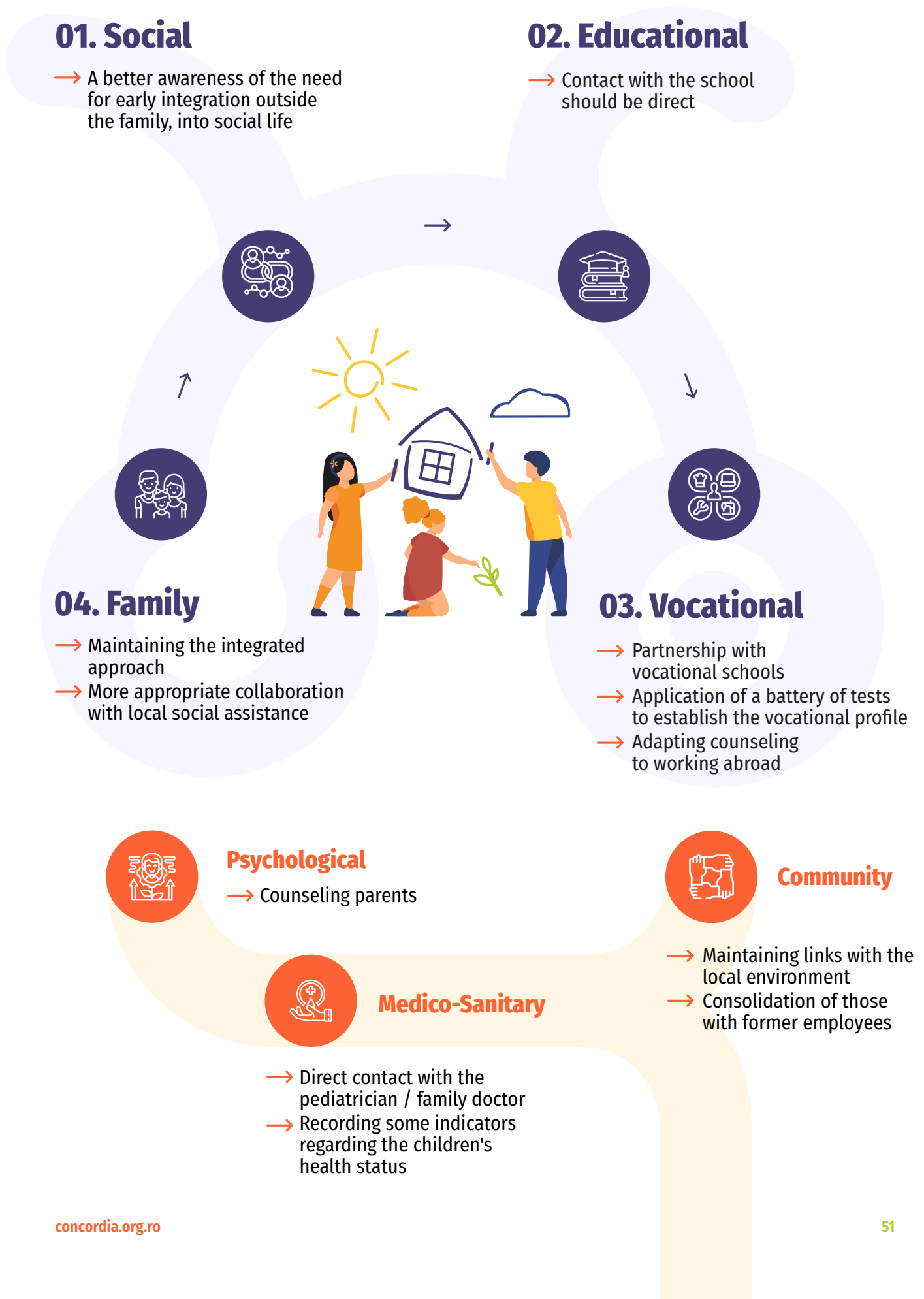
For example, one of CONCORDIA's employees asked us what percentage of those assisted end up finishing high school. Such information could only be found if a tracking tool was used. But the question applies as such to those who pass the aptitude test. Most beneficiaries are in the system until they finish secondary school.

Unfortunately, the existing files do not include systematic information on this, just as they do not include grades during the school year or at the end of the school year. Any attempted estimate of the share of those who graduate from middle school and can move on to high school will have such low precision that it becomes irrelevant.

That is why a systematic information recording system is needed. Such a system allows permanent monitoring, rapid intervention capacity, detailed impact assessment capacity and activity efficiency. We describe in the next section a proposal for this.

Figure 2

6.2. Matrix of essential recommendations



Differential impact

The present evaluation is predominantly qualitative and can identify the global impact of the programs of CONCORDIA day centres, but cannot distinguish the added value of each one. For example, it cannot say how much is the contribution of job coaching and how much is the contribution of psychological counselling.

The proposed monitoring system solves such a question. It needs to be doubled by maintaining information on those who leave CONCORDIA's programs, in order to assess the long-term effects of working in day-care centres.

Table 6

6.3. List of specific recommendations

AREA	RECOMMENDATIONS
Educational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic recording of educational indicators from schools. • Tracking the trajectory of beneficiaries leaving the day-care centres. • The need for contextualization: <i>Contact with the school should be through the parents, but also, complementary, directly, and records related to school results (general averages and averages in different subjects) and school participation (number of absences) should be received periodically.</i> • Ensuring the transport of the beneficiaries to and from the day-care centres would contribute to a better attendance at the activities carried out, and especially of those who come from families where the parents/guardians do not have time or cannot take care of them. • For children with CES, a specific intervention is needed to help them recover the educational gaps. • For children who leave the day care centres after numerous absences from classes, we suggest continuing assistance through the mobile teams.
Vocational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the professional path for a period of at least 10 years after leaving the day care centre system. • Partnerships with the vocational schools that organize classes in the dual system to present the offer to the beneficiaries of the day-care centres. • Applying a battery of tests to establish the child's vocational profile. • Adapting vocational counselling to patterns of working abroad. • The need to follow the trajectories of the beneficiaries of job coaching services for periods of at least 3-4 years.
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The integrated intervention must be continued and enhanced with a range of other services depending on the needs of the beneficiaries. Even if most of the services offered are standardized, CONCORDIA also offers personalized services according to those established in the individual service plan. There is a need for better monitoring of the results obtained at the family level as well so that the new services that need to be developed can be identified in time. Records are needed to be able to develop new services.

<p>Family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct periodic surveys of satisfaction among children and their families. These analyses can be correlated to see to what extent what the child says is confirmed by what the parents say. They will provide not only an evaluation of the activities carried out, of satisfaction with them, but also an identification of needs. • A more intense collaboration of CONCORDIA with local social assistance is useful in cases of domestic violence, causing the DGASPC and the competent institutions to intervene without prejudice to CONCORDIA's position in the community. Because the trust of the community members in CONCORDIA need to be kept at a high level, it is necessary that the notified institutions do not divulge the source that made the notification. • Long-term follow-up of beneficiaries is necessary to be able to estimate the impact on family life. The lack of these records of the long-term life course of beneficiaries makes it impossible to determine this momentary impact.
<p>Social relations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be useful if the existing files also included information on relationships outside the family. This observation refers to participation in community actions, volunteering, following the news, involvement in community life, frequency of socializing with friends and their number, etc. Such attention paid to reporting itself can lead the staff of CONCORDIA day-care centres to a better awareness of the need for early integration outside the family, into social life, which is a starting point in personal development as an independent individual.
<p>Psychological</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doubling counselling for children with counselling for parents, who have an essential role and are the ones who must support and encourage the child in order to learn new behaviours. • Need for systematic, more detailed records of psychological assessments carried out at different points in the day centre intervention. • It can be considered, with a preventive role, the periodic evaluation of those who do not enter counselling.
<p>Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health is a necessary precondition for development, and documentation of its evolution is necessary. • The contact with the paediatrician/family doctor must be included in the contract of reception in the day-care centres. In this way, the information related to vaccinations and diseases that the child has had will be available. The contact can be mediated by the parents, who will bring the information from a sheet to the day-care centres. A problem arises for those parents who cannot bring data from the doctor due to personal constraints (for example: communication difficulties). They can be counselled on how to do this, which on the one hand increases their competence as parents and on the other hand makes them responsible, both of which are beneficial to the children.
<p>General impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to evaluate the impact of CONCORDIA's day-care centres programs, an evaluation is necessary in approximately 4-5 years, when several beneficiaries from the first generations of Casa Cristina and Casa Alexandra will be young adults. The tracking tool proposed at the end of this report helps in this regard.

Collaboration with local actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining ties with the local environment, and strengthening those with former employees. An informal meeting once a year can be beneficial in this regard.
File structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic, narrative recording of observations on beneficiaries. For example, every two to three months, CONCORDIA staff notes the observations regarding each beneficiary. Practically, one can imagine a system through which things are noted for 12 beneficiaries at the end of January, April, July and October; for the next 12 it is noted in February, May, August, November; and for the next 12 in March, June, September, December. The notes can be structured according to the areas addressed in this report, but it is preferable to maintain a free format, which allows the recording of relevant, anecdotal things, etc. • Such registration, as well as the management of the rest of the information (e.g. personalized educational plans) should be done electronically. Experience from other organizations shows that there is no pressure at all related to the IT skills of the staff, and that in a short time (1-2 months), the electronic management of all these records leads to significant time savings for all involved.
Online presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting media engagement targets for digital communication components. • Integration of social media streams on CONCORDIA's main webpage. • Registration on digital presence monitoring platforms such as Zelist, Google Analytics, etc. for evaluating the evolution of media content. • Defining key terms to be used in media content, including defining them in the construction of web pages and internal and external communication.



7 List of abbreviations

ANDPDCA - National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions

ASSC - Community Social Services Administration Ploiesti

BMI - Body mass index

CZ - Day-care centre

DGASPC - General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection

ICCV - Quality of Life Research Institute

INS - National Institute of Statistics

ONG - Non-governmental organization

O.U. CONCORDIA - CONCORDIA Humanitarian Organization

List of figures and tables

Figure 1. Visualization of main flows implied by the theory of change **09**

Figure 2. Matrix of essential recommendations **48**

Table 1.

Estimates of age at entry into CONCORDIA day-care centres, age at exit* and length of time spent in CONCORDIA day-care centres **17**

Table 2. The operationalization of CONCORDIA's objectives at the moment of the study **38**

Table 3. Matricea efectelor și impactului intervenției CONCORDIA **43**

Table 4. Brief results associated with the assumed objectives **45**

Table 5. Answers to research questions **45**

Table 6. List of specific recommendations **49**

Box 1. Educational impact – Case studies (1) **19**

Box 2. Educational impact – Case studies (2) **21**

Box 3. Impact on Vocational Level – Case Studies **25**

Box 4. Impact on social relations - Case studies **26**

Box 5. Family relationships – Case Studies (1) **30**

Box 6. Family relationships – Case Studies (2) **32**

Box 7. Psychological counseling – Case Studies **33**

Box 8. Health information – Case Studies **35**

8

Glossary of terms

Integrated approach

It presupposes coordinated actions in a global approach that transcend disciplinary boundaries or categories of activities. In the case of the mission and activities of CONCORDIA, there are about providing services to both children, families and communities as part of a focus on children. The main activities are supporting learning, involving parents, promoting community engagement, etc.

Impact analysis

Comparing the final state with the initial one for a case that benefited from treatment, the difference between the two states being in turn compared to the difference between the initial and final state of a similar case that did not benefit from treatment. Any system can be defined by its input and output parameters. Humanizing this dry definition, we discuss the beneficiaries of CONCORDIA's day-care centres as "entries" to the system, who receive a series of "treatments" and exhibit certain "characteristics" upon entry and at the end.

For example, a child in a risk situation receives as treatment in CONCORDIA's day-care centre various educational services, psychological counselling, health education, professional guidance, etc. According to the theory of change, all these "treatments" contribute to an "end state" that is better than the "end state" likely in the absence of the treatments. "Treatment" or "intervention", "initial state", "end state", "input" are essential elements of impact analysis and are established terms in organizational analysis, impact analysis and several other fields. We use them as such throughout the report.

Day-care centre

A place that provides care, education, recreation services to those who cannot be completely independent. The day-care centre is a complex type of service, consisting in fact of a comprehensive set of benefits of a social nature, which may include support of various kinds. Beneficiaries can be elderly people, children, people with physical or learning difficulties, victims of domestic violence, homeless people, refugees, etc. The day-care centre can be organized by local authorities, private organizations or volunteers. In the case of CONCORDIA, day-care centres represent a form of protection and social assistance that prevents situations that endanger the child's development outside the institutional system, prevents children from entering the residential protection system, and promotes the child's right to grow up in his own family.

Group/individual at risk

Members of a society who are comparatively more likely than the rest of the population to fall short of the minimum standards of what is considered appropriate for social development. Children represent a category of the population subject to risks such as poverty, poor health, violence or family situation.

Educational impact

Defined as a social subsystem, education is the clearest indicator of life outcomes, influencing aspects such as income, social status, employment, and is a strong predictor of personal attitudes and general well-being in society. Education contributes to social identity in a positive sense by increasing social trust, political commitment, health, but also in a negative sense in the case of lack of education, registering phenomena of social exclusion and low self-esteem.

Impact on family relationships

In modern societies, children's emotional, cognitive and social development is strengthened when formal and informal education institutions work together with their families. The collaboration between them influences the evolution, social integration and learning processes of children.

Impact on social relationships

Social interaction is one of the most important aspects of a child's social integration and development. In addition to the family, society has codified the acquisition of social skills through institutions of socialization such as kindergarten, school, clubs or associations. They assess and assign grades or ratings for social interaction techniques that form the basis for later relationships with family members, friends, and co-workers.

Medical impact

It represents the acquisition of knowledge, access to material resources for families of minors and the somato-physiological changes observed in children enrolled in day care centres. Effects can be recorded in the area of cardiovascular and metabolic health, mental health or the incidence of communicable diseases.

Psychological impact

Related to the situation of children in day-care centres, it represents the changes felt by them when they are involved in their activity, separated from their family. Emotional impact can be measured using the pleasure-displeasure, arousal-non-arousal, and dominance-submission dimensions, and the effects can be varying degrees of aggression, social awareness, stress, vocabulary improvement, or social engagement.



Vocational impact

It represents the extent to which the fulfilment or denial of individuals' vocation and social change can be attributed to educational institutions such as professional colleges, schools, universities, but also to workplaces, domestic environments or voluntary organizations. A society's ability to ensure its members develop according to their abilities is an indicator of its modernity.

Impact

The difference between the observed end state and the likely end state in the absence of any treatment received by the beneficiaries. The consequences of CONCORDIA's programs materializes on the one hand in the achievement of direct objectives, and on the other hand in indirect effects on the community in which it is carried out.

Entry to the system

In systems theory, it represents the magnitude of the independent cause-type variables that externally influence the state and evolution of the system. They define the state variables that have the role of characterizing and describing the current state of the system and the output variables that transmit information about the system to the outside. Social systems are characterized by inputs such as economic processes, demographic factors, socio-cultural elements or natural and ecological features.

Stakeholder

Person or group who have interests in an organization and can affect or be affected by its actions. In the case of an NGO, these can be the persons directly involved, the persons to whom the services are addressed or the donors.

Final State/ Initial State

Suppose we are studying the change of some object.

The initial state is how this object looks at the beginning. The initial state is therefore defined by a set of one or more variables, which take values that constitute the initial state. The object under analysis can be, for example, a complex system, a lot of people, a certain person. For example, if we are interested in the effectiveness of an educational intervention on a school in terms of the high school enrolment rate, the initial state will be given by the high school enrolment rate before intervening through dedicated programs or policies, as well as elements related to the structure of the student population: parents' level of education, gender, age, ethnic composition, presence of disabilities, etc.

The final state is defined similarly, by an identical vector of the characteristics of the studied object, but measured at the end of the intervention, or, more precisely, at the time when it is considered that a change in the initial state should be observed following the intervention carried out. In this report, we define the initial state by socio-economic characteristics of the disadvantaged communities in Ploiești at the time of the establishment of the two day-care centres, and the final state by the same characteristics, but observed at the time of 2021. In addition, we look at individual beneficiaries, and in their case the initial and final states refer to the individual characteristics of each.

Treatment / intervention

Within the experimental method, it represents the selection of variables that are manipulated by the researcher. An experimental treatment involves changing the conditions of the experiment by holding all variables constant and manipulating the treatment, allowing for the potential establishment of a cause-and-effect relationship. In social systems, experimental situations are difficult to design, therefore social interventions oscillate between quasi-experimental situations and complex interventions that consider social subsystems and uncertainty.



This report is written within the **Quality of Life Research Institute (ICCV)** by the authors below, for the benefit of the Humanitarian Organization CONCORDIA Romania. It is part of a package of reports intended for O.U. CONCORDIA regarding the activity of the day-care centres in Ploiești. Previous reports drafted by the same team of authors, were completed throughout 2021, and include:



Evaluarea de impact a Centrelor de Zi CONCORDIA Romania. TEORIA SCHIMBĂRII ȘI INSTRUMENTE DE MONITORIZARE



Evaluarea de impact a Centrelor de Zi CONCORDIA Romania. TEORIA SCHIMBĂRII ȘI INSTRUMENTE DE MONITORIZARE - vers. sintetică



Impact Evaluation for Concordia Day-Care-Centres in Romania. THEORY OF CHANGE AND MONITORING TOOLS



Impact Evaluation for Concordia Day-Care-Centres in Romania. THEORY OF CHANGE AND MONITORING TOOLS. A Synthesis



Evaluarea de impact a Centrelor de Zi CONCORDIA Romania. INCEPTION REPORT

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All perspectives, opinions and results presented in this study are the product of the authors' work and do not in any way implicate the host organization (ICCV) or the beneficiary (CONCORDIA).

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