

EFFECTIVELY COMBATING

GENERATIONAL CHILD POVERTY

CONCORDIA DAY CENTRE MODEL

CONCORDIA Social Projects Non-Profit Foundation

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A.

CONCORDIA

FOREWORD

Every child deserves a safe place to grow, learn, and dream – and someone who believes in them.

At CONCORDIA, **we believe that all children have the right to live in dignity, with opportunities to flourish and grow.** Yet, across Europe, **too many children still wake up in poverty,** go to bed hungry, and remain trapped in a cycle of exclusion that repeats across generations.

We meet children like these every day in Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Kosovo and Austria. We see their resilience and the courage of families raising them under difficult circumstances. **This report outlines our response to their struggles – and our invitation to those with power and responsibility to act.**

The CONCORDIA Day Centre Model is a tested, adaptable approach that can support any community affected by generational child poverty. Generational poverty is a long-term form of deprivation transmitted across generations. As highlighted by Ruby K. Payne, families face barriers that go beyond income – including limited access to education, healthcare, and social capital – making early, integrated. community-based support essential.[1]

We know this Model works, because we see children returning to school, parents feeling less alone, and communities finding resilience. This report is not only a reflection of what we have achieved so far but **a call to action:** to governments and authorities at national and EU level, ministries, municipalities, schools, other civil organisations and international partners.

We call on municipalities and local **authorities to join us in scaling the CONCORDIA Day Centre Model,** adapting it to the local realities with our full technical and expert support. Together, we can **co-create sustainable solutions** that strengthen families, prevent child neglect, and help reduce poverty.



By working hand in hand – sharing know-how, training, and resources – we can ensure that every community has the capacity to give its children the safety, education, and hope they deserve.

Together, we can develop sustainable solutions that strengthen families, prevent neglect, and reduce poverty at its roots.

Conny Burtscher
Bernhard Drumel
International Executive Board of
CONCORDIA Social Projects

B.

SCALABLE, COMMUNITY-BASED MODEL
TO **REDUCE CHILD POVERTY**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The current policy report presents the CONCORDIA Day Centre Model as a proven and transferable solution to combat the root causes of generational poverty across Europe.

The Model, operational in 20 centres across 5 countries with 6 more in development, offers an adaptable modular structure rooted in child-centred, multidisciplinary care. The model builds on three decades of experience and combines prevention, education support, psychosocial care, and family-strengthening measures.

The 2025 report builds on the 2024 **Breaking the Cycle**[2] report, which emphasised the need for systemic, rights-based responses to child poverty. In the current report, CONCORDIA uses the term intergenerational child poverty to describe the persistent transmission of poverty and social exclusion from parents to children across generations. The term is sometimes also referred to as 'generational child poverty' in public discourse.

"When poverty is inherited across generations, families are locked into a cycle that limits opportunities long before a child can speak or dream. Children growing up in such environments face severe structural barriers, leaving them with little room to shape their own futures and undermining their fundamental dignity."

Martina Raytchinova
International Programme Development Director

The new report builds on that foundation, demonstrating how the Day Centre Model integrates educational support, psychosocial care, and family counselling in a consistent, yet locally tailored way, ensuring sustainability and strengthening local ownership.

- **A tested and scalable Model,** already replicated in five countries.
- Quantitative and qualitative data confirming **improvement in child well-being,** school performance, family resilience, and inclusion – validated by an independent Impact Assessment in Romania, which showed reduced school dropout, stronger family bonds, and increased parental engagement.[3]
- Partnerships with municipalities, national institutions and universities that reinforce sustainability and **local ownership.**

Finally, the report provides **concrete, experience-based recommendations** to national stakeholders in Bulgaria, Kosovo, Romania, Moldova, Austria, and Germany, as well as to EU institutions and international partners.

It presents the **CONCORDIA Day Centre Model** as a practical and adaptable approach to delivering child-centred, community-based services – with **promising evidence of its potential to help reduce intergenerational poverty in the region.**

C.

INTERGENERATIONAL **CHILD POVERTY**

THE VICIOUS CYCLE



Across Europe, poverty and social exclusion remain systemic and deeply entrenched, with children and young people disproportionately affected. According to Eurostat, **93.3 million people – 21% of the EU population – lived at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2024**.[4] For **children,** the risk is even higher: **24.8% grow up in poverty, with alarmingly high rates in countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, and Moldova.**[5]

Poverty is multidimensional and intergenerational. It includes lack of access to education, healthcare, decent housing, participation, and economic opportunities. Families caught in this circle face long-standing marginalisation that spans generations. Children born into such environments often remain trapped, with few chances of escape. As the report observed:

"Children raised in poverty often face psychological and emotional challenges and adverse experiences such as social exclusion and stigmatisation that can impact their long-term well-being and economic prospects. As a result, they cannot break free from the cycle of poverty and it repeats itself from generation to generation." – Breaking the Cycle, 2024

Today's socio-political context – including shrinking civic space, democratic backsliding and the war in Ukraine – has deepened inequalities and fuelled hostility against vulnerable groups such as Roma communities, refugees and migrants, and LGBTQIA+ people.

In this context, progress towards EU 2030 targets remains uneven**.** Many people across Europe experience multiple and overlapping deprivations while remaining largely invisible in policy statistics. Existing measures remain fragmented and insufficient to tackle the root causes of intergenerational poverty. As stated in our 2024 Policy Report:

Breaking this cycle requires coordinated political action and a clear strategy across all levels of government, civil society, and local communities. Generational poverty is not inevitable – but preventing it must be recognised as a **collective responsibility**. This is precisely the challenge the **CONCORDIA Day Centre Model** seeks to address, offering a practical, community-based pathway out of generational poverty.

The CONCORDIA Day Centre Model recognises Ruby K. Payne's theory that poverty is more than a lack of money – it includes social, emotional, and educational disadvantages passed down through generations.

Rather than focusing solely on material aid, the Model emphasises the importance of family support, life skills, and building social capital to break the cycle of long-term poverty.

D.

FROM INSTITUTIONAL CARE TO **PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT**

CONCORDIA'S IMPACT MODEL

CONCORDIA's Impact Model guides interventions that prevent family separation, ensure access to education, and protect children from violence.

Through multidisciplinary teams, integrated services, and strong local partnerships, the model fosters resilience, personal development, and social inclusion.

Each intervention is intentionally structured to help children and youth build the skills, confidence, and opportunities they need to lead independent, fulfilling lives. The **scalable design** ensures consistent quality while **allowing replication across diverse contexts.** The Model is not intended to replace public services, but to complement and strengthen them.

At its core, the Impact Model embodies **CONCORDIA's fundamental values** – solidarity, child-centeredness, and human dignity – expressed through **courage, heart connection, commitment, and chances for growth.** By centering our mission in every programme, we ensure that children and families not only receive support in times of need, but are also empowered to thrive and break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

"No institution, no matter how professional or well-run, can ever replace the love, stability, and sense of belonging that a family provides. This is why our work has evolved from residential care to prevention: supporting families early, long before separation becomes the only option."

Elena Matache
International Programme Operations Director







1 & 2 *Day Centre Casa Austria, Romania*
3 *Day Centre Ali Ibra, Kosovo*

CONCORDIA's Impact Model translates this mission into action across five interconnected **Pathways of Change:**

- **Childcare:** Safe, nurturing care including nutrition, healthcare, and emotional support to promote healthy development and school readiness.
- **Community-based Intervention:** Day centre and outreach services to strengthen families, reduce isolation, and support more resilient communities.
- **Education and professional training:** Academic support, remedial education, and vocational training to reduce learning gaps and expand opportunities.
- **Employment and social business:** Career guidance, skills training, mentorship, and social enterprise pathways towards economic independence.
- **Empowerment:** Building confidence, life skills, and agency, by involving children and young people in decision-making, advocacy, and civic participation.

These pathways support progress towards SDGs[6] on poverty reduction, education, decent work, and reduced inequalities.[7]

DE-INSTITUTIONALISATION

WHY WE CHANGED COURSE

For over 30 years, CONCORDIA offered placement services. In line with national reforms and EU standards, we began a process of de-institutionalisation in 2014 – shifting to family- and community-based services.

At the heart of this reform lies a conviction: poverty should never be the reason for a child to grow up without their family.

Our priority has become to support parents to **prevent abandonment** – through family support, community services, and empowerment – so that children can remain within a safe, nurturing family environment.

According to internal organisational data, since 2014, more than **600 children** have transitioned successfully through our de-institutionalisation programmes. In Romania and Moldova, large residential facilities have been replaced with family-type homes, foster care families, and small crisis units that more closely resemble a family life. In Bulgaria, the transition has been completed, while in Romania and Moldova, the process is expected to conclude by 2028.

This shift ensures that every child not only has the right to protection, but also to **belonging, attachment, and hope for the future.** The **Day Centre Model** has become a central part of this approach – demonstrating that prevention, early support, and community-based services can create meaningful opportunities for children's development, inclusion, and well-being.

Day Centre Zaharna Fabrika, Bulgaria 1
Day Centre Malki Iskar, Bulgaria 2

In many of the countries where CONCORDIA operates, prevention work in child protection is still largely understood as intervening after a risk has emerged, rather than as proactive support to strengthen families and reduce vulnerabilities before problems occur. This reflects the legacy of a more reactive, problem-oriented approach – often shaped by medical or institutional traditions – that prioritised addressing crises over building resilience.

Ongoing **child protection reforms in Europe increasingly recognise the importance of prevention, early intervention, and family-centred support services.** However, implementation remains uneven. Public analyses and sectoral assessments often refer to the "dynamics" of prevention and reintegration efforts, yet success rates in these areas continue to decline. Contributing factors commonly include reduced parental capacity, limited education, overcrowded households, socio-economic hardship, and mistrust or disengagement from public services. These trends highlight the persistent structural and social barriers that hamper effective prevention. They also point to the need for innovative, community-based approaches that actively engage families, build trust, and support sustainable pathways out of vulnerability.

In this context, **the Day Centre Model can play a crucial role in addressing these gaps** and completing the **shift in understanding towards a preventive and family-centred system.** By integrating core principles such as mobile outreach work, family preservation, and the activation of community resources, Day Centres embody the proactive, community-based approach that remains underdeveloped across Europe.

Strengthening and expanding this Model can help consolidate the transition from a reactive, institution-oriented system towards one that is preventive, family-focused, and community-driven, ensuring that every child can grow up in a safe and nurturing family environment.

E.

WHY THIS MODEL **WORKS**

CONCORDIA DAY CENTRE MODEL

E.1. PROVEN CHILD CENTERED MODEL

KEY RATIONALE

Many children attending CONCORDIA Day Centres live in precarious conditions, including very low household income, overcrowded rooms shared with the extended family, and limited access to water, sanitation, or electricity. Many also lack nutritious meals, clean clothing, and consistent support for school. These challenges often lead to social exclusion and reduced life opportunities.

Vulnerable **parents frequently face challenges in raising their children** as financial hardship, mental health difficulties, and social isolation can hinder their capacity to meet their children's basic needs and support their emotional well-being.

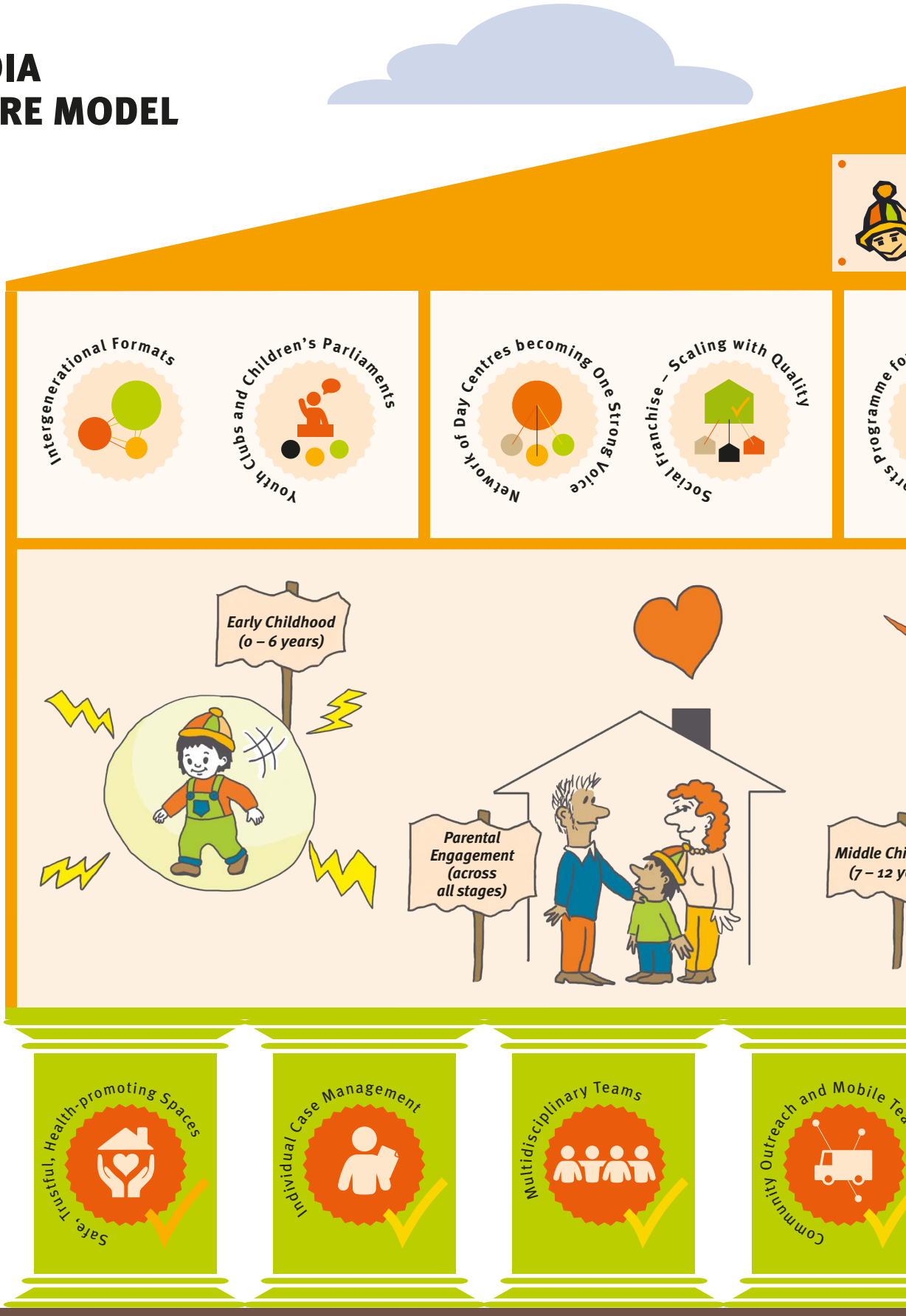
The CONCORDIA Day Centre Model provides a practical, child-centred response to these challenges. Built on a few decades of experience, it now operates across five countries, with a track record of adaptability and replication in diverse contexts. **The Model supports continuity of care and support to the child's development** – combining education, psychosocial services, family strengthening, and pathways to independence.

Above all, it ensures that children and families who are often invisible to public systems are recognised, supported, and empowered.

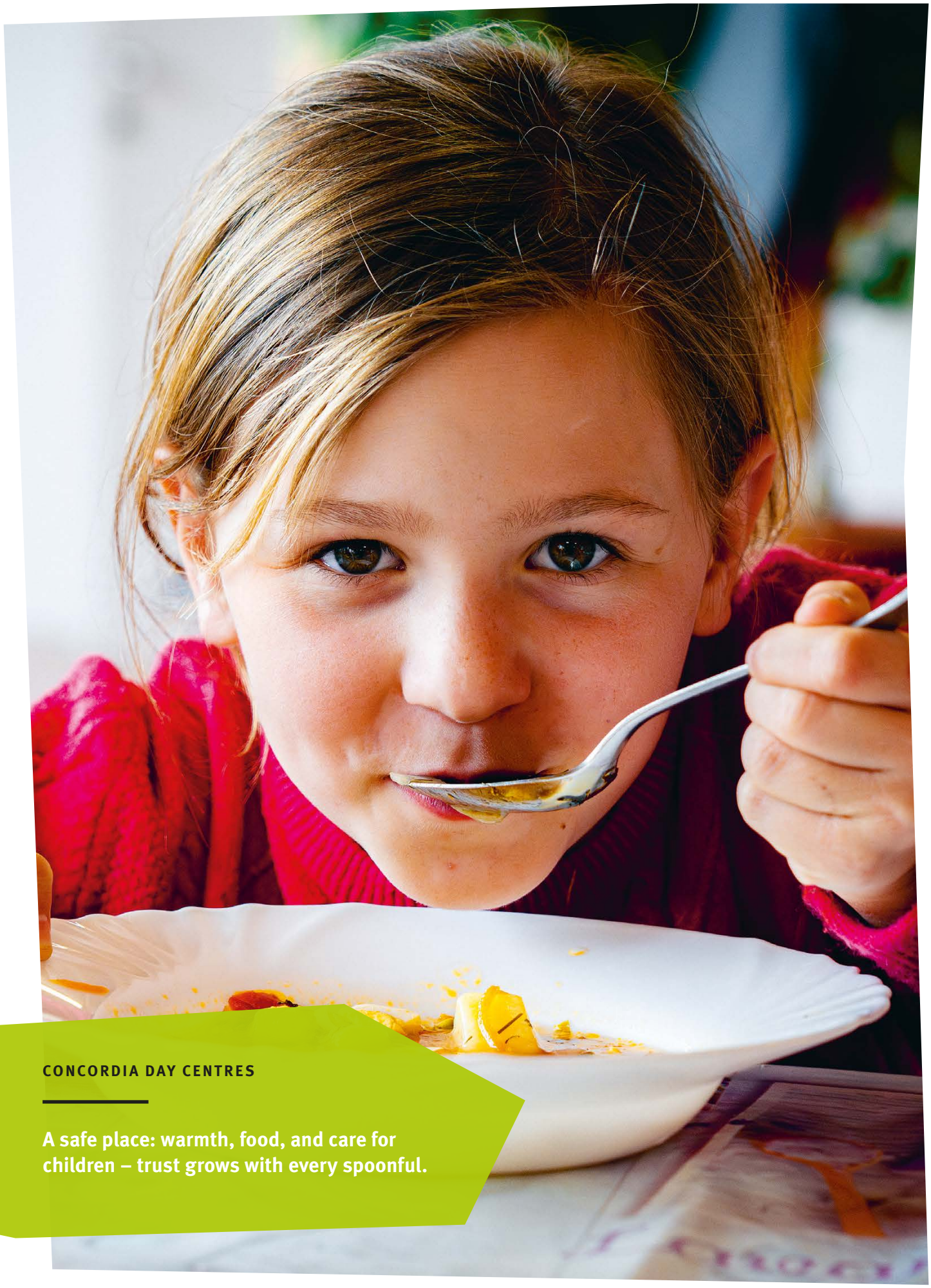

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CONCORDIA DAY CENTRE MODEL




WELCOME TO
concordia
Decentralised Day Centre for School-Based Prevention
Music programme – A Catalyst for Learning and Inclusion
Sensory Room as an Innovative Therapeutic Space
Multicultural Centre for the Needs of Refugee Families
Academia – Building Capacity for High-Standard Day Centres
IN SCHOOL
Adolescence
(13 – 18 years)
MY DECISION
HOTEL
SKILLS
MARGINALISATION
BARBER
BAKERY
RESOURCES
Transition to
Adulthood
(16 – 25 years)
Parental Engagement
Child and Youth Participation
Partnership and Local Ownerships
Quality Ensurance and Learning



CONCORDIA DAY CENTRES

A safe place: warmth, food, and care for children – trust grows with every spoonful.

Day Centre Dubăsarii Vechi, Moldova

E.2. DE-INSTITUTIONALISATION

FOUNDATIONS OF THE DAY CENTRE MODEL

The Day Centre Model rests on a set of core foundations that are non-negotiable wherever it is implemented.

These elements form the **backbone of our approach:** they guarantee dignity and safety for children, ensure consistent quality across contexts, and create the conditions for trust, learning, and long-term change. While programmes may differ according to local needs, **these foundations remain the same in every centre.** Together, they translate our mission into daily practice and provide the structure that makes the model both effective and scalable.



Safe, trustful, health-promoting spaces

Many children arrive at CONCORDIA Day Centres from overcrowded homes with limited living conditions. The centres offer daily meals, hygiene products, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities within structured routines and safeguarding protocols. This supports rebuilding trust and provides a foundation for learning, school attendance, and healthy development.



Individual case management

Case management at CONCORDIA places the **best interests of the child at the centre.** The care for every child at our service includes a standard intake and a **comprehensive needs assessment** covering education, health, psycho-social well-being, as well the wider family context. Based on this, **an Individual Development Plan** (IDP) is prepared, with referrals to schools, health services, and child protection actors when needed. **Progress is closely monitored** and regularly adjusted to respond to the child's evolving needs.

A crucial element in this process is the **involvement of local stakeholders** – teachers, social workers, heath specialists, police, and municipal representatives – who know the families and the realities of the communities they belong to. Their engagement ensures risks are identified early, challenges are addressed quickly, and families are connected to the necessary services at the right time.

Within the Day Centre, case management coordinates educational support addressing individual learning needs, psycho-social counselling, basic health monitoring and alleviation of socially difficult situations. **Mobile teams extend this work into the home,** ensuring continuity of care for children and parents, and – importantly – reaching those who are extremely isolated or unable to come to the centres due to distance or other impeding circumstances. This approach not only strengthens local networks of support, but also creates lasting change that benefits both the individuals and the wider community.



Multidisciplinary teams

The Day Centre Model relies on multidisciplinary teams that include social workers, educators, psychologists, job coaches, outreach workers, and where relevant, medical assistants. This mix of expertise ensures holistic support for children and families, addressing both immediate needs and underlying vulnerabilities. These teams collaborate closely with schools, local authorities, and other partners to coordinate interventions and ensure families can access the services they require.

To maintain quality of services, staff receive regular professional training through CONCORDIA Academia, including non-violent communication, emotional regulation, and trauma-informed practice. This strenthens both service quality and local professional capacity.[10]





Community outreach and mobile teams

Mobile outreach is an essential part of CONCORDIA's integrated model, ensuring that children and families who cannot access Day Centres due to isolation, stigma, transport barriers, or crisis situations still receive timely and holistic support. Through multidisciplinary teams, CONCORDIA brings assistance directly into homes – providing crisis response, school mediation, help with documentation and entitlements, basic medical checks, psychosocial first aid, and, when needed, food, hygiene packages, and information on education or labour opportunities.

In 2024 alone, **mobile teams across four countries carried out 6,635 home visits,** preventing risks such as domestic violence and school dropout, and strengthening cooperation with local authorities, schools, police, doctors, and community leaders. Beyond emergency response, **outreach plays a preventive role** by stabilising families, fostering resilience, and reducing the need for costly interventions such as institutionalisation.

Innovative initiatives like the **CONCORDIA Caravan** in Romania extend these efforts by bringing educational, psychosocial, and environmental activities to remote and marginalised communities, promoting sustainability in line with the European Green Deal and the EU Child Guarantee. Approaches like these show how CONCORDIA aims to reach every child – combining mobility, prevention, and partnership to create inclusive, community-based networks of care.



Parental engagement and support

Parental involvement and **active cooperation between home, school, and the Day Centre** are crucial for children's educational success and emotional development. Recognising parents as key partners in every child's progress, CONCORDIA places strong emphasis on building their capacity and confidence to nurture, guide, and protect their children.

Parental support is provided through group workshops, the School for Parents programme, individual and family counselling, community activities, and home-based coaching tailored to each family's situation. These activities help parents strengthen their skills, improve communication and emotional connection within the family, and adopt constructive approaches to discipline. They also reduce domestic tensions, prevent violence risks, and reinforce school attendance through regular cooperation with teachers and school workers.

Across all five CONCORDIA countries, thousands of parents have participated in structured group sessions and individual counselling, leading to measurable improvements in family dynamics and child outcomes. Our analyses show that in Romania, parents attending School for Parents workshops report improved communciation and reduced conflict at home; in Moldova, monthly training on hygiene, non-violent discipline, and crisis management has helped reduce cases of family separation; in Bulgaria, joint family events and open days at the Posoka Centre have strengthened trust and cooperation between families, schools and service providers.

By empowering parents and fostering partnerships between families and professionals, CONCORDIA not only improves individual children's well-being but also contributes to stronger, more resilient family and community networks capable of sustaining change over time.



Child and youth participation

Participation is a core principle of the Day Centre Model. Using the Lundy Model,[8] we ensure children and young people have the space and support to express their views and influence decisions affecting them.

Participation takes place through Youth Councils, Children's Parliaments, Youth Clubs, debate groups, and structured feedback mechanisms. These platforms enable children to develop leadership skills, contribute to centre rules and activities, and advocate for their interests and rights.[9]

1 *Day Centre Congaz, Moldova*
2 *Day Centre Casa Alexandra, Romania*





Partnerships and local ownership

Strong partnerships with national and municipal authorities, schools, NGOs, and community organisations ensure that services remain relevant and integrated into local systems.

In Romania, scaling is supported through the CentreZi RO network and a social franchise approach. In Bulgaria, the Model operates through delegated municipal service contracts. In Austria, it is linked to municipal education services, while in Moldova, partnerships with universities and CONCORDIA Academia help train new professionals. In Kosovo, multifunctional centres operate under accreditations from both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Justice. These partnerships strengthen coordination and embed the Model within local service provision.



Quality assurance, monitoring and learning

Maintaining high standards and fostering continuous learning are central to the CONCORDIA Day Centre Model. Quality is ensured through a core manual, clear operational standards, regular supervision, and on-going capacity-building, as well as peer-learning networks such as exchange visits, online forums, and joint quality reviews. **External evaluations** complement internal monitoring, validating outcomes and guiding improvements. An independent **Impact Assessment in Romania** (2021) confirmed that CONCORDIA's integrated approach reduces early school dropout, strengthens family relations, and enhances children's well-being – demonstrating that the Model delivers sustainable, measurable results.

A unified Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is now in process of embedding across all countries to demonstrate impact and support learning. It **combines quantitative indicators with qualitative insights** from children, families, and staff, ensuring accountability and responsiveness to evolving needs. Since 2025, **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** monitored across the Model include children's well-being across emotional, physical, social and safety dimensions; school attendance and learning progress; and young people's skills, confidence, and access to training or employment opportunities. Together, these indicators support continuous learning and ensure that services remain responsive to the needs of children and young people.

Child well-being is assessed across emotional, physical, social, safety, and environmental dimensions; children across all countries report feeling safe, supported, and happier since joining CONCORDIA services.

Education outcomes show improved attendance and academic performance, with preliminary analyses of data showing that 77% of children in Romania have improved their grades within a year and the school attendance in Kosovo has risen by 27%.

1. *Music Class, Day Centre Tranzit, Kosovo*
2. *Music Class, Day Centre Tranzit, Kosovo*
3. *Day Centre Dubăsarii Vechi, Moldova*
4. *Day Centre Tranzit, Kosovo*

Additionally, in order to address learning gaps caused by poverty, unstable family environment or limited school attendance, CONCORDIA Romania has implemented the **Remedial Education Initiative** which provides targeted educational support, combining small-group tutoring, mentoring, and digital learning tools.

Family resilience has grown through the School for Parents programme, helping families adopt positive, non-violent parenting and better communication with schools.

Youth employability initiatives, such as Moldova's Youth Clubs and Austria's Digi-Women programme, build life skills, confidence, and pathways to sustainable employment.

Each child has an Individual Development Plan (IDP), guiding progress across wellbeing, education, and family integration. Real-time data collection and interactive mapping tools, such as CentreZi RO in Romania, enable evidence-based decisions and advocacy for public investment in prevention services.

Early results from 2025 already show positive results in children's well-being, education, and family stability, confirming that the CONCORDIA Day Centre Model is not only effective but continuously evolving through evidence and shared learning.



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E.3. DAY CENTRE MODEL

LIFECYCLE INTERVENTIONS

The Day Centre Model supports children and families across the entire lifecycle, from early childhood through the transition to adulthood.

Not every centre has integrated all elements of support for all stages yet, but across our network we have evidence of impact at each critical age. This life course approach allows us to respond to the evolving needs of children, while providing continuity of trust, safety, and opportunity.

Awesome Childhood Centre, Bulgaria

Early childhood (0 – 6 years)

The first years of life are decisive for breaking the cycle of poverty. CONCORDIA Day Centres provide holistic early childhood education and care (ECEC), combining structured learning activities, play, nutrition, WASH, and parental counselling. Parents learn positive, non-violent parenting practices and routines that promote health and development, while early screenings detect potential delays in time for intervention.

Examples:

In Odobești, Romania,
Maria, a single mother of eight children, struggled to access early education for her youngest daughters, aged three and five. Through CONCORDIA Day Centre, both children were enrolled in kindergarten, receiving daily support while Maria accessed counselling and parental support – giving the family a path towards stability and resilience.

In Ploiești, Romania,
outreach teams tackled low kindergarten attendance by engaging directly with families and partnering with schools. As a result, enrolment increased from just four to twenty-eight children, proving that trust-building and family mediation can make education both accessible and attractive for vulnerable communities.

In the Tranzit Centre, Kosovo,
CONCORDIA runs a licensed early childhood programme for children aged three to six, officially recognised by the Ministry of Education. Its full-day structure integrates social inclusion with quality education and allows parents to work – a crucial support for families from Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian backgrounds facing social and economic exclusion.

In Malki Iskar, Bulgaria,
where formal nurseries and kindergartens are missing, CONCORDIA Day Centre supports over 150 children and their families.[11] The Centre serves as a community anchor, offering early learning, parenting support, health consultations, and educational activities. A new Early Childhood Development Centre for children aged zero to four is also being established to prevent early isolation and to help parents enter the labour market. These efforts directly contribute to Bulgaria's de-institutionalisation reform by filling systemic gaps in early education and care.

Middle childhood (7 – 12 years)

Primary school years are **critical for academic progress and emotional development.** Day Centres provide homework support clubs, remedial education, arts and sports, and structured psychosocial support to address bullying, strengthen resilience, and build confidence. Parents are engaged through counselling and School for Parents programme to reinforce the value of education.

Examples:

In Prizren, Kosovo,
Rafi (12) discovered his talent for the saxophone and now dreams of starting a music group, while Esma (10) found purpose in singing and aspires to become a professional singer. Both children were supported through CONCORDIA's creative and psychosocial programmes, which nurture self-expression and build confidence among children from marginalised communities.

Ermal, also from Kosovo,
had experienced domestic violence and struggled with fear and emotional withdrawal. Through tailored psychosocial support and regular participation in arts and music sessions at the Day Centre, he began to rebuild his sense of identity and safety – showing how creative engagement can be a powerful tool for recovery and resilience.

In Sofia, Bulgaria,
Georgi (10), once quiet and withdrawn, now speaks with joy about animals, nature, and the excursions organised by the "Awesome Childhood" Day Centre. The programme's combination of structured learning and creative activities has helped him – and many other children – gain confidence, improve school participation, and feel a stronger sense of belonging.

In Nisporeni, Moldova,
twelve-year-old Nicolae, a sixth-grade student, describes CONCORDIA Day Centre as his "second family" – a place where he feels safe, supported, and encouraged every day. Through educational, social, and emotional support, Nicolae has found not only a space to grow, but also a renewed motivation to learn and thrive.

Adolescence (13 – 18 years)

During middle and late adolescence, CONCORDIA Day Centres combine academic support, mentoring, trauma-informed counselling, and Youth Clubs focused on life skills, financial literacy, sexual and reproductive health, and civic engagement. Mechanisms like Children's Parliaments and Youth Councils anchor participation in the Lundy Model, enabling young people to take leadership roles. School dropout and early marriage remain significant risks across all CONCORDIA programme countries, particularly among children from marginalised communities such as Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian populations, as well as those facing poverty, gender-based discrimination, or limited access to education.

Examples:

At the Posoka Day Centre in Sofia,
children who previously struggled with academic performance found new motivation through a combined approach linking football training with tutoring and school engagement. This innovative method not only improved school results but also helped build discipline, teamwork, and a strong sense of belonging among participating children.

Marina (17), also from Sofia,
was once shy and unsure of her place in the community. Through CONCORDIA Debate Club, she developed public speaking skills and gained confidence to express her opinion. Today, Marina actively participates in community forums, representing her peers and advocating for the needs of young people like herself.





CONCORDIA DAY CENTRES

Strengthening families: through guidance and care, parents and children grow together towards stability and hope.

Bolohan, Moldova

Transition to adulthood (16 – 25 years)

Youth and young care leavers need structured support towards independent life. Centres provide vocational counselling, job coaching, apprenticeships, and targeted training in information technologies (IT), languages, and life skills. Social Housing arrangements give young people the opportunity to practice independent living in a safe, supervised setting.

Examples:

In Moldova,
young people transitioning out of care have successfully entered apprenticeships and secured stable employment through CONCORDIA's tailored vocational training and job coaching. These structured pathways offer both skills and confidence for independent living.

Tatiana (18), in Romania,
who grew up in care, now dreams of studying in Romania, while Catalina (20), once raised in a family-type house, is currently a university student and an active volunteer. Their stories show how sustained support during adolescence leads to empowered, resilient young adults.

Atanas (24) in Bulgaria,
a young parent who faced homelessness in the past accessed mentoring, housing, and emotional support with the help of CONCORDIA's "Zdravei" centre for young people and "Timok". Today, he works two jobs, cares for his daughter, and is saving to build a secure home – proving that holistic youth support can create lasting change.

School for Parents programme

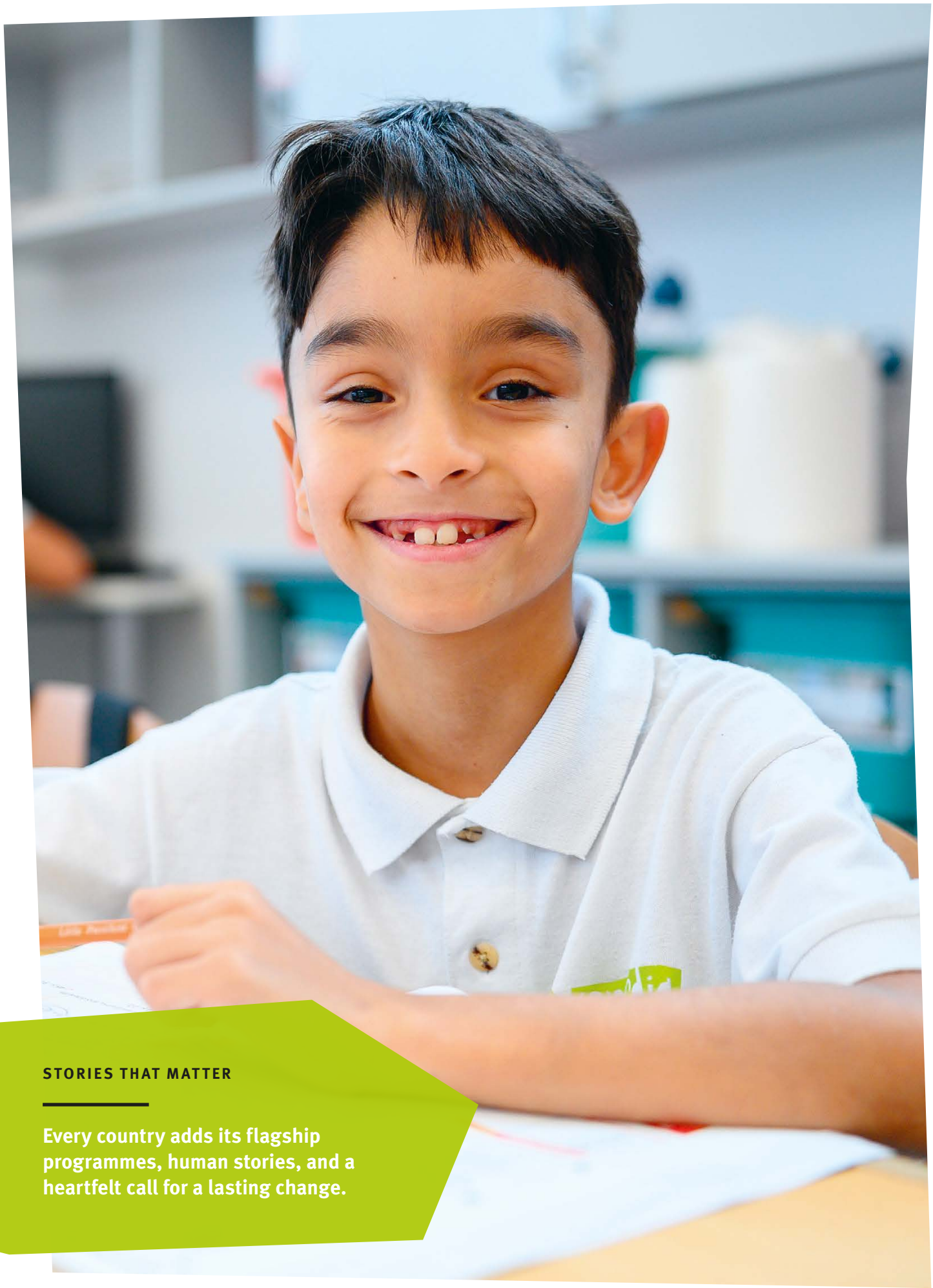
Parental engagement is an essential pillar throughout the life-cycle. School for Parents combines group sessions, individual counselling, and peer learning to strengthen family stability and reduce risks such as violence, neglect, or early school dropout.

Examples:

In Nisporeni, Moldova,
Ion and Olga, parents of eleven children, moved from a state of crisis toward stability after joining CONCORDIA School for Parents. Once overwhelmed by addiction, Ion became a more engaged father and took active steps to improve the home environment for his children.

In Taraclia, Moldova,
a single mother of three gained confidence and practical tools through parenting groups. As a result, she now communicates more openly with her children, creating a calmer and more nurturing family dynamics and relations.

In the village of Malki Iskar, Bulgaria,
Tsvetana, a grandmother caring for over forty members of her extended family, embodies quiet resilience. With support from CONCORDIA Day Centre, she accesses food, medical aid, and parenting support – ensuring her grandchildren are safe, fed, and in school. In turn, she shares her strength with others in the community, reminding us that empowered care-givers are the foundation and the pillar of child's well-being and community life.



STORIES THAT MATTER

Every country adds its flagship programmes, human stories, and a heartfelt call for a lasting change.

F.

FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES, HUMAN STORIES
AND **CALLS TO ACTION**

COUNTRY IMPLEMENTATION

Across five countries, the CONCORDIA Day Centre Model has established a robust foundation of core intervention standards.

At the same time, **each country has developed distinctive special programme flavour tailored to local needs and opportunities** – ranging from intergenerational activities in Moldova, a sports academy in Bulgaria, a sensory room and music school in Kosovo, to refugee integration support in Austria. Our team in Romania, where we first developed a consistent model, has already moved one step forward in scaling up this model, through the Network of Day Centres and a social franchise model. These Flagship Programmes exemplify Centres of excellence and innovation, providing inspiration for replication across other services and enhancing the core Model with complementary approaches.

Primary School EduCampus, Romania

Within each country's section, we highlight these Flagship Programmes alongside two **individual stories** of a child or young person, representing the thousands whose lives have been positively affected by CONCORDIA's work. While not every story ends in success – interventions sometimes arrive too late or face limitations – these testimonials demonstrate our commitment to continuous improvement and learning.

Each country section concludes with a clear **"Call to Action"** for policymakers and stakeholders at national level, outlining the concrete steps needed to embed CONCORDIA Day Centres Model into national systems, secure sustainable resourcing, and position the Model as an important contribution towards child poverty prevention.

The chapter closes with **actionable recommendations for EU institutions and European-level stakeholders,** supporting the wider replication and scaling of this proven, evidence-informed approach.

F.1. FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES

MOLDOVA

Moldova faces some of Europe's deepest, most ruralised child poverty. **In 2024, 33.6% of children lived in absolute poverty, rising to 46.6% in rural areas** – where services are scarce, transport is limited, and families often rely on precarious seasonal work.[12]

Around 21% of children (150,000) have at least one parent living abroad, while approximately **5% (35,000) grow up with both parents absent.**[13] Local systems struggle to provide consistent early intervention, psychosocial support, and links to education and health.

Against this backdrop, CONCORDIA operates **10 rural Multifunctional Centres** (MFCs) that combine day services for children, parental support, intergenerational activities, outreach, and youth work under one roof. Children receive home-work support, psychosocial counselling, nutritious meals, hygiene support (laundry, showers, WASH services) and creative activities; mobile teams reach remote households with hot lunches, hygiene support, and early interventions to prevent domestic violence. Academic partnerships with Moldova State University and Free International University in Moldova (ULIM) create a pipeline of trained social workers, ensuring the model strengthens both local families and the wider social service workforce.

The MFC model fills an important system gap. It offers **low-threshold access,** integrated case management, and strong school-municipal partnerships.

The result is a practical, scalable approach that improves school engagement, strengthens families, and prevents costly crisis placements.


1


2



FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME 1

Intergenerational Formats with Mutual Benefits

What it is. Intergenerational formats intentionally connect three groups of people that rarely meet in structured ways in rural Moldova: young children, adolescents, and isolated elders.

How it works in practice. Weekly day-care activities for seniors (light movement, memory games, cultural circles) are paired with children's reading clubs, music, or crafts. Youth volunteers deliver hot lunches, assist with errands, and co-host community events. Staff co-plan activities with local partners – mayor's offices, parishes, libraries, cultural centres – while children practice reading, elders share folk traditions, and youth set up digital corners for calls to relatives abroad.

Why it matters and how to scale. These activities reduce isolation, strengthen empathy and confidence among children, and build community trust in the MFC. With minimum costs, municipalities can replicate this approach by leveraging existing venues and aligning with school calendars. Tracking simple indicators (elderly participation, youth volunteer hours, children's prosocial behaviour) can build the case for co-funding in local budgets and integration into de-institutionalisation and active-ageing policies.



FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME 2

Youth Clubs and Children's Parliaments

What they are. Youth Clubs (15 –25 years) provide life skills, financial literacy, sexual and reproductive health education, and career guidance. Children's Parliaments (9 –14 years) apply the Lundy Model, giving younger children real platforms to shape centre rules and community projects.

How they work in practice. Youth clubs provide skills-building activities, including workshops on CV writing, budgeting, IT, languages, and self-defence, as well as debate clubs and driving classes. Care leavers benefit from targeted job coaching and post-placement follow-up. Children's Parliaments, meeting monthly, gather peer views and present proposals to MFC staff and schools—ranging from extending home-work-club hours to introducing anti-bullying campaigns. Meetings with Local Councils make local decision-makers aware of the needs and problems of children and young people in the community. Joint sessions with local police and health services normalize youth-institution dialogue and strengthen referral pathways.

Why they matter and how to scale. These platforms boost school attendance, agency, and civic skills, while Youth Clubs create tangible education-to-work pathways. Scaling requires a toolkit (scripts, election guidelines, micro-grants, monitoring and evaluation templates), embedding participation targets in each child's individual development plan, and strengthening partnerships with universities to train facilitators. Municipal co-financing can institutionalise Youth Councils, turning participation into a permanent feature of local decision-making.

1 *Day Centre Tudora, Moldova*
2 *Youth Club, Moldova*

Valeriu

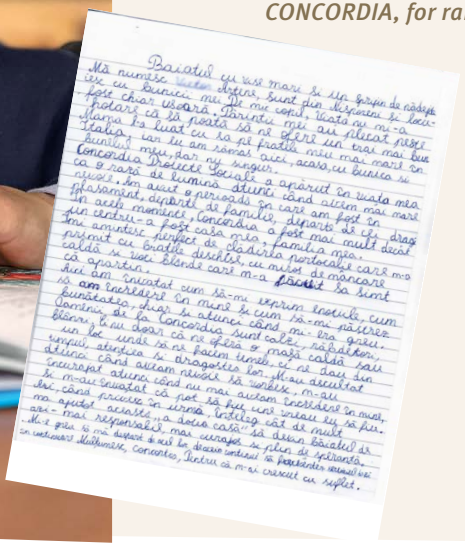
Age: 11 years

My name is Valeriu, I'm from Nisporeni, and I live with my grandparents. Since I was a little child, life hasn't always been easy. My parents went abroad to offer us a better life. My mother took my older brother with her to Italy, while I stayed here, at home, with my grandma and grandpa – but not alone.

CONCORDIA Social Projects came into my life like a ray of light just when I needed it most. There was a time when I was in foster care, far from my family, far from my loved ones. In those moments, CONCORDIA was more than just a center – it was my home, my family.

I remember perfectly the orange building that welcomed me with open arms, the smell of warm food, and the gentle voices that made me feel like I belonged. Here, I learned how to express my emotions, how to believe in myself, and how to stay kind even when things were hard. The people at CONCORDIA are warm, patient, and kind. They don't just offer us a hot meal – they give us their time, attention, and love. They listened when I needed to talk, encouraged me when I had lost confidence, and taught me that I can become whoever I want to be. Today, when I look back, I understand how much this "second home" helped me become the boy I am now: more respectful, braver, and full of hope. It's hard for me to say goodbye to this place, so I continue to attend the day center every day. Thank you, CONCORDIA, for raising me with heart.





Adelina

Age: 11 years

Hobby: I like to dance and to read
I remember very well the first day I came to the center. I was a bit shy and didn't know what to expect. It's been a year now since I started attending the center, and when I think about the journey I've been on, I realise how much I've grown and changed here.

Coming to the center has helped me a lot. In the beginning, I wasn't confident when I had to speak in front of others. Here, I learned to be braver and to express my ideas. The group discussions helped me become more informed and understand the world around me. I've learned to be more open, to listen, and to make new friends – something I used to find quite difficult.

The greatest quality I've improved is believing in myself and not being afraid to try new things. I've also become more responsible and organized, especially with my home-work.

When I think about the future, I can see my path more clearly than before. I dream of becoming a teacher because I love helping other children learn and discover new things, just like the educators here helped me.

To those children who are just starting out or thinking about joining CONCORDIA, I would like to say: Don't be afraid to try! Here you will find kind people who will help you grow, learn, and become better. You will leave stronger and more confident.

To CONCORDIA, I want to say a big THANK YOU for the care, patience, and everything I have learned. Thanks to you, I am a better person today and I have big hopes for the future.

With love,
Adelina



MOLDOVA

CALL TO ACTION

PIVOTAL:

Day Centres in Moldova play a crucial preventive role: providing after-school learning support, psychosocial counselling, parental guidance, outreach to remote villages, and intergenerational initiatives. Yet, access remains limited – too many children are left without this safety net, raising risks of dropout, neglect, or separation.



"Replicating the Day Centre model in Moldova is key to tackling poverty at its roots. By supporting children, engaging families and communities, and building essential life skills, Day Centres create real pathways to inclusion, resilience, and long-term opportunity. Scaling this model helps ensure that a child's future is shaped by potential, not by inherited disadvantage."

Vadim Tarna
Executive Director CONCORDIA Moldova

We urge the national authorities to:

ALIGN WITH THE RESTART REFORM (2023–2026)

- Guarantee **minimum quality standards for social services,** especially for children and families.
- Ensure a sufficient, skilled, and motivated **workforce.**
- **Integrate Day Centres as a central element of reform,** with stable national budget financing.

EMBED THE DAY CENTRE MODEL IN THE EU CHILD GUARANTEE FRAMEWORK FOR MOLDOVA

- Adopt and implement a **National Action Plan** prioritising access to integrated, community-based services for rural children, children with disabilities, and children left behind by migration.
- Ensure the **meaningful inclusion of children and youth in the development and monitoring** of Moldova's EU Child Guarantee National Action Plan.
- Institutionalise the Day Centre Model as a key pillar of Moldova's child protection system.
- **Expand municipal partnerships** for delivery, ensuring sustainable co-financing.
- **Invest in workforce professionalisation** (social workers, educators, psychologists).
- Align national child protection strategies with EU commitments.

IMPLEMENT KEY INTERVENTIONS FROM THE CONCORDIA'S IMPACT MODEL

- **Family strengthening first:** prioritise family-based care (foster families, kinship care, family-type houses) over institutionalisation.
- **Day Centres as exemplars:** replicate their integrated after-school and family-support programmes as standard community services.
- **Youth empowerment:** support young people to engage in civic processes and defend their rights.
- **Pathways to employment:** offer job coaching, vocational counselling, and social housing for care leavers.
- **Kinship care and prevention:** expand kinship models to keep children safe in familiar environments.

ESSENTIAL POLICY DECISIONS

- Guarantee a **fundamental package of services** (after-school, foster care, disability support) funded by the state.
- Subsidise day centres as preventive investments that reduce costly institutionalisation.
- Expand social apartments for care leavers as a bridge to independence, **ensuring stable financial support from the state budget** to provide housing, mentorship, and life-skills assistance during the transition to adulthood.
- **Embed mobile outreach teams in local social protection frameworks.**
- Standardise **indicators to monitor** integrated services and improve evidence-based decision-making.

Why it matters and how to scale. Without preventive services, Moldova risks deepening the cycle of poverty and the risks of abandonment of children. The Day Centre Model demonstrates how community-based interventions keep children in school, prevent separation from their families, and strengthen resilience. Scaling it within the RESTART reform would institutionalise prevention, formalise NGO-municipal partnerships, and move Moldova towards a child protection system rooted in dignity, family, and inclusion.

F.2. FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES

ROMANIA

Romania has the third highest child poverty rate in the EU, with 33.8% of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2024.[14] Almost half of Romania's children live in rural communities, where access to education, healthcare, and social services remains extremely limited.[15] For many of these families, the absence of nearby preventive social services means that poverty continues to be inherited from one generation to the next. Despite the adoption of a **National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee** that aims to reduce the number of vulnerable children by 500,000 by 2030, progress remains slow.[16]

The **CONCORDIA Day Centre Model was first developed and piloted in Romania,** where it continues to evolve and serve as a foundation for implementation across other countries. The initial centres in Ploiești, launched in 2013–2014, laid the groundwork for an integrated, community-based model that combines education, psychosocial support, family counselling, and outreach to address the complex needs of children and families at risk.



Day Centre Odobesti, Romania

Over the past decade, **Romania has played a central role in shaping and expanding the Model.** Today, CONCORDIA Day Centres offer safe, supportive environments where children receive remedial education, daily hot meals, and counselling, while parents engage in training and family-strengthening activities. Each centre acts as a trusted point of connection – fostering inclusion, resilience, and long-term development.

The effectiveness of this approach was confirmed through the abovementioned independent Impact Assessment conducted in 2021, which documented significant improvements in children's school performance, psychosocial well-being, and family stability. It validated the Model's potential for scale-up and its capacity to prevent early school leaving and reduce the risk of child separation.

Yet, the need remains acute. **Over 30,000 children in Romania are currently in the social care system** – many separated from their families due to poverty, violence, or neglect.[17] Preventive services are still lacking in numerous towns and rural communities.

To respond to these challenges and expand reach, **CONCORDIA has developed two structural innovations in Romania: the CentreZi RO national network,** which connects over 190 Day Centres in coordinated advocacy and quality assurance; and a **social franchise model,** which equips municipalities and NGOs with the tools, training, and mentoring needed to replicate high-quality centres with local ownership.

Together, these platforms demonstrate how systemic change can be achieved through collaboration, standardisation, and sustained investment in prevention.



FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME 3

CentreZi RO – Becoming One Strong Voice (Network of Day Centres)

What it is. **CentreZi RO** is a national practice-and-advocacy network connecting **190+ day centres across 29 Romanian counties.** It provides a shared **learning and quality platform**, coordinated advocacy for **sustainable financing and better regulation**, and a professional community to **standardise interventions** while reflecting local realities.

How it works in practice. Members exchange **methodologies and tools**, run **joint quality assessments**, and coordinate **policy asks** (e.g., municipal co-financing, service standards adapted to rural settings). Digital forums and workshops speed up peer learning; interactive **mapping** of coverage and need guides investment; working groups engage ministries and county authorities. The network elevates cases and data from front-line services to the policy arena.

Why it matters and how to scale. While one centre alone cannot transform systems, a coordinated network can. **CentreZi RO enhances professional standards,** raises visibility, and strengthens advocacy for sustainable funding. It has already contributed to securing co-financing and elevating day centres as a core component of prevention efforts. Moving forward, priorities include **formal recognition of CentreZi RO within national planning processes,** alignment with ESF+ and Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) funding streams for prevention services and embedding child and parent participation mechanisms within the network's quality standards.



FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME 4

Social Franchise for Day Centres – Scaling with Quality

What it is. **The CONCORDIA social franchise** offers a practical, structured way for municipalities and NGOs to establish Day Centres based on a proven model. It brings together essential services – educational support, psychosocial counselling, health and hygiene, nutrition, parenting advice, and outreach – into a coherent, easy-to-implement package.

How it works in practice. The **rollout of the CONCORDIA social franchise** follows a **structured four-step process: selecting and assessing** local partners; **launching centres** through staff recruitment, safeguarding, service mapping and licensing; **building staff capacity** through training, mentoring and peer exchange; and **consolidating quality** through supervision, data collection and joint reviews. Centres such as those in **Ploiești** and **Odobești** provide integrated support – including meals, remedial education, psychosocial counselling, material assistance and **School for Parents** – based on personalised development plans developed with schools.

Why it matters and how to scale. The CONCORDIA social franchise is more than a replication tool; **it is a capacity-building mechanism for local institutions that enables scale without compromising quality.** It responds to the **urgent need to expand coverage - estimated at around 3,000 centres nationwide** – while supporting school retention, preventing family separation and promoting local ownership through co-financing. Key actions include **embedding the franchise in national child protection and anti-poverty strategies,** securing **multiannual municipal funding** for preventive services, strengthening staff training and using national monitoring tools to track child well-being and education outcomes. As an alternative to institutional care, the social franchise prioritises early intervention and family support.

Larisa

Age: 12 years

My name is Larisa and I am 12 years old. My family consists of two children and a father. My mother, during the pandemic, went to heaven, killed by a ruthless disease.

My father has tried all this time to be both mother and father for us, but it is very difficult. I miss my mother enormously and I feel that I need her advice and hugs.

But God took care of us and two years ago an acquaintance of my father brought us to the center of the (CONCORDIA) Austria house, where we come every day.

For me, this center is the place where I feel the best, the place where I am listened to, where I started to trust myself.

I get help with my homework when I need it and my school results have improved.

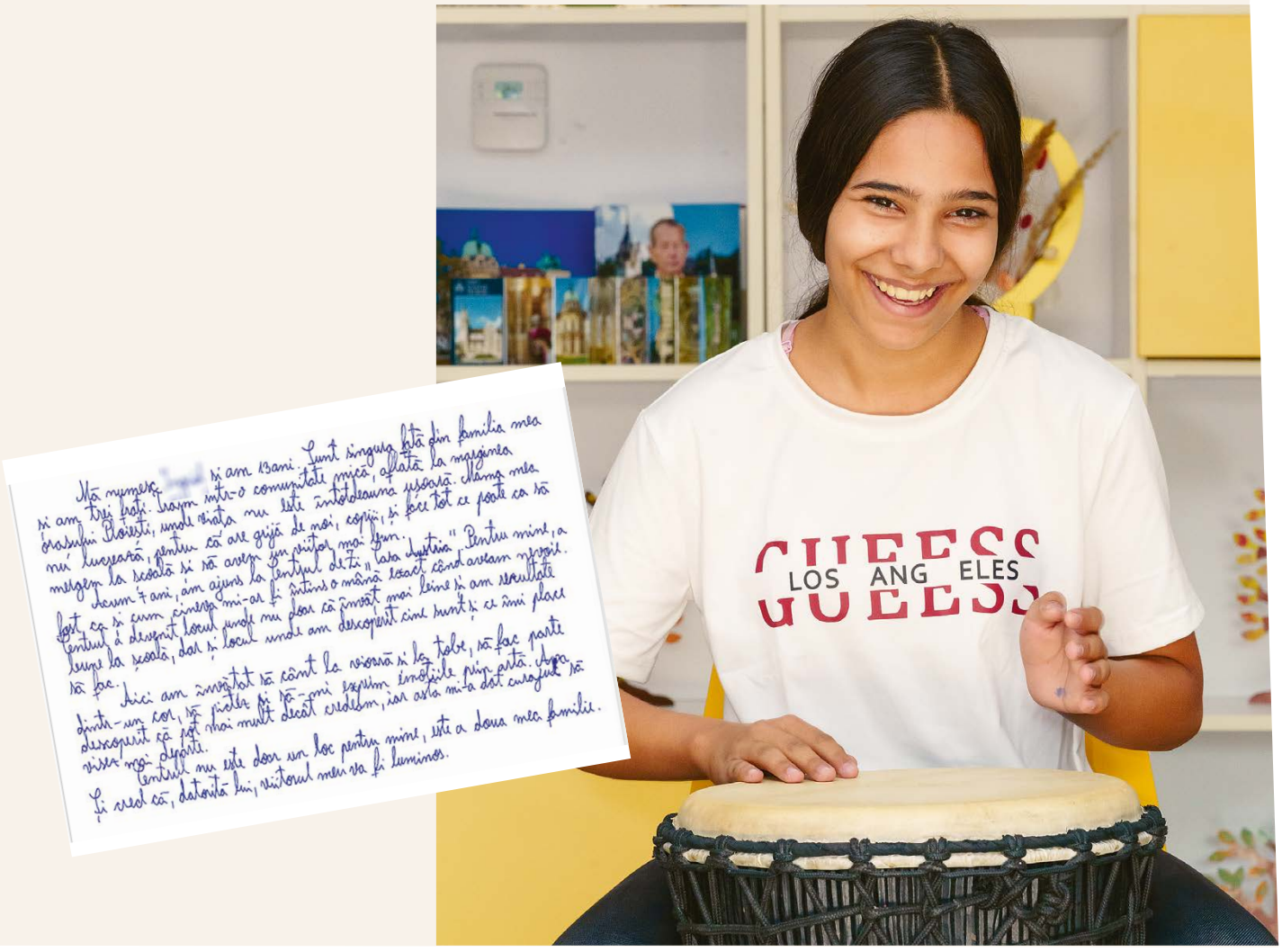
Here I discovered that I have a beautiful singing voice, that I can play drums and even dance. The center was for me like a light at the end of the tunnel.



Diana

Age: 13 years

My name is Diana and I am 13 years old. I am the only girl in my family and I have three brothers. We live in a small community, located on the outskirts of Ploiesti, where life is not always easy. My mother does not work, because she takes care of us, the children, and does everything she can for us to go to school and have a better future.
7 years ago, I arrived at the (CONCORDIA) day center. For me it was as if someone had extended a hand to me exactly when I needed it. The center became the place where I discovered who I am and what I like to do.
Here I learned to play the violin and drums, to be part of a choir, to paint and to express my emotions through art. I discovered that I could do more than I thought, and that gave me the courage to dream further.
The center is not just a place for me, it is my second family. And I think that thanks to it my future will be beautiful.



ROMANIA

CALL TO ACTION

PIVOTAL:

While Romania's public policies emphasise school access, many children still lack the supportive services that make education effective – such as after-school tutoring, psychosocial counselling, parental guidance, and essential material support. Structural barriers continue to affect children in intergenerational poverty.

Against this backdrop, CONCORDIA Day Centre Model demonstrates a scalable, rights-based solution that integrates education, health, family support, and child participation, breaking cycles of exclusion and building long-term resilience.

Urgent investment, stronger state commitment, and alignment with EU frameworks are essential to scale up prevention services, embed them in public policy, and ensure that no child is left behind.



"If the European Union is serious about the Child Guarantee and the responsible use of future European funds (2028 – 2034), the Romanian state must act now – by guaranteeing public investment in community-based, locally run day care centres as the first line of defence against intergenerational child poverty."

Diana Certan
Executive Director CONCORDIA Romania

We urge the national authorities to:

EXPAND AND STABILISE THE DAY CENTRE NETWORK

- According to national administrative data, Romania currently operates approximately **860 accredited Day Centres** (public and NGO-run), while needs assessments indicate a minimum requirement of **3,000 centres nationwide to meet demand,** particularly in rural and small-urban areas.
- Institutionalise financing so that **50% of costs are covered by the state budget**, based on the principle "funding follows the child." This relieves poor municipalities while directing resources to areas of greatest need.
- Ensure the implementation and achievement of the set target in the **National Action Plan for the EU Child Guarantee** of 45% increase in the number of children benefitting from the Day Centres as a core component of community-based child protection and poverty reduction services.[18]
- Expand the **CentreZi RO network**, which already connects 190+ centres in 29 counties, into a formal national platform for quality standards, peer learning, and joint advocacy.

RECOGNISE AND SCALE THE SOCIAL FRANCHISE MODEL

- Support CONCORDIA's **social franchise** as a national mechanism for replicating Day Centres with guaranteed service quality, standardised manuals, and continuous training.
- Invest in **capacity-building and monitoring systems** to ensure franchise partners adapt to local needs while upholding standards.
- Encourage **municipality–NGO co-financing and co-management**, embedding franchise centres into national child protection strategies.
- Include social franchising as an **eligible mechanism for EU and national structural funds** (ESF+, National Recovery and Resilience Plan) to allow rapid, quality-assured expansion in high-poverty regions.

PRIORITISE INTEGRATED SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- Go beyond classroom access: invest in **after-school and remedial programmes** that prevent dropouts, particularly in segregated or remote areas.
- Guarantee **psychosocial support** through case management, counselling, and child participation mechanisms, following the Lundy Model.
- Introduce **structured vocational training and job coaching for youth**, alongside parental education to prevent family breakdown.
- Address **material deprivation** with targeted nutrition, health, and housing support – recognising that children cannot succeed academically if basic needs remain unmet.
- Strengthen **cross-sectoral coordination** between education, health, and social protection at the local level, with clear referral protocols and a central role for Day Centres.
- Use **Key Performance Indicators monitoring systems** (attendance, wellbeing, family resilience) to inform contracts, financing, and policy adjustments.

Why this matters. Without integrated, community-based support, Romania risks another generation of children growing up in poverty and social exclusion. The CONCORDIA Day Centre Model shows that a multidisciplinary approach makes a difference: children stay in school, families are strengthened, and young people find pathways to a better future.

To meet its commitments under the European Child Guarantee, Romania must scale prevention services by embedding Day Centres into municipal budgets, integrating them into child protection law, and aligning them with EU funding instruments such as ESF+. Without these steps, many vulnerable children will continue to be missed by fragmented public systems – an avoidable loss for both society and the economy.

As the EU looks ahead to the **next Multiannual Financial Framework** (2028–2034), shifting investments towards prevention is both a strategic and humane choice. The Romanian experience shows that preventing school dropout, family separation, and institutionalisation is not only more effective, but also more cost-efficient than addressing these issues later.

Dedicated EU funding for integrated, community-based services – aligned with the Child Guarantee and national inclusion goals – would allow models like CONCORDIA Day Centres to expand and thrive. With the right investments, Romania can reduce inequalities and give every child more than access to basic services: a real chance for dignity, stability, and opportunity.

F.3. FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES

BULGARIA

Bulgaria continues to face **persistent social and governance challenges** despite low unemployment and steady economic growth. According to Eurostat (2024), **35.1% of children are at risk of poverty or social exclusion** – the highest rate in the EU. Inequality is severe with 84.1% inequality risk due to poverty for children of low-educated parents. The share of working poor has risen to around 11 – 12%, reflecting low wages and limited social protection.[19]

The country remains affected by an **unstable political climate,** with frequent elections, short-lived governments, and limited policy continuity. This instability contributes to **frequent regulatory shifts** and **unpredictable funding conditions** for social service providers. Municipal services remain underfunded and project-based, failing to prevent neglect, violence, and exploitation. Experts from the state administration highlight that municipalities often fail to absorb available resources, pointing to structural inefficiencies rather than a lack of funds.

Housing insecurity and illegal housing persist in poorest communities. **Over 60% of Roma pupils in Bulgaria attend segregated schools,** undercutting equal opportunity. Drop-out and illiteracy remain highest among Roma children.[20]

Civil society organisations report **growing public backlash against NGOs** and shrinking civic space, including restrictive legislative proposals and administrative hurdles in accessing EU funds. These dynamics exacerbate social inequality and weaken service delivery at the local level – reinforcing the need for stable, evidence-based partnerships and quality-assured social models.

In this challenging landscape, CONCORDIA Day Centre Model offers a proven, rights-based solution. It brings together safe spaces, psychosocial care, education support, and family counselling – all rooted in community partnerships.

From established centres to new pilot initiatives, CONCORDIA Bulgaria shows that when services are integrated and placed where children live and learn, they can break the cycle of exclusion and create real pathways to stability, inclusion, and hope.

1 *Sports Programme, Day Centre Posoka, Bulgaria*
2 *Awesome Childhood Centre, Bulgaria*







FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME 5

Sports Programme for Social Integration

What it is. **The Sports Programme at CONCORDIA Posoka Day Centre uses physical activity as a tool for education, inclusion, and resilience.** It offers a range of sports –football, boxing, dance, swimming, climbing, and athletics – **designed to engage children with diverse interests and abilities.**

How it works in practice. **Participation is directly linked to school attendance and monitored weekly by teachers.** More than 200 children are engaged in football, the U12 and U14 teams within the football club participate in the national championship. The boxing is led by a former CONCORDIA programme participant, who completed his trainer qualification with the support of CONCORDIA team, while dance sessions provide a safe and inclusive space for children to participate. Climbing is tailored to children with psychomotor difficulties or conditions such as autism, and athletics introduces structured competition at local and national levels. **Regular training, matches, and performances reinforce discipline, teamwork, and persistence while maintaining school attachment.**

Why it matters and how to scale. **The programme prevents school dropout by tying sports to school performance, while also building resilience and inclusion.** Its success shows that sports can serve as an effective prevention and integration tool. **Scaling requires stronger municipal partnerships and recognition of sports-based programmes** as part of Bulgaria's national child protection and education strategies.



FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME 6

Awesome Childhood Centre – School-Based Prevention

What it is. Launched in 2025, **the Awesome Childhood initiative introduces a school-based model for early intervention and family support.** By embedding multidisciplinary teams within schools and neighbourhood hubs in high-risk districts such as Fakulteta and Hristo Botev, it reaches **children most at risk of dropping out.** This decentralised, scalable approach improves access, strengthens school attachment and trust with families, and enables **early risk identification,** timely support and closer cooperation between educators, social workers and parents – contributing to better educational outcomes and long-term inclusion.

How it works in practice. The initiative engages groups of around 25 children in weekly, **school-based sessions combining remedial education, health awareness, social skills and recreational activities.** Delivered jointly by social workers, educators and school staff, **the model provides coordinated support** for each child while progressively involving families through home visits, community activities and parenting groups. By embedding services within schools, it ensures continuous educational participation, allows timely response to behavioural and emotional needs, and strengthens school–family partnerships - key to preventing dropout and promoting inclusion.

Why it matters and how to scale. **The Awesome Childhood initiative addresses a critical gap** in Bulgaria's child protection system by providing consistent, school-based preventive services that strengthen family engagement. Unlike short-term interventions, it offers **sustained support** that improves teacher-parent cooperation, student retention and children's well-being. With its integrated approach and early results, **the model shows strong potential for replication** and scale through municipal partnerships and diversified funding, positioning it as a key pillar of Bulgaria's preventive child welfare system.

Manuela

Age: 10 years

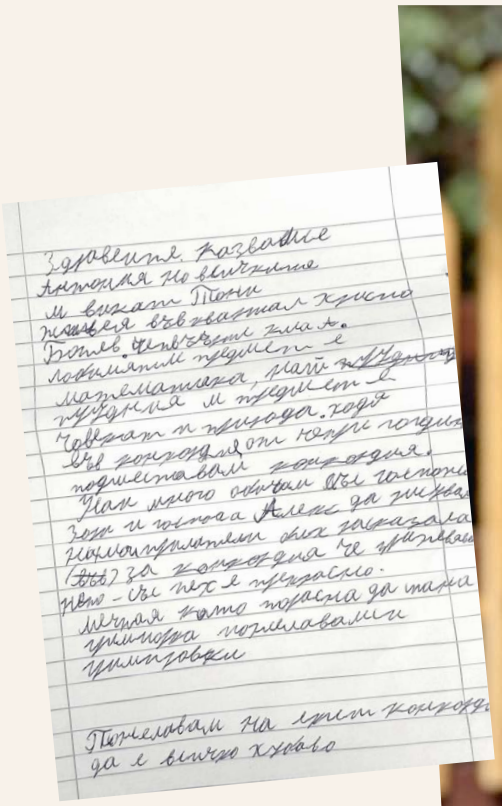
My name is Manuela, but everyone calls me Moni. I live in the Hristo Botev neighborhood and I'm in 4th grade.

My favorite subject is mathematics, and the most difficult one for me is "Human and Nature." I have been coming to CONCORDIA for four years now.

What I love most is painting with Mrs. Zori and Mrs. Alex. If I had to tell my friends about CONCORDIA, I'd say that the experiences here are wonderful.

When I grow up, I want to become a makeup artist. I wish to have a lot of makeup one day.

I also wish the CONCORDIA team all the best!



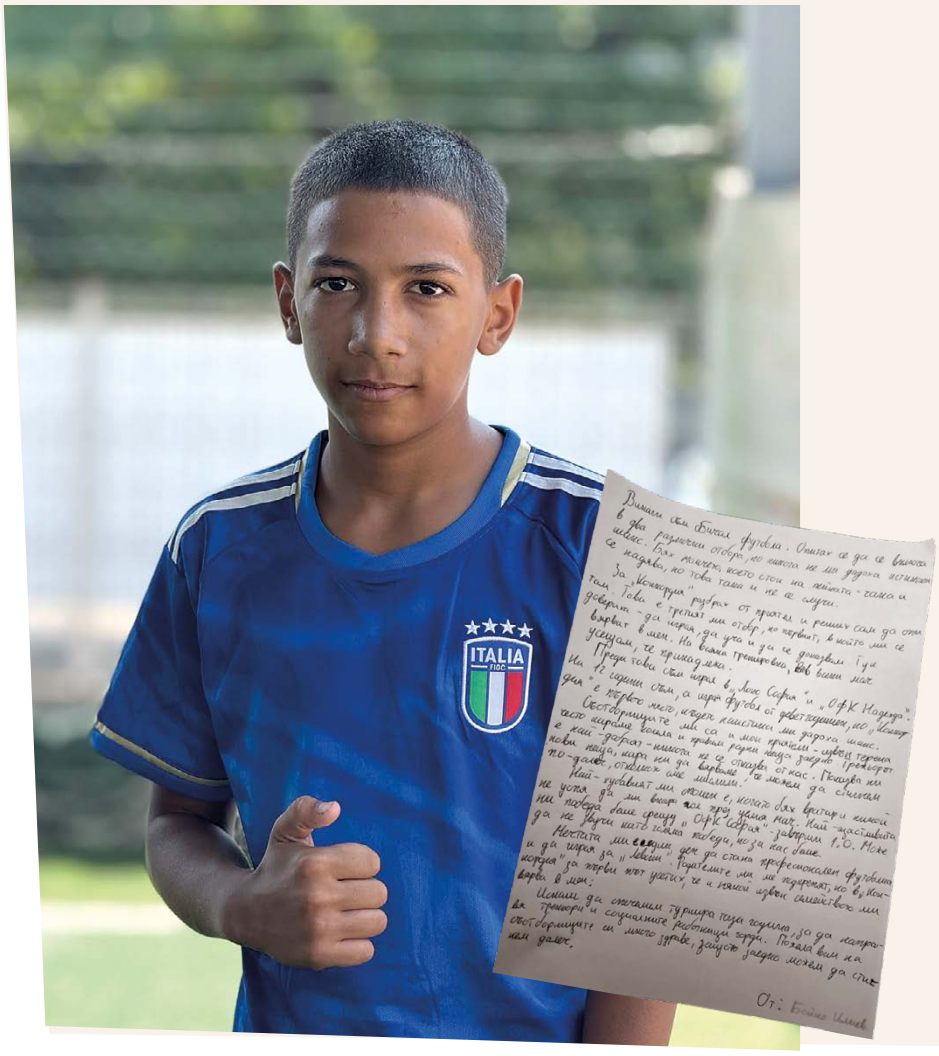


Kamen

Age: 12 years

I've always loved football. I tried joining two different teams, but I was never really given a chance. I was the boy sitting on the bench, waiting and hoping, but it never happened.

I learned about CONCORDIA from a friend and decided to come and try it myself. This is my third team, but the first one where I was trusted — to play, to learn, and to prove myself. Here, they believe in me. At every training, in every match, I feel that I belong.



The coach is the best, he never gives up on us. He shows us new things, pushes us to work harder, to respect each other, and to believe that we can go further than we ever thought possible.

The social workers are always telling us that if we want to be a professionals players one day, we also need to do well at school. So I try harder now, because I know education is part of my dream too.

My favorite memory is when I was the goalkeeper and nobody scored a single goal against me the whole game. Our happiest victory was against OFK Sofia — it ended 1:0, it doesn't sound like a big victory, but it is.

My dream is to become a professional football player one day and to play for Levski. My parents support me, but at CONCORDIA, for the first time, I felt that someone outside my family believed in me too.

I want to win the tournament this year to make my coach and the social workers proud. I wish my teammates a lot of health, because together we can go far.

BULGARIA

CALL TO ACTION

PIVOTAL:

Despite progress in delegated service mechanisms, access to quality education, health, and social services remains fragmented, particularly in urban Roma neighbourhoods and rural areas.

CONCORDIA Day Centre Model demonstrates that integrated, community-based services can provide safety, resilience, and pathways out of generational poverty. Scaling and institutionalising this model is essential for Bulgaria to meet its commitments under the European Child Guarantee.



"Day Centres are CONCORDIA's most effective bridge between vulnerable families and the systems meant to support them. They offer not only services, but an opportunity – to learn, to feel safe, and to imagine a different future. Scaling this model is not just a policy choice – it is an investment in Bulgaria's future."

Stanimir Georgiev
Executive Director CONCORDIA Bulgaria

We urge the national authorities to:

STRENGTHEN AND SCALE DAY CENTRES AS PREVENTION HUBS

- Ensure that the **National Map of Social Services** is thoroughly revised and updated to guarantee that specific target groups are not omitted, e.g. children and families from remote areas.
- **Expand delegated municipal service agreements to finance and replicate Day Centres** such as Posoka and new models like Awesome Childhood.
- Guarantee that every vulnerable child has **access to hot meals, tutoring, psychosocial care, and family counselling.**
- Equip centres to deliver early education, remedial learning, and vocational preparation, ensuring continuity from preschool to adolescence.
- **Embed outreach mobile teams** into the delegated service framework, so segregated or remote communities are not left behind.

INVEST IN HEALTH, SPORTS, AND FAMILY RESILIENCE

- Institutionalise the Sports Programme as a national child-inclusion tool, linking **sports participation** to education and resilience.
- Provide **structured family-strengthening services,** including parenting workshops, domestic violence prevention, and mediation.
- Expand **job coaching and vocational counselling** for parents and youth to address poverty at its root.

ADDRESS STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES THROUGH HOUSING, INCLUSION, AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

- Prioritise access to **adequate housing,** infrastructure, and essential amenities in vulnerable communities, addressing unsafe and overcrowded living conditions.
- Ensure equal **access to quality education** through early education, remedial classes, language support, and tailored teacher training.
- Enforce robust **anti-discrimination frameworks** in education, housing, and employment, with monitoring mechanisms to ensure accountability.
- Promote **inclusive public services** through diversity training and civic participation opportunities.
- Use **KPI-based monitoring** (attendance, well-being, family resilience) to inform contracts, funding, and policy adjustments.

Why this matters. Without structural change, Bulgaria risks perpetuating intergenerational poverty, particularly among Roma children.

Day Centres show that prevention works: they reduce school dropout, prevent family separation, and strengthen family and community resilience. Scaling the model nationally under delegated contracts, investing in health and sports, and tackling housing and discrimination will turn successful pilots into systemic solutions. This would help Bulgaria deliver on the European Child Guarantee and the Sustainable Development Goals and more specific strategic frameworks like the EU Roma Strategy 2023.[21]

F.4. FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES

KOSOVO

According to Kosovo's official data, in 2024 **nearly 23% of Kosovo's children lived in poverty and 7% lived in extreme poverty.** Around **80% of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children lived in severe material deprivation,** far above the national average of 34%.[22] Their housing conditions are often inadequate, with damp, overcrowded dwellings lacking basic sanitation.

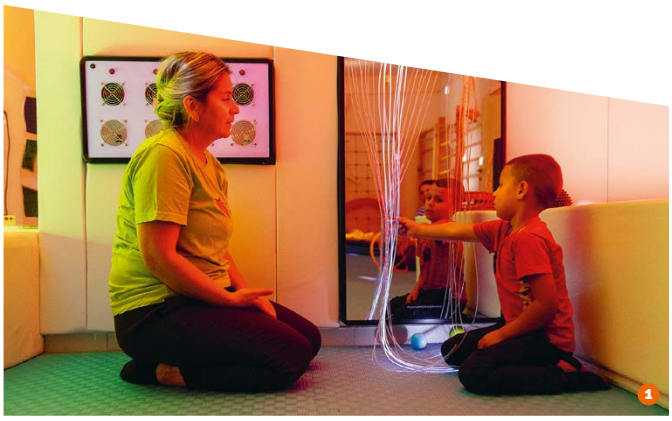
Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities face harsh realities: chronic unemployment, school segregation, and widespread discrimination. Many children from these groups have never attended school or dropped out early, trapped in cycles of poverty, neglect, and domestic violence. Public child protection systems remain weak, with limited outreach capacity and fragmented, insufficient social services.

In this environment, **CONCORDIA Day Centres in Prizren (Tranzit) and Gjakova (Ali Ibra)** have become lifelines. They provide safe spaces, trauma-informed care, educational support tailored to individual learning needs, psychosocial counselling, and outreach support for children, youth, and families from vulnerable communities.

Integrated services include early childhood education, after-school learning support youth empowerment and life skills activities, and psychosocial counselling. Families receive parenting guidance, social assistance, and referrals to schools, health, and municipal services. The centres also provide daily warm meals, health education, and basic medical support, alongside music and art programmes, life skills and vocational orientation. Staff trained in non-violent communication, emotional regulation, and child protection work with children who have experienced extreme neglect, violence, or discrimination. Each centre functions as a safe and inclusive space that promotes learning, well-being, and community integration. Mobile teams conduct home visits to prevent crises, neglect and school dropouts and link families with schools, health services, and municipal authorities.

Internal monitoring data from 2023–2024 illustrate that **over 1,500 children and caregivers took part in programmes, school attendance among beneficiaries increased by 27%, and 43% of families reported reduced domestic conflict thanks to counselling and crisis intervention.** The **Ali Ibra Day Centre,** opened in June 2024 in partnership with the Municipality of Gjakova, exemplifies these acute needs: in a neighbourhood where 90% of families live in extreme poverty, the centre enrolled 144 children within a year, provided daily home-work support to 86, preschool to 32, and successfully re-enrolled 22 children in formal education.

Despite space constraints and rising poverty, the centre show how integrated, community-based services restore hope and opportunity for children who might otherwise remain invisible.


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FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME 7

Music Programme – A Catalyst for Learning and Inclusion

What it is. The Music Programme at the Tranzit Centre uses music both as therapy and as a powerful tool for inclusion. It provides children from vulnerable families, mainly from Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities the chance to learn instruments such as piano, guitar, violin, flute, drums, cello, saxophone and clarinet, guided by seven dedicated music teachers. Children also participate in a choir. The Music Programme has expanded to the Ali Ibra Centre, where a music teacher provides lessons in saxophone and clarinet and has established a children's choir.

How it works in practice. More than 70 children participate each month in music instruments lessons that culminate in orchestra performances, and more than 40 children are part of the choirs of the two centres. These activities build structure, discipline, and self-expression, while motivating children to attend school regularly. Music also helps children process trauma, builds confidence, and connects across ethnic divides by creating spaces where different communities learn and perform together. Each year, at least six concerts are organised, either at CONCORDIA's premises or in external venues, including prestigious locations such as the President's Office.

Why it matters and how to scale. In Kosovo's post-conflict context, music has proven to be one of the most effective tools for healing and inclusion. It builds resilience, fosters mutual respect, and helps children reclaim identity and hope. Scaling requires investment in teachers, instruments, and space, as well as formal recognition of cultural and creative education as part of social services. With these measures, the programme could serve as a national model for inclusion and trauma recovery.



FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME 8

Sensory Room in Tranzit Centre

What it is. The Sensory Room is an innovative therapeutic space designed for children with emotional, behavioural, or attention challenges. It responds to findings from a 2024 assessment of 89 children at the Tranzit Centre: over 70% were nervous or restless, 75% were easily distracted, and nearly half struggled to concentrate.

How it works in practice. The Sensory Room provides calming stimuli, supervised exercises, and positive reinforcement to help children develop self-regulation and focus. Parents are engaged through guidance sessions to apply these strategies at home, while staff gain new tools to support children in daily centre activities.

Why it matters and how to scale. With only one Sensory Room currently available in Kosovo, CONCORDIA is pioneering specialised therapeutic child services. For children with undiagnosed learning or behavioural difficulties, the Sensory Room is the difference between exclusion and inclusion at school. Scaling requires municipal investment and integration into Kosovo's child protection framework, ensuring that every major urban centre has access to such facilities.

1 *Sensory Room, Day Centre Tranzit, Kosovo*
2 *Music Class, Day Centre Tranzit, Kosovo*

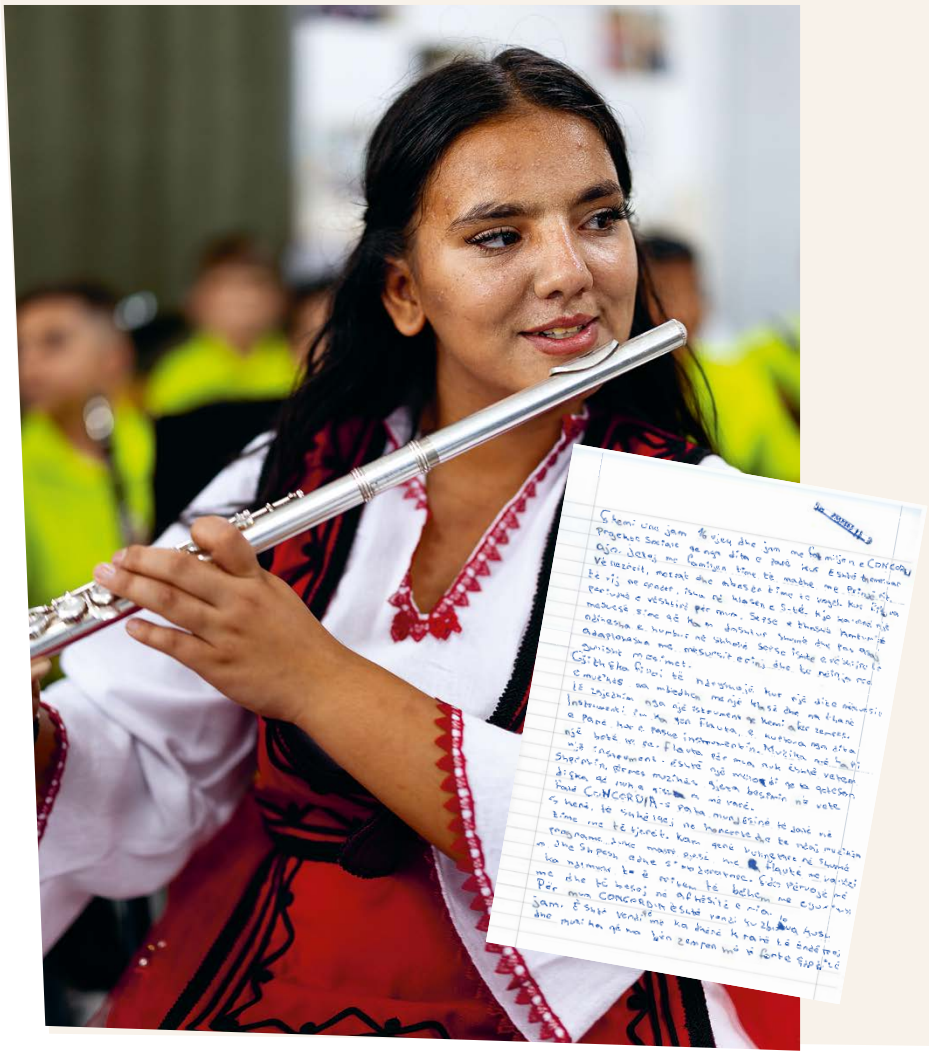
Lena

Age: 16 years

Hi, I'm Lena, I'm 16 years old, and I'm lucky to be part of the CONCORDIA Projekte Sociale family since the very first day it was founded. I live with my big family, my parents, brothers, sisters, and my little niece.

When I first started coming to the center, I was in the 5th grade. That was a difficult period for me because I had to say goodbye to my teacher, whom I loved very much, and after that I felt lost in school.

It was hard for me to adapt to the new teachers and to follow the lessons regularly. Everything began to change when one day the music teachers gathered us with a class and told us to choose an instrument that was closest to our hearts. My instrument was the flute, I knew it from the first day I saw it.



Music opened a new world for me. The flute is not just an instrument – it's a melody that calms my soul. Through music, I found confidence in myself, something I didn't have before.

Thanks to CONCORDIA, I had the chance to go on stage, shine in concerts, and share my music with others. I have been a volunteer in many programs, participating with the flute, dancing, and often even as a moderator. Each experience has helped me grow, become braver, and believe in my abilities.

For me, CONCORDIA is the place where I discovered who I am. It is the place that gave me wings to dream, and music that makes my heart stronger every single day.

Dina

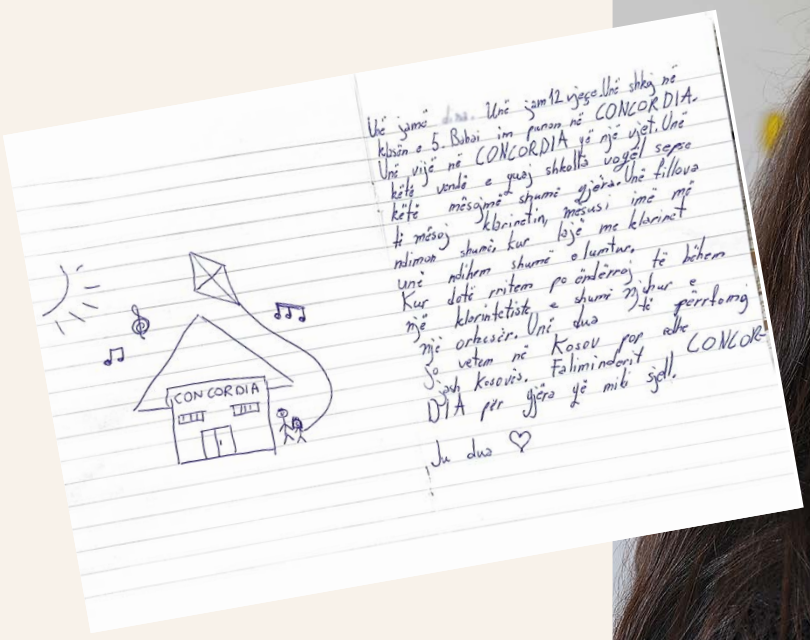
Age: 12 years

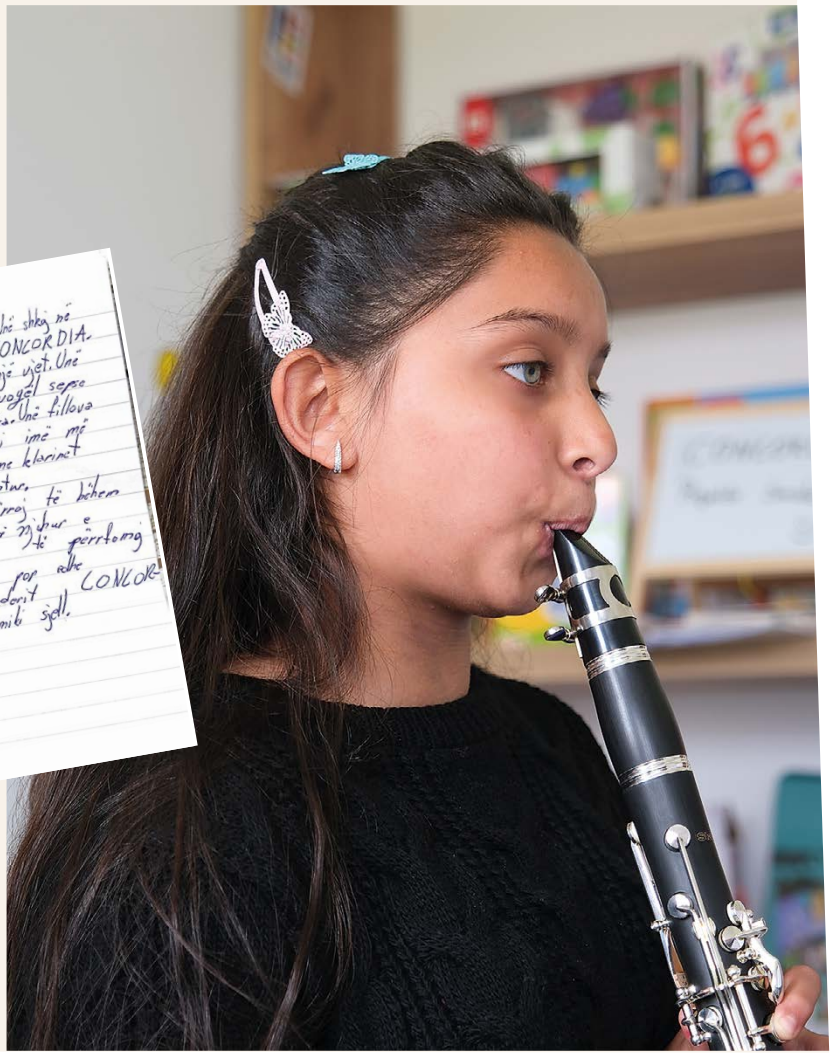
I am Dina, I am 12 years old. I am in the 5th grade. My father works at CONCORDIA. I have been coming to CONCORDIA for one year. I call this place "the little school" because we learn so many things here. I started learning the clarinet, and my teacher helps me a lot. When I play the clarinet, I feel very happy.

When I grow up, I dream of becoming a famous clarinetist in an orchestra. I want to perform not only in Kosovo but also abroad.

Thank you, CONCORDIA, for everything you have brought me.

Love you all.





KOSOVO

CALL TO ACTION

PIVOTAL:

To meaningfully disrupt the cycle of intergenerational poverty, Kosovo should consider integrating the Day Centre Model — a proven multidisciplinary approach offering educational, social, and family-support services — as an important component of its child protection and social inclusion strategy.



"The CONCORDIA Kosovo Day Centres empowers children and youth from marginalized communities to access education, protection, and opportunities they would otherwise be denied. It is a model that restores dignity and opens real pathways towards inclusion."

Mirela Lavric
Executive Director CONCORDIA Kosovo

We urge the national authorities to:

GUARANTEE ACCESS TO EDUCATION THROUGH PREVENTION AND TAILORED SUPPORT

- **Fund the establishment of multifunctional Day Centres across Kosovo** to ensure that every vulnerable child has access to learning support, deliver tutoring, remedial education, home-work assistance, and extra-curricular activities (music, art, sports).
- Provide school supplies, uniforms, transport, and scholarships to **remove financial barriers.**
- Ensure each **school partners** with a Day Centre under clear referral protocols and **joint monitoring.**
- Expand early childhood education and **guarantee inclusive schooling** for children with special needs, minorities, and those in rural or segregated areas.

PRIORITISE PSYCHOSOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- **Contract Day Centres** to deliver systematic psychosocial care, trauma therapy, and family mediation.
- Recognise and **replicate creative therapies** – like the Music Programme and Sensory Room – as core child services.
- Ensure **free access to healthcare** and health education, with referral links to public providers.
- Institutionalise domestic-violence prevention and counselling within **family support programmes.**
- Ensure that children from economically disadvantaged families receive a **daily warm and nutritious meal** as part of an integrated support system promoting health, learning, and social inclusion.

BUILD YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY AND FAMILY RESILIENCE

- **Finance vocational counselling and job coaching** for youth and parents, linked to national employment platforms.
- Provide **allowances and financial support** for families in extreme poverty, with Day Centres as distribution hubs.
- Establish **social housing solutions** for families at risk to ensure stability, safety, and social inclusion.
- Expand **women's support groups** within Day Centres to challenge gender discrimination and strengthen parenting and financial independence.

INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS AND SYSTEM ALIGNMENT

- Mandate **child protection mechanisms in all schools,** with strong referral links to Day Centres and municipal services.
- Diversify Day Centre services to **offer a continuum of care** from early education to youth employability.
- **Secure multi-year public contracts for NGOs** running Day Centres, co-financed by municipalities and central government.
- Ensure **access to entitlements for all vulnerable children,** up to the age of 18.
- Introduce **KPI-based monitoring** (attendance, wellbeing, family resilience) to inform contracts and policy reforms.
- Support **professional training** for social workers, educators, and youth workers to build national capacities in trauma-informed care, non-violent communication, and child participation, thus, to ensure quality and sustainability of services.

Why this matters. Kosovo's children – specially Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian minorities – face compounded risks of poverty, exclusion, and trauma. The Day Centre Model shows that integrated, preventive services can keep children in school, reduce violence, and strengthen families. Investing in these centres is not a cost but a pathway to reduce dependency, foster employability, and build stronger, more inclusive communities.

F.5. FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES

SPECIALISED PROGRAMMES

FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME 9

The LenZ in Austria – Multicultural Centre for the Needs of Refugee Families

Austria is often seen as a high-income country with strong welfare systems, yet **migrant and refugee families face persistent poverty, exclusion, and barriers to integration.** Many arrive after journeys marked by trauma and instability, and once in Vienna, encounter overcrowded housing, labour-market discrimination, language barriers, and obstacles in accessing education. Children in these families are especially vulnerable, struggling with interrupted schooling, cultural isolation, and emotional distress.

In this context, **CONCORDIA LenZ Day Centre in Vienna** has become a critical hub of support and empowerment. It **adapts the Day Centre Model to an urban, multicultural environment, tailoring interventions to the needs of migrant and refugee families.**

Services combine educational support, psychosocial care, parental empowerment, and intercultural mediation. Staff work closely with schools and municipal services to ensure continuity and trust between families and institutions. By creating a safe and inclusive environment, LenZ enables children and women to build confidence, develop skills, and find their place in Austrian society.


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What it is. LenZ is a holistic support centre for migrant and refugee families in Vienna.[23] It combines tutoring, mentoring, and psychosocial support for children with tailored services for mothers, such as German language classes, the Digi-Women digital literacy initiative, and peer-led women's groups.

How it works in practice. Children receive German tutoring to ease school integration, structured homework support, and mentoring to help them navigate academic and social challenges. Recreational and intercultural activities promote belonging and resilience, while case management ensures each child's needs are systematically addressed. For women, Digi-Women provides digital literacy training alongside childcare, enabling participation. Intercultural mediation is a cornerstone: LenZ staff actively build trust between schools and families, bridging cultural gaps and preventing misunderstandings that could harm children's education.

Why it matters and how to scale. LenZ shows that even in high-income countries, integration barriers keep families trapped in cycles of exclusion. By combining education, psychosocial support, and empowerment, the centre strengthens whole families and promotes long-term inclusion. Scaling requires investment from municipal and federal authorities, plus recognition of intercultural mediation and women's empowerment as essential to child protection and integration. Replicating the LenZ model in other Austrian cities—or adapting it for rural areas with growing migrant populations—would ensure vulnerable families nationwide gain access to comprehensive, community-based support.



FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME 10

Academia – Building Capacity for High-Standard Day Centres

What it is. CONCORDIA Academia (CA) is the organisation's regional learning hub, dedicated to strengthening the professional capacity of staff, partner organisations and the sectors working with children, youth, and families at risk. Its mission is to ensure that the Day Centre Model is implemented to the highest standards through certified training, continuous learning, and structured peer exchange.

How it works in practice. CONCORDIA Academia offers both long-term certified training programmes and short-term formats such as webinars, workshops, and regional seminars. Professionals are trained and certified in key areas including child rights and case management. To complement this, Academia established digital platforms (MS Teams, WhatsApp) that allow staff to access resources, share experiences, and engage in mutual learning across centres. This combination of formal training and informal peer exchange equips frontline professionals with the skills and confidence needed to deliver quality interventions.

Why it matters and how to scale. High-quality services for vulnerable children depend on a professional, well-trained, and motivated workforce. By investing in capacity building, CONCORDIA Academia makes it possible to scale the Day Centre Model without compromising quality. Its central role in the development of Romania's National Day Centre Network illustrates its ability to influence systemic change.

1 *Lenz in Austria*
2 *CONCORDIA Academia*

Victoria

Age: 41 years

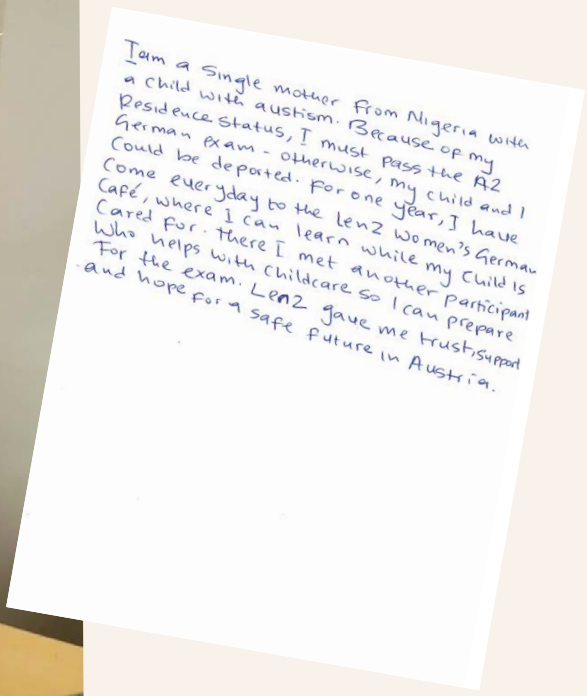
I am a single mother from Nigeria and have a child with autism. I only attended school for a short time and could hardly speak German when I arrived.

Because of my residence status, I must pass the A2 German exam – otherwise, my child and I could be deported.

For one year now, I have been coming every day to the LenZ Women's German Café. There I can learn while my child is cared for.

I even met another participant who now helps me look after my child so that I can prepare well for the exam. In my culture, it is a taboo to let someone else take care of your child, but thanks to LenZ, I found trust, support, and a real chance for a safer future for both of us.




I am a single mother from Nigeria with a child with austism. Because of my Residence Status, I must pass the A2 German exam - otherwise, my child and I could be deported. For one year, I have come everyday to the LenZ Women's German Café, where I can learn while my child is cared for. There I met another participant who helps with childcare so I can prepare for the exam. LenZ gave me trust/support and hope for a safe future in Austria.

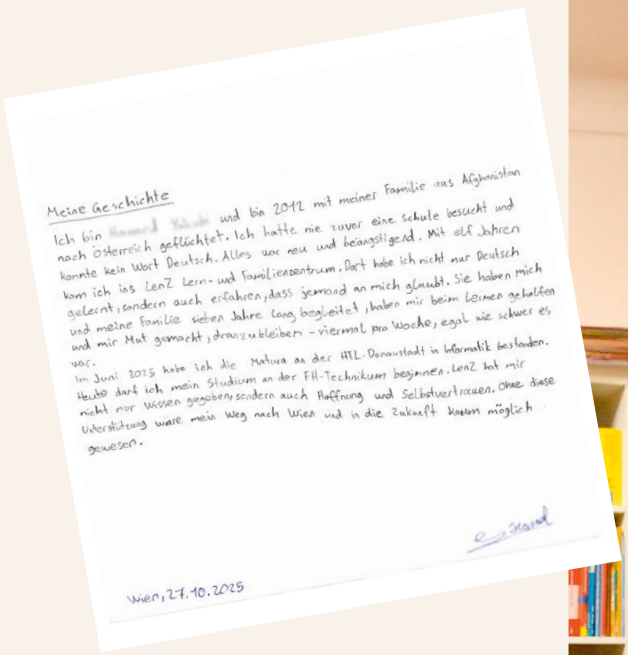
Hassan

Age: 20 years

My name is Hassan, and in 2015 I fled from Afghanistan to Vienna with my family. I had never been to school before and did not speak a word of German. Everything was new and frightening.

When I was 11, I joined the LenZ Learning and Family Center. There, I not only learned German but also realised that someone believed in me. They supported me and my family for seven years, helped me with my studies, and encouraged me to keep going – four times a week, no matter how hard it was.

In June 2025, I graduated from HTL Donaustadt with a diploma in Informatics. Today, I have been accepted to study Informatics at FH Technikum.



Meine Geschichte

Ich bin [redacted] und bin 2012 mit meiner Familie aus Afghanistan nach Österreich geflüchtet. Ich hatte nie zuvor eine Schule besucht und konnte kein Wort Deutsch. Alles war neu und beängstigend. Mit elf Jahren kam ich ins LenZ Lern- und Familienzentrum. Dort habe ich nicht nur Deutsch gelernt, sondern auch erfahren, dass jemand an mich glaubt. Sie haben mich und meine Familie sieben Jahre lang begleitet, haben mir beim Lernen geholfen und mir Mut gemacht, dranzubleiben – viermal pro Woche, egal wie schwer es war.
Im Juni 2025 habe ich die Matura an der HTL Donaustadt in Informatik bestanden. Heute darf ich mein Studium an der FH-Technikum beginnen. LenZ hat mir nicht nur Wissen gegeben, sondern auch Hoffnung und Selbstvertrauen. Ohne diese Unterstützung wäre mein Weg nach Wien und in die Zukunft kaum möglich gewesen.

[redacted]

Wien, 27.10.2025



F.6.

INTERNATIONAL POLICY ALIGNMENT

To meet its obligations under the **European Union Child Guarantee (EUCG)** and the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),** the EU must move from fragmented, reactive measures towards systemic investment in integrated, community-based prevention services.

The **CONCORDIA Day Centre Model** directly operationalises the European Child Guarantee by ensuring that vulnerable children access early childhood education, inclusive schooling, healthcare, nutritious meals, and safe housing. It demonstrates that high-quality, rights-based care is not only possible but also **replicable, scalable, and cost-effective.**

For example, in Romania children benefits from an individual development plan, daily hot meals, and remedial education, while in Austria the LenZ Centre supports migrant families with language, housing, and integration services.

The model also advances key **SDGs:**

- **SDG 1: No Poverty:** breaking intergenerational poverty through family strengthening and vocational pathways.
- **SDG 4: Quality Education:** reducing dropout – Romania reports that 77% of children improved their grades within a year.
- **SDG 10: Reduce Inequalities:** prioritising Roma children in Kosovo and Bulgaria, children with disabilities in Romania, migrant families in Austria and children from rural areas in Moldova.

EUROPEAN UNION

CALL TO ACTION

PIVOTAL:

Make prevention the norm and replication the rule.



"Prevention is the most effective and humane choice and must be at the heart of Europe's social agenda. Every child deserves community-based services – not as a privilege, but as a basic right."

Diana Yovcheva-Koparanova
CONCORDIA International Advocacy Expert

1. WE URGE THE EUROPEAN UNION TO: ENSURE SUSTAINABLE, MULTI-ANNUAL FINANCING FOR PREVENTION

- Secure ESF+/ERDF and RRF successor **funds for prevention-oriented, community-based Day Centres** — covering not just infrastructure, but also operational and integrated services.
- Establish **multi-annual funding windows** to enable long-term planning and delivery as part of Member States' national strategies.

2. RECOGNISE AND SCALE UP PROVEN SERVICE MODELS

- Formally endorse **social franchising** and **delegated-service approaches** as EU good practices.
- Create a **Replication and Innovation Facility** to fund scaling through manuals, peer mentoring, capacity building, and quality assurance.

3. EMBED THE DAY CENTRE MODEL IN CHILD GUARANTEE IMPLEMENTATION

- Require Member States to show how they cover all six ECG target areas (early childhood education and care, inclusive education, health-care, nutrition, housing, and services) through integrated centres.
- Support **territorial mapping of needs and coverage** to guide investment and reduce regional disparities.

4. INVEST IN THE SOCIAL SERVICES WORKFORCE

- Fund **cross-border academic partnerships,** field placements, and credentials for social workers, educators, and psychologists.
- Use Erasmus+, ESF+, and **mobility instruments** to strengthen training pipelines and ensure recognition of qualifications across Europe.

5. CREATE CHILD-CENTERED EU INDICATORS

- Promote a harmonised, light-touch **KPI set** (child well-being, attendance/grades, family resilience, youth employability) for outcome-based contracting.
- Use these indicators for monitoring, evaluation, and EU-wide comparability.

6. MAKE PARTICIPATION A STANDARD

- Require child and youth participation, in line with the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, as a **compliance criterion** for EU-funded child services.
- Institutionalise participatory monitoring and feedback in all child-focused programmes.

7. STRENGTHEN CROSS-BORDER LEARNING AND EXCHANGE

- Create an **EU Learning Network** linking CentreZi RO, delegated providers, MFCs, LenZ, and Kosovo partners.
- Promote **study visits, digital toolkits, and participatory evaluation** models for replication across Member States and candidate countries.

8. PRIORITISE INCLUSION AND EQUITY IN EU INVESTMENT

- Direct **funding envelopes** and incentives toward **Roma inclusion,** rural poverty, migrant/refugee integration, and disability-inclusive services (e.g., sensory rooms, accessible infrastructure).
- Promote **data disaggregation** to ensure "invisible groups" become visible in EU statistics and policies.



BREAKING POVERTY CYCLES

Day Centres help children flourish, turning community care into lasting, generational change across Europe.

G.

SCALING THE DAY CENTRE MODEL TO
END INTERGENERATIONAL CHILD POVERTY IN EUROPE

FROM PRACTICE TO POLICY

Scaling integrated Day Centre services across Europe would help Member States meet their commitments under the European Child Guarantee, the EU Social Pillar Action Plan, and the upcoming MFF 2028 – 2034. Prioritising prevention within the ESF+ and future EU social investment instruments can strengthen families earlier, reduce long-term costs, and support more coherent child protection systems.

The CONCORDIA Day Centre Model offers a coherent and adaptable approach that connects education, health, family support, and youth empowerment into a single preventive system. It aligns with the EU's broader social objectives by strengthening local services, promoting participation, and addressing the needs of children facing poverty and exclusion.

From Ploiești to Prizren, from Sofia to Nisporeni, **CONCORDIA has shown that when services are embedded in communities and shaped around children's needs, lasting transformation becomes possible.** Children gain confidence, parents rebuild stability, and communities grow stronger – proving that prevention works when it is close, consistent, and compassionate.

Yet, challenges remain. Across Europe, many children still grow up without timely support, and prevention is often underfunded or unevenly prioritised. The next EU funding period provides an opporunity to expand integrated Day Centres as part of national Child Guarantee action plans, helping reduce school dropout, strengthen families, and prevent social exclusion.

Day Centre Dubăsarii Vechi, Moldova

This must change. That is why **CONCORDIA is committed to scaling what works** – through **social franchising,** strong partnerships with municipalities, and quality-assured training for the social workforce of tomorrow. The Model provides not only a roadmap for replication, but a framework for shared responsibility between civil society and public authorities.

We invite national authorities, NGOs, local governments, and donors to take the Model further – by adopting it through the CONCORDIA franchise, investing in local adaptation, and aligning policies and resources to make prevention a sustainable cornerstone of child protection and poverty reduction.

At the European level, we call on institutions to prioritise integrated, community-based services in the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (2028 – 2034), in line with the European Child Guarantee and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Investing in preventive and family-strengthening services is not only a moral responsibility – it is a smart, cost-effective strategy that builds stronger families, more resilient communities, and a fairer Europe for the next generation.

CONCORDIA's promise remains clear: to keep listening, learning, and improving – ensuring that every child has not only a place to go, but a place to belong, to thrive, and to shape their own future.

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IMPRINT

Published 2025 by:
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Photos:
ACHIM Photos, ALPHA Production, Christina Bancu, Aninia Boeva, Benjamin Kaufmann, Mariana Kosovan, Ardit Qeriqi, Cosmin Sbarcea, Thomas Seifert
Print:
Druckwerkstatt Handels GmbH

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ÖSTERREICHISCHES SPENDEN GÜTESIEGEL Reg.Nr. 06006 WWW.OSGS.AT

IHRE SPENDE IST STEUERLICH ABSETZBAR
Reg.Nr. SO-1295