

Casa Bună (The Good House) Association

—
Annual Report
2023



Casa Bună

The year in review

Us in 2023

A mountain cabin with an astronomical observatory. A festival. An old school brought back to life. A new piece of land where we will build a dream. Constant care and support from a huge group of friends, both old and new.

Many stars lit Casa Bună's sky in 2023. All of them to illuminate the path ahead for our children.

In 2023 we brought our biggest and boldest plans a little closer to reality. And that gave us the confidence to dream to the moon and back.



The year in review

463 children

received support for education, health, vocation, and a decent living standard

441 volunteers

were part of the children's lives, week to week

13,535 hours of education

took place both online and offline in 2023

1,680 hours

were spent together with the children during camps at Casa Bună, in the mountains, and at the seaside

32,400 kg

of groceries were distributed to our families in 2023, in 25 distributions

3,630 pieces of clothing and footwear

kept the children warm and dry in winter and spring

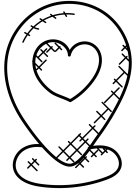
2,699 individual donors

gave us confidence and courage, month after month

190 companies

transformed our plans into happiness

Where we work

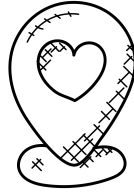


BUCHAREST

Ferentari and Jilava

92 families

182 children

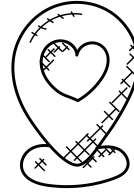


ARGEȘ

Lerești and
Câmpulung

89 families

112 children

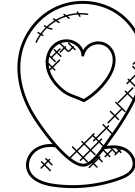


ARGEȘ

Nucșoara

62 families

107 children



BRAȘOV

Sânpetru

30 families

62 children



The year in review

Ferentari and Jilava

"In Ferentari we struggle with the vast distance between the fantastic potential of the children and the stark reality of their lives. In 2023 we were happy for the days when we felt we made progress. The rainy Sunday mornings when 40 children show up for tutoring at Casa Bună. The growing ability and attention span of our little ping pong champions. The phone calls from new parents to enroll their children at Casa Bună. And the yearly school supplies list which shows us that almost all of our kids are still in school, including more and more enrolled in high school."

Hannah Slavik

Founder and Community Coordinator for Ferentari and Jilava



The year in review

Lerești and Câmpulung

“In 2023, we tried to become more independent and responsible. We learned that we have to work hard for everything we want. We get to go to the coolest camp only if we attend tutoring and submit our ‘application’ on time. We continue to learn to offer help and to be punctual. We also started kindergarten, because learning is easier from a young age. The little brothers and sisters who could barely speak four years ago are now confidently shouting out letters during our monthly kindergarten. We are growing, both in the number of beautiful and brave children, as well as in the years we’ve spent together.”

Eliza Trăistaru and Marianna Agoni

Community coordinators for Lerești and Câmpulung



The year in review

Nucșoara

“2023 was a year of growth. We introduced groceries distributions, which brought more children into the program and increased their attendance at lessons. We reopened the old school in Slatina, which brought us closer together. Encouraged by the success in Ferentari, we brought our kindergarten to Nucșoara and the number of participants grew from one meeting to the next. We anxiously awaited the results of the National Evaluation and were delighted when all of our teenagers chose to continue their studies in high school. We made our first hire in the community. Our special place at the edge of the forest remains our second home, and the families in Nucșoara are now our family.”

Anca Teodora Sandu and Cătălina Croitoru

Community coordinators for Nucșoara



The year in review

Sânpetru

“2023 was a year of evolution at Casa Bună Sânpetru as our small educational center transformed into a place of continuous learning and development. Our program expanded and we now offer tutoring five days out of seven. The number of children involved in our activities doubled and we are now working with over 60 children eager to learn and develop. We are especially proud that one of our children enrolled in the "Second Chance" program. The fact that this child attends classes daily is evidence of his commitment to education and the positive impact we have in facilitating access to educational opportunities.”

Angela Moldovan

Community coordinator for Sânpetru

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The year in review

Guardian angels

“Last year, we felt more than ever what it means to be part of a large circle of good. And with this sense of belonging came the certainty that we would succeed, no matter how difficult or ambitious our goals were. We felt this at those moments when we no more than expressed a wish and it was immediately fulfilled by a sponsor who believed in the possibility to make positive changes in the lives of children. We felt it during the most challenging moments of the year. We knew that the people from these wonderful companies and organisations were just as determined as us, and that gave us the confidence to reach further. In addition, we benefited from the encouragement and support of hundreds of individual donors. Many thanks to everyone for giving us wings and dreams in 2023! With your help, we changed the stories of a few brave children, too small to tackle challenges on their own.”

Anca Elena Sandu
Fundraising Manager



The year in review

Casa Bună's tribe

“With their help we organised a festival and built a cabin. The children read and write better now, thanks to them. By their side, the children learned to play ping pong, climbed mountains, and swam in the sea for the first time. They give us hope and confidence. They are our engine, our safety net, and our inspiration. They are with us each step of the way and they show us what we can do through the power of community. And together with them, our volunteers, we continue our journey.”

Anca Teodora Sandu

President, Casa Bună



The year in review

2023 Highlights



2023 highlights

The Nucșoara cabin

In June, a miracle happened: the beautiful cabin, designed by our friends from Rubrick and built by the big-hearted Bikers for Humanity community, was completed. In less than a year, the bikers raised and meticulously crafted, down to the last detail, a fairy-tale place in the middle of nature, where hundreds of children will spend carefree days each year.

It will be a space of joy and friendship where social barriers disappear. A place where children can be children: curious, natural, and free to play. And while the children learn about stars, nature, and mathematics during the camps, we are sure that we will also learn from them. We are ready to start: in January 2024 we will write the first page of the story of "the cabin with the astronomical observatory." Stay tuned for updates!



Many thanks to eOrion - Lighting & Electric, JYSK, and Nucșoara City Hall for their significant contributions to the story!



2023 highlights

The old school in Slatina

In 2023, the old school in the village of Slatina, Nucșoara commune, became Casa Bună's outpost. The building was brought back to life through a community effort: the Nucșoara Town Hall renovated the building; Ana designed a child-friendly space; and donors filled the two rooms with furniture, whiteboards, books, school supplies, games, and toys.

And then the children came: for lessons, sewing and digital workshops, kindergarten, playtime, trying on clothing and shoes, or just to see us and give us a hug.

In 2023 we spent 68 days in the old school in Slatina with the children, their parents, and our volunteers. We started with weekends and then added two weekdays with the help of Ami, our first employee from the community.



2023 highlights

The “Orchard with Stars” festival

We started with a question: How can we make as many kind-hearted people as possible aware of our plan to build a social kindergarten? And how can we gain more support for this project?

The answer: let's do it in the craziest way possible! Let's organize a massive festival from scratch, with no experience and just a handful of people. A festival with over twenty bands and artists, two stages, three days of music, dozens of activities for children and adults, and several thousand spectators, in the middle of the mountains, in Nucșoara, Argeș.

We called it “Livada cu stele”; the “Orchard with Stars”. And it turned out great.



Festivalul “Livada cu stele”

The festival turned out great only because we had a very, very solid foundation.

This means we owe a huge thank you to the main sponsors: Sameday, PepsiCo, Textar, Decathlon, Regina Maria, JYSK, Autonom, Ascendis, Auto Total, Conservation Carpathia Foundation, Tășuleasa Social, The Plot, and Nucșoara City Hall; and to everyone else who supported us and ensured the success of the event!

Very, very important also were the over 100 volunteers who worked tirelessly and non-stop before, during, and after the festival.

Without the companies and organizations that supported us and the volunteers who helped us, the festival would not have been possible.

We are grateful beyond words to the artists who came to perform just for the sake of our children and filled the meadows of Nucșoara with music and good deeds: **VAMA, Irina Rimes, TAXI, Luna Amară, Ada Milea, Mădălina Pavăl Orchestra, Luiza Zan, Dora Gaitanovici, Leyah, Emaa, Eyedrops, Delta pe Obraz, Stema, Ana Coman, Cristina Lupu, Rockabella, Soul Serenade, Blană Bombă, Dan Amariei DJ Set, Pixar Stelar DJ Set, DJ Marinov.**

And we must also applaud the key people in this project: Ana Dobrin, Lucia Popescu, Bogdan Moroșanu, Florin Perișan, Bogdan Munteanu, and Thomas Marinescu. They are just a few of the many wonderful people who dedicated themselves to the festival.

Plus a special star for Vali Tronaru (valitronaru.ro), the magician behind the livadacustele.ro website.

2023 highlights

The Good Kindergarten

Our dream is getting closer and closer to reality. We purchased land in Jilava and prepared the architectural plans for the Good Kindergarten. After years of working to fill the educational gaps which our children face, we realised that we need to start working with them as early as possible. Early childhood education is the only way to improve their prospects. After five years of Saturday Kindergarten we can already see the results: a group of children who attend school daily and achieve good results. We are ready to make kindergarten a daily routine.

Stay tuned! In autumn 2024 we plan to cut the ribbon of the Good Kindergarten and welcome 80 children day-to-day.



Many thanks for the essential support,
eMag, Beast Philanthropy, Conectys.



2023 highlights

Casa Bună Sânpetru

In 2023, the volunteer group in Sânpetru, Braşov, became the first official Casa Bună branch. This is a huge first step towards reaching more children in need, something which we cannot do alone.

We first met them in 2021. At that time, during the first Zoom meeting, it was hard to believe that we would find other crazy people like us, ready to carry out our tough but extremely rewarding mission in their own community.

Angela, Cristina, and Eugen are the engines of Casa Bună Sânpetru. They built a small community of dedicated volunteers which offers almost daily educational support for local children living in difficult conditions.

We are very proud of them and thank them for joining us on this journey.





Casa Buna
Asociatia
DORIM VOIE DE UN SAF INTRU
SA CRESTI UN COPIL

2023 achievements

What we built together in 2023



Education at Casa Bună

Saturday kindergarten, 1-to-1 tutoring both online and face-to-face, evaluations and personalised learning plans, 8th grade tutoring

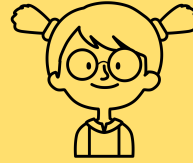
Saturday kindergarten

Our kindergarten numbers continue to grow by leaps and bounds! In 2023, 85 children attended our Saturday kindergarten in Jilava, including 22 new enrollees and 9 graduates. The youngest child enrolled in the program? One year and eight months! We are happy that this year all the children experienced at least one camp or an excursion to the pool, the theater, or the museum. It was a great year for them!

In 2023 we also decided to extend our kindergarten to Nucșoara and Lerești, where we were invaded by 18 and 24 little sisters and brothers, respectively. Offering the kindergarten program in our rural communities was a natural next step as part of our presence there.



Many thanks to the kindergarten volunteer team. They are the ones running the playstations every Saturday of the year.



127 children attended our kindergarten activities in Jilava, Nucșoara, and Lerești



64 volunteers accompanied the children every step of the way



331 hours were filled with educational games and play



9 children graduated from kindergarten and began school full of confidence



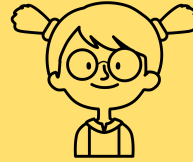
1-to-1 online tutoring

The 1-to-1 online tutoring program continues to be our most extensive educational program, with the highest number of volunteers and children consistently and actively involved. It's the program through which children who sounded out words letter by letter three years ago are now reading fluently.

However, in the post-pandemic context, we had fewer available volunteers and fewer teaching hours compared to 2022. Instead, we focused on improving the quality of lessons, offering better support to volunteers, and encouraging children to be independent in respecting their established learning schedules.



Thanks to the hundreds of volunteers who continue to support the children with small steps and hours of patience.



358 children attended twice weekly online tutoring with their volunteers



255 volunteers connected online with the children each week of the year



12,308 hours of education took place, on Zoom and Skype, in 2023



25,199 points were earned and exchanged for **255 prizes**; phones and headphones remain the favorites

Face-to-face tutoring

In 2023, we met in person more often. We met more often with our children and their families in Ferentari and Jilava, but especially with those in rural areas; for them, the main communication method had been online in previous years.

At the beginning of the year we decided that a team should visit Nucșoara and Lerești once every two weeks, and we succeeded to maintain this rhythm. Although we still need more volunteers for these visits, we adapted by organising reading groups and by connecting children from our locations in Nucșoara and Lerești with online volunteers. In Ferentari, we have a stable team of weekend volunteers working face-to-face with the children and this has made a significant impact on their progress.



Every Sunday at Casa Bună is made possible thanks to the weekend volunteers. Thank



153 children attended Sunday tutoring at Casa Bună in Jilava in 2023



200 volunteers dedicated at least one Sunday to the children; many of them came weekly



1,647 hours of education took place during 43 Sundays at Casa Bună



52 days were filled with educational activities in Nucșoara and Lerești

Assessments and learning plans

2023 was the second year that we focussed on improving the educational process at Casa Bună. In 2023 we continued to assess children on four key skills: reading, writing, comprehension, and mathematics, and we improved the way we conducted these assessments. Based on the assessments, we developed individual learning plans for each child with clear objectives, work recommendations, and suggestions for materials. These plans offer volunteers specific and concise guidance so that they can spend their limited time with the children in the most effective way possible.



We are in a continuous process of learning and adapting our educational support and we are grateful that we can continue this in 2024 with the help of the PepsiCo Foundation and PepsiCo Romania.



306 children were assessed on reading, comprehension, writing and mathematics



306 learning plans were created and distributed to volunteers



105 children were re-evaluated to measure progress and adapt the learning plan



65 supervised online tutoring sessions were conducted to better support the learning process

Preparing for the National Evaluation

In June 2023 we saw the first positive results from our preparation programme for the National Evaluation: almost all the enrolled teenagers attended the exam and registered for high school.

With the start of the new school year in autumn 2023, we expanded and improved the program, putting into practice what we learned in previous years. We included 7th grade students in the program together with 8th grade students. We began with an initial assessment which helped us create an appropriate curriculum and measure progress. Camps and face-to-face meetings brought us all closer, and absences decreased. We started to receive more requests to join the programme.

Throughout the year, we worked with a fabulous team of dedicated volunteer tutors. Thank you, Miha Griga, Alex Seclaman, the community of tutors, Raiffeisen Bank, and Stepic Charity for the support.



64 teenagers, divided into 16 groups, attended weekly tutoring sessions in 2023



17 teenagers wrote the National Evaluation in June 2023; now they are at high school or professional school



25 volunteers tutored the teenagers in Romanian and mathematics



1,026 hours of weekly tutoring were registered by the tutors

1st Prize for Education

2023 was the second year in a row that we were called onto the stage at the Civil Society Gala to receive the first prize in the Education category.

At Casa Bună, we dream of an inclusive educational system that doesn't lose children along the way. We dream of educational projects and programs that start from the real needs of each child: a Good Kindergarten, a Good School, a Good High School, with curricula adapted to the children of today. We're not afraid to dream big because we're not alone in this dream.

Thank you, eMAG, UniCredit, Conectys, PepsiCo, Microsoft, JYSK, Raiffeisen, Sameday, Ascendis, Valrom, Conservation Carpathia Foundation, Autonom.



Camps at Casa Bună

153 children attended 14 educational camps at Casa Bună in Jilava, at the seaside, and in nature

Casa Bună camps

This is our third year of camps at Casa Bună in Jilava, and the happiness and laughter which fill the house during these weeks encourages us to continue them.

In 2023, we focused on thematic camps with programs adapted to the selected children. We called children from Ferentari and Jilava to the camps, the ones with the greatest need for a quiet and safe space.

The kindergarten camp has gained a regular place in our summer programme. Similarly, the 8th grade camps have also become recurring and involve teenagers both from Ferentari and from our rural communities.



During the camp weeks Casa Bună is filled with activity and excitement, all thanks to our friends at JYSK Romania. Thank you for three wonderful years!



61 children filled Casa Bună with joy and laughter during the camps



840 hours were spent learning, playing, and exploring during the camps



10,675 portions of food were prepared with love and affection



305 items of clothing kept the children comfortable during the camps

Richita camps

"I've never been in the forest before!"
"And how is it, Maria? Do you like it?"
"Yes, it's... thrilling!"

We really enjoy visiting Conservation Carpathia's Richita Center for Activities and Nature Exploration, so we are happy every time we receive an invitation to come with a group of children.

Many of our children from Ferentari have never been outside the city, and the chance to spend a few days in nature is a novelty for them. For our children from the rural areas, it's an opportunity to learn more about the nature that surrounds their villages, but also to make new friends.



Thank you, Conservation Carpathia Foundation, Ascendis, and JYSK Romania for allowing us to continue the camps at Richita in 2023.



35 children made friends with nature during 2 camps at Richita, in the Făgăraș mountains



288 hours were spent outside in nature, and learning about nature



44 km were hiked by energetic children and volunteers



830 clothing and hygiene products kept the children warm and comfortable during the camps

Seaside camps

The most anticipated camps of the year are Casa Bună's seaside camps. Children attend tutoring sessions all year long with one thought in mind: to make it onto the list for that "one special camp of the year". In 2023, we went to the seaside three times. The selected children from all communities said YES to the camp invitation, without hesitation or fear.

The magic ingredients for these perfect days were sun, splashing, waves, lots of sunscreen, and fun and games in the sand. Add to the recipe some strong new friendships formed between children from different communities and we take out of the oven the most beautiful memories.



Thank you, JYSK Romania and BlueProjects, for the most beautiful memories of 2023.



33 children enjoyed several sunny days at the beach during the seaside camps



306 hours were spent splashing in the waves, building sandcastles, and reading books



264 swimsuits and beach toys joined the children in their daily adventure at the beach



54 hours were spent by the children in the water, until their fingers wrinkled



Ski camp

Nothing teaches patience and perseverance like learning to ski! During our first ever ski camp a group of courageous kids and equally courageous supervisors tackled the slopes at Cheile Grădiștei.

From the first day, which we spent mainly on our bums, to the last day when we finally graduated to a real slope with others skiers, the children made enormous progress both with skiing and with their self-confidence.



Thank you, JYSK Romania, for supporting our new ideas.



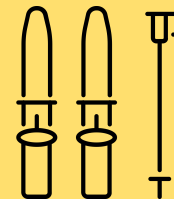
10 children tried on skis and hit the slopes for the first time



5 adults (with nerves of steel) supervised the children throughout the camp



60 pieces of ski equipment were borrowed, begged, rented, or bought



Slope tiiiiime! **500 trips** up and down the slope were made by the children

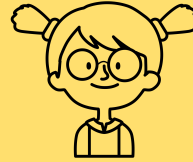
Survival camp

At the end of August we had the opportunity for a brand-new experience when Mihai and Machi invited us to bring 20 children to the TROSC camp.

At the start, all we knew was that we would sleep in tents and spend a lot of time in nature. We didn't know that the children would love every minute under the open sky and make firm friendships around the campfire. We didn't know we would have to call them ten times to get them out of the river, although their fingers had been wrinkled for a hour. They slept in tents and in bivouacs, went on daily hikes, learned about trees, plants, and animals, and ate everything on their plates. They became architects and drew, built, cut, and glued.



Thank you, Mihai and Machi. We look forward to continuing the story together in 2024.



20 children from Ferentari, Nucșoara, and Lerești became friends during the camp



840 servings of delicious food ended up in satisfied bellies after full days spent in nature



7 nights were spent in tents for the first time, together with old and new friends

Sports at Casa Bună

Table tennis, swimming,
football



Table tennis

We had our first table tennis training of 2023 in January and the last one during the week between Christmas and New Year.

We practiced every weekend throughout the year, with very few exceptions. And the consistency paid off. More and more Casa Bună children went through the selection process and joined the training, guided by coach Gabriela Dumitrescu. The three to four hours per week of concentrated sports training led to results in their academic performance as well, where we saw increased attention span and better grades.

94 children were tested, 36 were called to train, and 14 show potential for high-level performance.



Thanks for the support, Auto Total, School No. 136, and the volunteers who donated dozens of hours for training!



36 children attended table tennis training sessions



148 hours of training took place during the 92 days dedicated to training



54 sports volunteers were alongside the children during the training sessions



14 children show potential for high-level performance in the future

Swimming

In 2022, 13 children attended swimming lessons. In 2023, we continued swimming lessons and gladly accepted the opportunity to increase the number of participating children, including kindergarten children. The lessons moved closer to Ferentari, allowing the children to develop their independence, coming to lessons alone or with their parents on public transport.

The reward for all their efforts came at our seaside summer camps, when our little swimmers demonstrated their skills for us and their friends! We now have a waiting list of children hoping to join the swimming group.



Thank you, Atack Team, for the opportunity to continue swimming lessons this year!



49 children from Ferentari attended swimming lessons in 2023



78 hours were spent practicing at the pool



4 years old was the age of the smallest swimmer when he started swimming lessons



1,680 trips with public transport were made to the pool and back

Football

In 2023 we placed a bet on sports education as one of the best ways to capture children's hearts. And football was at the top of our list, due to its popularity among the children.

Our main aim with this programme was to reach children living in the ghetto; children with few opportunities to engage in formative activities that teach them healthy practices and routines and help them discover themselves. In 2023 we conducted over 100 training sessions with them, with the help of our dedicated volunteers, to whom we are grateful.



Thank you, UEFA Foundation and the Romanian Football Federation, for supporting our program of social integration through football!



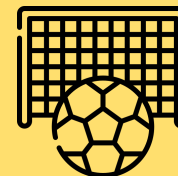
127 children were involved in sports activities aimed at social integration through football



152 volunteers helped in educating young football players through sports



224 pieces of sports equipment were dedicated to football training



108 hours of football training took place with coaches and volunteers

Sports at Casa Bună

Casa Bună mini-football tournament

For the second year in a row, with the help of the Romanian Football Federation, we organised two full-fledged editions of a mini-football tournament. The 2023 tournaments were dedicated to fundraising for our future kindergarten.

We were impressed and grateful that hundreds of people were ready to dedicate two entire weekends to the event, where the joy of team sports and the passion for football were just excuses for doing good.

Alongside the 240 amateur footballers and supporters, several former national team footballers participated, including Miodrag Belodedici, Claudiu Sânmărtean, and Narcis Răducan.



Special thanks to Florin Şari, Social Responsibility Manager, Romanian Football Federation.



240 amateur footballers formed the teams that competed in the 2 2023 tournaments



280 spectators supported their favorite teams from the stands



17 companies sent their teams onto the football field to support the kindergarten project



Auto Total and **Lindab** were the winning teams of the two 2023 tournaments

Sports at Casa Bună

Casa Bună table tennis tournament

In November, with the support of CSTA Bucharest, we organized the first edition of the charity tournament "Casa Bună Table Tennis Cup <<Otilia Bădescu>>".

Over 70 participants, including 11 talented kids from Casa Bună, coached by Gabriela Dumitrescu, brought positive energy and joy to the venue.

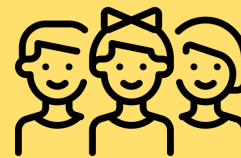
The great table tennis champion, Otilia Bădescu, and Elisabeta Lipă, President of the National Sports Agency, honored the event with their presence, inspiring participants and audience alike.

The funds raised during this event will support Casa Bună's sports programs.

See you at the next editions!



67 table tennis players were present at the charity sports event



11 talented children attended the competition and aspired to become champions



5 hours of intense playing took place, for a good cause



2 cups were awarded, one per category (Elite and Hobby)

Health at Casa Bună

Pediatric check-ups, the ophthalmology caravan, dental treatment, diabetes screening

Pediatric check-ups

At the start of the year our friends at Regina Maria Private Healthcare Network asked "Where do you need our help this year? What can we do together?"

Before the end of February, we had completed blood tests for the children in Ferentari and Lerești, soon followed by pediatric check-ups. The Sânpetru children were next; for many it was their first blood tests and full check-up.

This is the second year that Regina Maria has offered us much-needed health-care support. Throughout the year, they came to our rescue with follow-up appointments whenever needed to ensure that Casa Bună's children received the highest standard of medical care available.



Thank you, Regina Maria! Together we are building healthy communities.



215 children benefited from blood tests and pediatric check-ups in 2023



46 doctors, nurses, and other volunteers from Regina Maria took part in our health-related activities



More than **43 follow-up appointments**, recommended by the doctors, were offered free of charge



3 communities benefited from the support offered by Regina Maria (Ferentari, Lerești, Sânpetru)

Ophthalmology caravan

În 2023, the ophthalmology caravan revisited four communities for yearly check-ups and extended to one new rural community where eye-care was much needed.

In Ferentari, our children continued to call us when they could not see what the teacher was writing on the blackboard or when their younger siblings accidentally sat on their glasses!

For us, the most important part of our eye-care support is our team of specialists who leap to our assistance each and every time we need them. Without them, none of this would be possible.



Thank you, Mioara Marinescu, Cristina Nițulescu, Roxana Cozubaș, Florin Mureșan, Alin Răducanu, Florin-Victor Cinpianu, Lensa, Optica Vedere and all of the specialists who helped our children

this year.



212 children had an ophthalmological check-up in 2023



5 ophthalmology caravans reached communities where eye-care was needed



13 volunteer doctors and assistants made the caravans possible



76 pairs of glasses are now perched on 76 little noses, helping the children to see better

Dental treatment

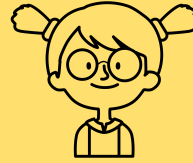
In our communities dental problems are a never-ending story. Prevention and dental hygiene are not a priority, and dental visits take place only when the pain is unbearable.

Fortunately, in 2023 our dental partners remained close to us and continued to offer urgently needed and high-quality dental care for our children. We started to extend dental care to our rural communities, but transport remains an obstacle.

In 2023 we also focussed on dental education and prevention: 120 children from Nucșoara and Ferentari took part in their first dental hygiene workshop.



Thank you, Dr. Melnic Clinic, Titu Maiorescu Dental Faculty, Dentaline, Cristina Niță, Smile Spot, Măriuca Ioan, Dana Dăscălescu, Victoria Dental Clinic Pitești, Dr. Leahu Clinic, Dentalik Image.



57 children benefited from dental and orthodontic treatment



307 visits to the dentist and the orthodontist took place in 2023



22 dentists offered pro bono dental treatment



80 children from Nucșoara were screened to identify the most urgent cases

Diabetes screening

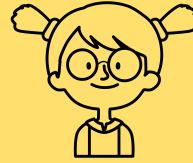
The end of the year brought us an excellent new partnership. In November, together with ALMA Association and Bikers for Humanity, we offered free diabetes screening for our Ferentari community.

Any experience involving a needle can be frightening for children, but our friends from ALMA and Bikers for Humanity transformed the day into a positive and fun event. Each child was the center of attention during the test and received encouragement, a biker's badge, and healthy snacks to take home.

In 2024 we plan to visit our rural communities with diabetes screening.



Thank you to the extraordinary people at ALMA Association and Bikers for Humanity Romania.



88 brave children were tested for diabetes (HbA1c test)



35 parents were tested for diabetes alongside their children (blood glucose test)



30 bikers held their hands, encouraged them, and did the test themselves



5 children attended a consultation with a diabetes and nutrition specialist and received an individual prevention plan

Vocation at Casa Bună

Carpentry, painting, sewing,
cosmetics and personal
care, digital workshops

Vocational school

In 2023 we took several small but important steps for our vocational school program.

We relocated the workshops to Nucșoara and we invited teenagers from Nucșoara and Lerești to learn with us. We dedicated the weekends to carpentry and painting, and we even built a greenhouse. We involved the teenagers in finishing the Bikers for Humanity cabin, where they learned from professionals, and we also involved them in painting the old school in Slatina.

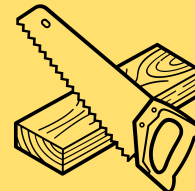
Still, we are far from having a coherent program. Without a dedicated professional directing the vocational school, we remain at the stage of sporadic workshops.



Thank you, PPG Romania, for partnering with us to help teenagers build skills for a future job.



10 teenagers
attended vocational
workshops in 2023



40 hours were
dedicated to
“learning by doing”
during 8 workshops



**1 outhouse, 1
greenhouse, 4
rooms, and 4 sets of
shelves** were
constructed

Sewing workshops

In 2023, we loaded the sewing machines into the car and took the sewing workshops to the rural communities, Nucșoara and Lerești.

Cristina Zlota, our seamstress, stormed the rural communities and the kids fell in love with sewing, just as our Ferentari kids did the year before.

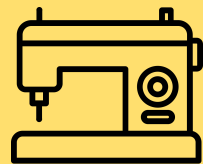
The girls sewed pencil cases, skirts, and - their favourites and most-used items - kitchen aprons. A few curious boys also crossed our threshold and practiced sewing with the machines and installing snaps. The children proudly showcased what they had learned at the "Orchard with stars" festival, where the sewing machines worked non-stop.



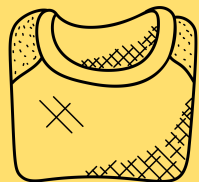
Thank you, PepsiCo Foundation and PepsiCo Romania! With your help, we are tailoring our children's futures.



40 children (10-14 years old) created their own products at the sewing machine



96 hours were dedicated to practicing sewing during 24 workshops



83 products were created and proudly used by the children that attended the workshops

Cosmetics workshops

We were happy to receive Emy Cojocaru's support for a second year of cosmetics and personal care workshops. So far, this is most attractive activity we have found for the teenage girls who no longer participate in our educational programmes; the workshops help keep them close to us.

The workshops offered us the occasion to spend time with the teenage girls from our Ferentari community and to teach them some vocational skills. We were delighted to see them attentive, serious, and focused during the workshops and to attend their graduation.



Thank you, Emy Cojocaru and your make-up artists community, and thank you, Madi, for bringing Emy to Casa Bună. Also, a big thank you to our volunteers who modelled for the girls..



16 teenage girls from Ferentari attended the cosmetics workshops in 2023



35 hours of practice were guided by Emy during 14 workshops



6 teenage girls attended and passed the final practical exam



10 professional make-up kits were donated by Emy's colleagues to our girls, the future make-up stylists

Digital workshops

Our children have had computers in their homes for three years now and they have been using them for online tutoring and browsing the internet. In 2023, we set out to broaden their horizons through practical, creative, and fun workshops in new areas.

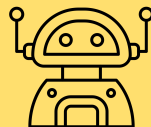
Our digital workshops in 2023 continued to teach newly enrolled children how to use their computers, but we also introduced creative workshops on 3D printing, electrical circuits, LEDs, and solar panels, all discussed within familiar contexts. It goes without saying that attendance was 100%, and the happiness level likewise.



Thank you, PepsiCo Foundation and PepsiCo Romania, for continuing to support us in opening the children's horizons.



106 children from the rural communities attended at least one digital workshop in 2023



7 themes (office, 3D printing, electrical circuits, solar panels, LEDs) were explored by the children



46 hours were spent exploring digital topics during the 23 digital workshops delivered by the IT team



180 objects (LED postcards, electrical cars, timetables, 3D unicorns) were created by the children

Decent living at Casa Bună

Hot meals, grocery and hygiene products distributions, clothing and footwear, school supplies, furniture and home appliances

Groceries distributions

In 2023 we expanded groceries and hygiene products distributions to the Nucșoara community. While in Ferentari the distributions have been taking place monthly since 2020, 2023 was the first year for Nucșoara. As in Ferentari, the families appreciated this much-needed assistance and it proved to be a catalyst for education.

Everyone helps out at distributions. An unexpected benefit is the way they bring people together: volunteers, parents, and children work side-by-side to unload, arrange, and distribute the food to the community.



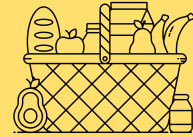
Thank you, PepsiCo Foundation and PepsiCo Romania, for extending this opportunity to more families, and thank you, Auchan Romania, for joining our mission. Thank you, Autonom and Auto Total, for many safe trips loaded with food.



235 children (130 families) received much-needed groceries in 2023



27 groceries distributions took place in Ferentari and Nucșoara in 2023



32,400 kg of groceries (meat, dairy products, fruit and vegetables) were distributed



10 people (volunteers, staff, parents, children, teenagers) made each distribution possible

Decent living at Casa Bună

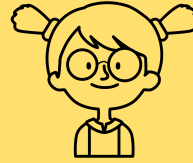
Hot meals

Often, children come to lessons at Casa Bună hungry. Often, they pull us aside and ask us to prepare them a sandwich. Seeing this, we realized how important it is to offer the children a hot meal every time they come to Casa Bună.

In 2023 we were delighted to receive support to continue our hot meals project. Throughout the year we were able to offer a meal each Saturday and Sunday at Casa Bună in Jilava. The warm, delicious, and healthy meals were the perfect complement to educational activities and playtime, creating a year of perfect weekends for everyone.



Thank you, PepsiCo Foundation, PepsiCo Romania, and Auchan Romania, for all 2,460 portions of warm, delicious, and healthy food.



180 children benefited from a hot meal after weekly tutoring at Casa Bună



41 weekends with delicious food were made possible due to our generous sponsors



2,460 portions of food were served to the children and, for a few minutes, there was silence in the house!



20 volunteers heated and served the food each week, and washed all the dishes too!

Decent living at Casa Bună

Clothing and footwear

Two things never fail to bring us joy year after year: when we add new children to the list for clothing and footwear, and when we see the children proudly wearing what they have received.

Providing new clothing and footwear every year entails significant financial resources, but we know how important it is for the children. This year, we received a lot of support to ensure new clothing for the children. Colorful, cheerful, and warm, the children fell in love with the new clothing immediately, and have been wearing them ever since.



Thank you to everyone who donated for a pair of warm boots, or several. This is one of our most extensive actions, and all contributions are greatly appreciated.



330 children received seasonal clothing and footwear this year



3,630 new clothing and footwear articles were bought or donated by Casa Bună's friends



25 volunteers assisted the children in trying on and selecting their new clothing and shoes

Decent living at Casa Bună

School supplies

2023 was the second year that Stepic CEE Charity supported our growing list of backpacks and school supplies. As in 2022, the school supplies travelled from Austria by train and truck to arrive at Casa Bună's gate in Jilava.

And like every year, in early September we set up our "Swedish buffet" of school supplies on the sports field at Casa Bună. Our team of volunteers ensured that each backpack was lovingly prepared with everything needed for a great start to the school year.

This year our list of children grew, especially the kindergarten and high school children. And we were very happy to be able to share excess supplies with partner organisations helping vulnerable children in their own communities.



Thank you, Stepic CEE Charity, and thank you to everyone who donated for one backpack or more.



500 backpacks filled with school supplies reached our children and children from partner organizations



71 kindergarten and preschool children received their first backpack this year



35 volunteers filled up the backpacks with all the necessary supplies



15,000 school supplies traveled in backpacks to the children's desks



Decent living at Casa Bună

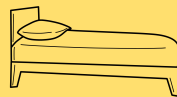
Furniture and household appliances

All year long, our logistics team, Vincențiu and Marcel, shuttled between generous donors of furniture, electronics, and household appliances, and the homes of our children. Our trusty orange van made hundreds of trips loaded with refrigerators, washing machines, stoves, beds, mattresses, wardrobes, and desks.

Vincențiu and Marcel carefully selected those items in the best condition that would fit into the 13 square meters available to families living in apartments in the ghetto, or the small houses of families living in Ferentari and Jilava.



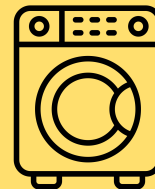
Thank you, Auto Total, Autonom, AJ Renewables, and Enterprise. With you by our side, there is no [transport] mission impossible.



146 pieces of donated furniture reached the small homes in Ferentari and Jilava



50 families benefited from these generous donations from kind donors



35 donated household appliances helped the families wash clothes and prepare meals



70 donors made life a bit better for the children and their families through these donations

Decent living at Casa Bună

Santa Claus

We don't know how long Santa Claus needs to prepare for Christmas. But every year, a week before the winter holidays, Casa Bună moves, lock, stock, and barrel, to Santa's workshop at the KIA showroom on Giurgiului Road.

There, the magic has been happening for three years now. That's where the lists are prepared, checked twice, and gifts are finalized before being loaded onto Casa Bună's modern sleighs.

Then they reach the eagerly awaiting children. And what an explosion of joy! Every year hundreds of children receive long-awaited toys and games, clothing and books.



This year their joy was thanks to the kind people at KIA, Ioanid School, Step by Step School, Veeam Software, Regina Maria, Gabi Grozea and friends, ASCB, and Fieldstar.



521 Christmas presents were carefully prepared for the children



7 organizations played Santa for the children in 2023



3,126 articles (lego, headsets, dolls, and much more) traveled in colorful parcels to the children



10 volunteers made sure that the gifts were perfectly selected for each child

Civic activities at Casa Bună

The second year of the project
“Watch PR - Watchdog -
Advocacy - Transparency -
Correctness - The Map of
Romanian Politics”

which benefited from a grant under the Active Citizens Fund
from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, through the EEA Grants
2014-2021

Civic activities at Casa Bună

WATCH PR - The Map of Romanian Politics

We thought that, since we've embarked on saving, let's not stop at fighting social injustice. So, inspired by Valeriu Nicolae, the founder of Casa Bună Association, we learned to monitor politicians, public officials, and institutions. A task that, in our opinion, should be performed by the state's control institutions.

Our intention was to teach as many civic-minded volunteers as possible how to find relevant information about the public sector and how to contribute to better informing citizens, especially in the context of an upcoming important electoral year.

Together with volunteers from the civic project "Integritate pe bune" (Integrity for Real) and partners from the RISE Project Association, we managed to inform over 3700 people in the two years of the project, which came to a conclusion at the end of 2023.



Over 3,700 citizens were informed about the importance of watchdog and advocacy actions



Over 200 volunteers were involved, together with the civic group "Integritate pe bune" (Integrity for Real)



Over 200 online complaints and petitions were sent to authorities by volunteers



4 advocacy campaigns mobilized citizens and raised awareness among authorities

Civic activities at Casa Bună

WATCH PR - The Map of Romanian Politics

200 volunteers - coordinated by civic activist Valeriu Nicolae, investigative journalist Ana Poenariu from RISE Project, environmental activist Cornel Zainea, and lawyer Diana Iașciurjinschi - invested over 17,000 hours researching the public documents of individuals in public positions and learned to use journalistic, civic, and legal tools to expose imposture and lack of transparency.

It was challenging and intense, but we are extremely grateful for everything we learned: to see the legal vulnerabilities that encourage corruption, to propose solutions that protect the environment, and to demand transparency and integrity from institutions.



3 investigation coordinators guided the volunteers who contributed to the project



150 hours of training took place, within **3 courses**, lasting over **10 months**



60 volunteers were trained and prepared for investigative and watchdog activities



Over 17,000 hours of research on public documents was conducted by volunteers



Civic

Harta Politicii Românești

Prin Watch PR, facem cartografierea guvernării în România și avem în vedere trei direcții principale: transparență și competență în funcția publică, transparență și integritate în administrația publică, combaterea exploatărilor ilegale și a sinturii biocorupției.

Prin Watch PR răspundem pe de o parte nevoii de informare corectă și conștientizare privind derapajele statului de drept, iar pe de alta parte, propunem mecanisme concrete de implicare civică pentru sancționarea derapajelor politice sau din instituțiile publice, influența politică asupra sistemului public, fenomenul defrișării legale, dotarea fondurilor publice, abuzul de putere, respectiv conflictul de interese, angajările fictive din instituțiile și companiile de stat - toate acestea au un numitor comun - CORUPȚIA.

Conform organizației Transparency International cu un scor de 44/100 = zero corupție România se califică în mod constant ca una dintre cele mai corupte țări ale UE, iar acest indice a rămas aproape constant din 2012 (44 - 45 max).

În acest context comunitatea civică creată în jurul Watch PR va propune acțiuni de identificare și "impunere" a sectorului politic, acțiuni de advocacy privind derapajele sistemice, activități de investigare și watchdog pe principalele problematice abordate, respectiv acțiuni de implicare activă a participanților în activități conștientizate, advocacy și influențare a deciziilor publice.

Succesul proiectului nu ar fi posibil fără implicarea organizației Rise Project pe partea de Jurnalism de Investigare și fără colaborarea cu asociațiilor precum Fundația Conservația Carpatică, experți pe partea de monitorizare a defrișărilor legale și a conservării.

Civic activities at Casa Bună

WATCH PR - The Map of Romanian Politics

Active Citizens Fund Romania is financed through the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021. The general objective of the grants is to reduce economic and social disparities and to strengthen the bilateral relations between the 15 beneficiary states and the donor states (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway). The programme is run by the consortium between the Civil Society Development Foundation, the Partnership Foundation, the Resource Centre for Roma Communities, the PACT Foundation and Frivillighet Norge, acting as Fund Operator appointed by the FMO – Financial Mechanism Office of the EEA and Norway Grants. Active Citizens Fund Romania aims at strengthening civil society and active citizenship, as well as at strengthening the capacity of vulnerable groups. With a total allocation of 46,000,000 EUR, the objective of the programme is the long-term development of the civil society sustainability and capacity, strengthening its role in promoting democratic participation, active citizenship and human rights, consolidating at the same time the bilateral relations with the donor states Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. For more information about Active Citizens Fund Romania, see www.activecitizensfund.ro. For more information about the EEA and Norwegian Grants, visit www.eeagrants.ro.



2 strategic litigations aimed to amend or even repeal legal texts regarding transparency and integrity



7 meetings with students on civic topics introduced their role in obtaining and sharing accurate information



3 consultations took place with parliamentarians: 2 on National Integrity Agency Law, and 1 on environmental issues



1 best practices guide was published regarding the application of civic engagement tools

Many thanks to project team and the over 200 volunteers involved!



Anca Elena Sandu

Communication
Coordinator



Andrei Busuioc

Graphic Designer



Ana Poenariu

Investigations
Coordinator



Diana Iașciurjinschi

Lawyer



Cornel Zainea

Investigations
Coordinator



Elena Roșescu

Financial
Coordinator



Iuliana Rusu

Volunteers
Coordinator



Lia Copariu

Manager Assistant



Gabriel Popa

IT Coordinator



Mihaela Onea

Project Manager



Valeriu Nicolae

Investigations
Coordinator

The Casa Bună team

Employees and volunteers
working together to make
things happen

Say hello to the 2023 team



Anca Elena
Sandu



Anca Teodora
Sandu



Ami
Liță



Corina
Olteanu



Catalina
Croitoru



Eliza
Trăistaru



Hannah
Slavik



Lia
Copariu



Marianna
Agoni



Marian
Grigore



Marcel
Enache



Mihaela
Aptiș



Mihaela
Griga



Thomas
Marinescu



Vincențiu
Mihaiu



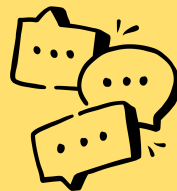
Valeriu
Nicolae

Casa Bună volunteers

When we say Casa Bună, we mean Casa Bună volunteers because nothing we do here is possible without their time, energy, and dedication to our mission. In 2023 we looked at ways to better engage and involve the people that wish to become part of our tribe.

We asked volunteers to attend onboarding training sessions where we discussed the fears and emotions that come with any new beginning; we talked more about our activities and invited everyone to take part in them; and we publicly recognized and thanked volunteers for their involvement.

We still haven't found the magic formula to move as many people as possible from desire to action, but we're working towards that.



333 volunteers participated in our onboarding training sessions in 2023



441 volunteers donated their time weekly to Casa Bună activities



More than 60% of our volunteers have been volunteering for more than one year with Casa Bună



100 volunteers made the "Orchard with Stars" festival possible

Casa Bună team

Casa Bună teenagers

They help us with the groceries distributions, coach the younger children at sports, play with them during camps, and tutor them at Casa Bună on Sundays. They lent us many helping hands at the festival.

One of the most beautiful surprises of 2023 was the involvement of our teenagers in our activities. We have watched them grow up since the years we did homework at school 136 and now they work side-by-side with us. They are part of our team, and we couldn't be more proud of them, of how beautifully they have grown, and the fact that they have chosen to join our mission to do good.



Thank you for your support, Luiza, Gigel, Krystiana, Marcel, Mihai, Ami, Larisa, Moise, Oli, Adelin, Sebi, Rareș, Alexia, Miruna, Lorena, Adi, Andreea.



IT at Casa Bună

In 2023 IT at Casa Bună meant maintenance for our online tutoring program and the development of a digital platform to replace manual processes.

Alongside our small team of 10 IT volunteers we benefited from the help of another 26 professionals from IT companies Adobe and Commify who, in two full days, set-up, repaired, and inventoried over 50 computers.

The Casa Bună digital platform is being developed by another team of IT professionals from Endava who have shown a lot of patience, empathy, and curiosity with the process.



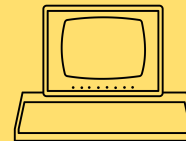
Thank you, Pavlo, Claudiu M, Claudiu R, Aurel, Teo, Endava, Adobe, and Commify teams. Thanks to you, the educational process continued smoothly in 2023.



439 IT tasks were solved, both on-site and remotely, by our team of IT specialists



16 IT professionals from Endava dedicated their time to build the Casa Bună platform



194 computers reached the children (for new children starting online lessons, replacing old or broken equipment, or as prizes)



7,000 hours were dedicated to building the Casa Bună platform

Casa Bună team

“Porters” at Casa Bună

In 2023, the “porters” continued to be our most dynamic and resourceful team, led by the one and only Vincențiu.

We call them when we need help with transporting the largest pieces of furniture or the smallest children enrolled at Casa Bună. When we need to rearrange the warehouse or dismantle and load furniture from a donated kindergarten. When something or someone needs to be transported somewhere. And quite often, when we simply don't know who else to call.

And they never let us down. In 2023, the mighty "porters" team raised and constructed an entire festival, moved a warehouse, and unloaded a truckload of food from Germany.



Boys and girls, we love you and appreciate all your hard work!



44 volunteers responded to calls to lift, sort, transport, and assemble donations



16 professionals worked around the clock to make sure everything went smoothly at the festival



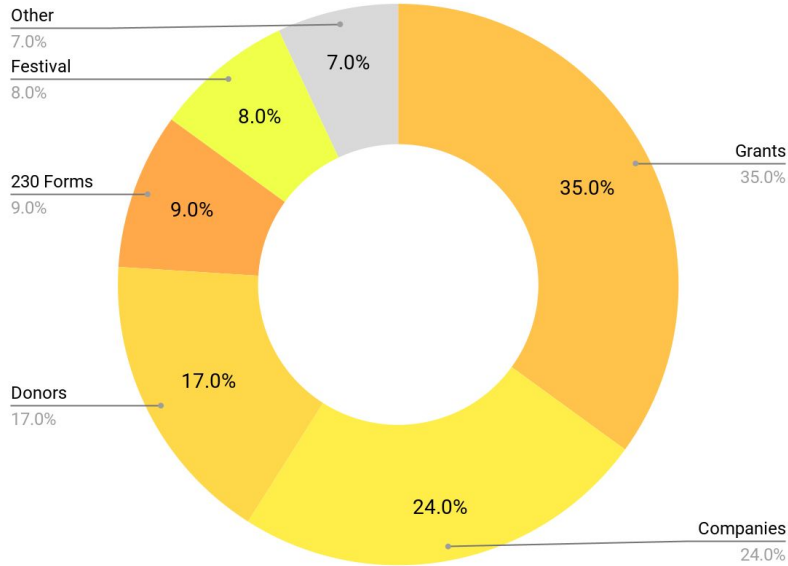
100 hours were spent in the eMAG warehouse sorting and arranging donations

2023 in numbers

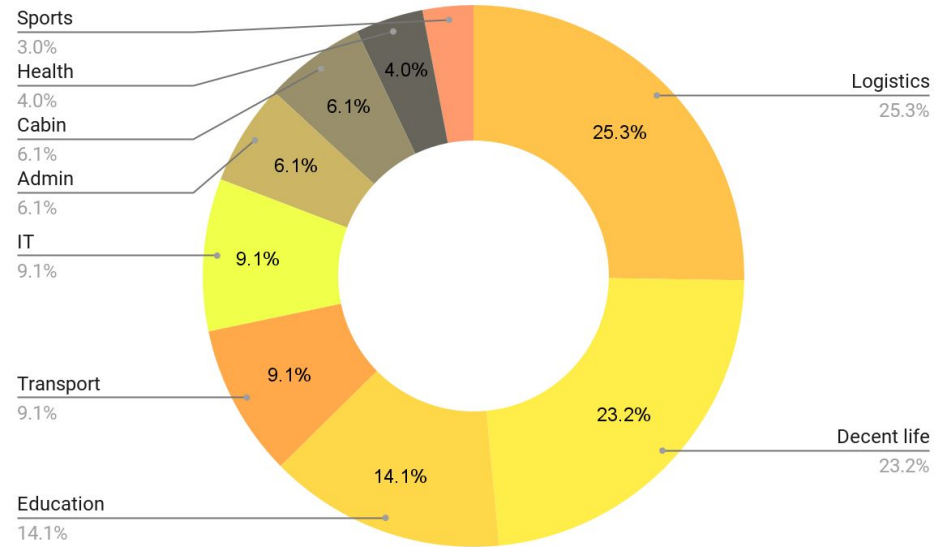
The support we received
and where this support was
invested

The support we received in 2023

Financial support

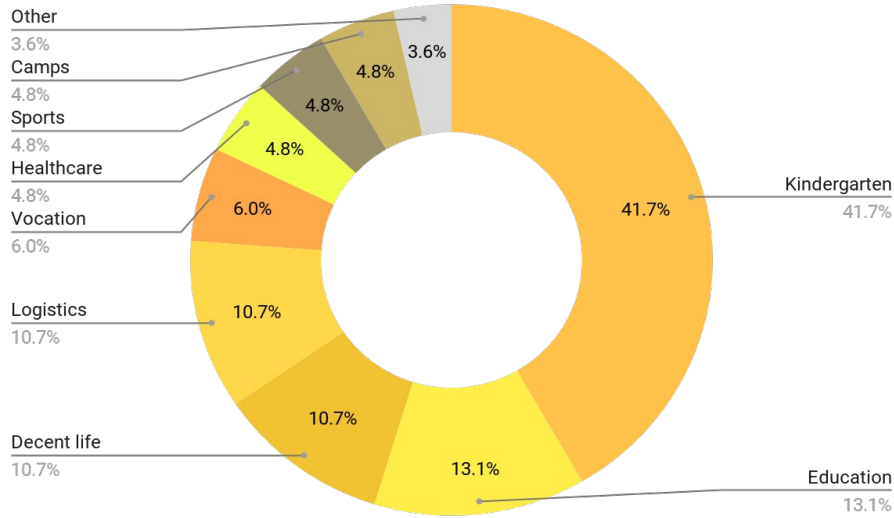


Supports in goods

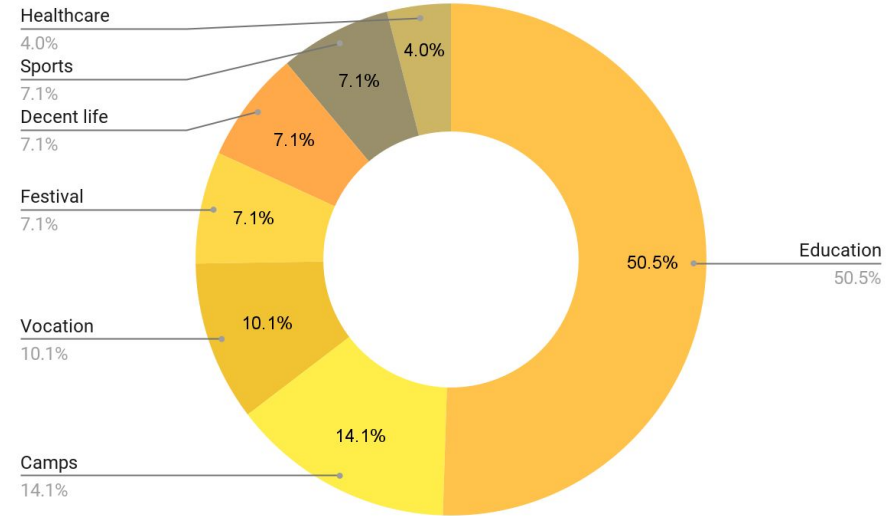


The resources we invested in 2023

Financial resources invested



Time (hours) invested



Bonus - 2023 Failures

Here's where we failed in 2023

2023 Failures

It would be easier to focus only on what we did right, because nobody is comfortable with failure. But we have to admit we made mistakes in all of our 2023 activities. We hope this means we'll be a bit smarter in 2024.

Clearly, we don't know how to ask for help well enough; nor do we know how to sufficiently acknowledge the help received. We still haven't managed to find a balance between our passion for what we do and the risk of accumulating too much fatigue.

We haven't been as entrepreneurial as we would have liked this year either. We want each of the activities we undertake eventually to be supported as far as possible, perhaps even entirely, by small businesses developed around Casa Bună.



“Orchard with stars” festival

Underestimating the effort required to support a festival, as well as leaving activities until the last minute, led to the exhaustion of the team. It was really beautiful, but it drained us, and we decided not to host the festival in 2024 as we are focusing on building the kindergarten.

The apprenticeship program

Although we made some progress with the vocational workshops, not having a professional employee dedicated to this program led to ceasing the activities partway through the year.

Communication and clear roles

Lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities as well as lack of clear communication within the team led to activities slipping through our fingers and uneven workload among the team members.

Nucșoara cabin

The problems we faced with utilities at the cabin forced us to postpone starting camps until the beginning of 2024.

Team work

Although we made progress compared to last year, we continued to shine when it came to working individually and to struggle when working as a team.

Too little time together

In 2023 we planned regular team-building events. In the end, we only managed to have one, which we struggled to organize. But at least we played Catan and beat Valeriu. (Valeriu's addition: they didn't beat me!)

Celebrating successes

We still don't know how to celebrate our successes. In 2023, as well as in previous years, we didn't make time to enjoy our successes, as a team and as a community.

Changes within the team

In 2023 we lost two important team members: Marian and Thomas. We would have liked them to stay, but we didn't know how to make each other happy. They mean a lot to us, and we are grateful for their contributions.

“Veteran” volunteers

Although the volunteer team has grown, we see some of our favourite “veteran” volunteers rarely, those who were with us from the start. We miss them and hope to see them more often in 2024.

Civic vs. social

We haven't managed to separate Valeriu's civic activism from Casa Bună's social activities yet. There were objective reasons for this, but we still see it as a failure.

It's hard to say “no”

Although we've started to refuse donations in goods which we don't need, no matter how valuable they may be, we still need to learn how to say "no." Part of our limited storage space is full of things which we may never need but simply couldn't refuse!

Thank you!

We got caught up in work and forgot to properly thank everyone who supported us in 2023. We feel guilty about this because without their help we would have accomplished much less.

These were the stories of 2023. There might be more to tell, but we will stop here.

Thank you for helping us transform our stories into a beautiful reality for the children!

