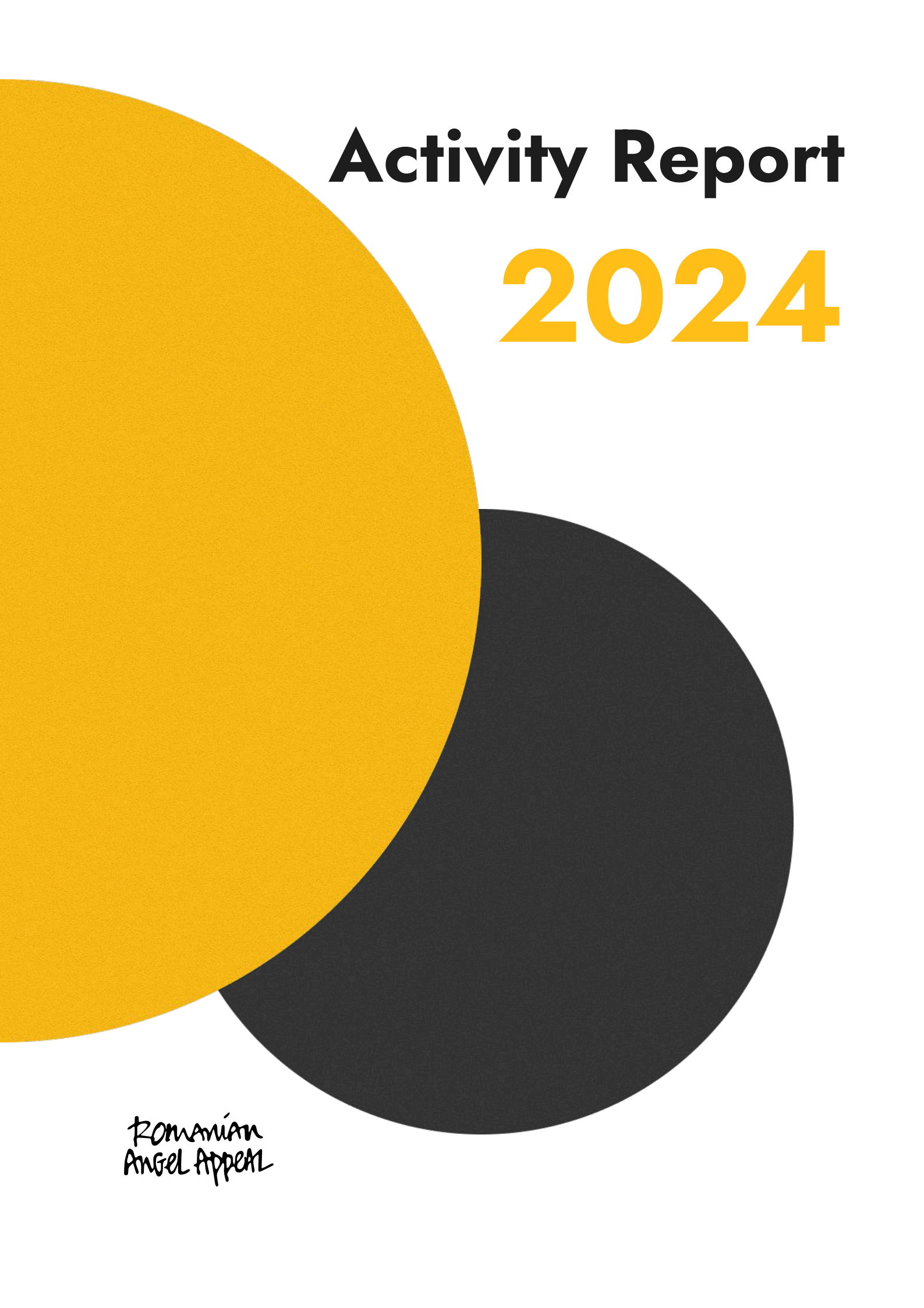




Activity Report

2024

Romanian
Angel Appeal

Annual Activity Report of the Romanian Angel Appeal Foundation

The report documents the main interventions of the Romanian Angel Appeal Foundation in 2024, with a focus on the mental health of children and adolescents, access to healthcare services in vulnerable communities, the training of professionals, and the involvement of young people in European volunteering programs.



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List of Abbreviations

AMFB

Bucharest-Ilfov Family Physicians Association

CCD

Teacher Training Center

CMBRAE

Bucharest Municipality Educational Resources and Assistance Center

CMEB

Bucharest Municipality Psychopedagogical Counseling and Assessment Center

CNSMLA

National Commission for Mental Health and Anti-Drug Efforts

CPR

Romanian College of Psychologists

DGASMB

General Directorate of Social Assistance of Bucharest Municipality

DofE

Duke of Edinburgh's International Award

ISMB

Bucharest School Inspectorate

ISTT

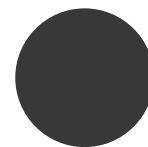
Institute for the Study and Treatment of Trauma

ESOL

English for Speakers of Other Languages

FIDS

Feel Imagine Do Share



Opening Note

There is no formula for trust. It is built over time - with each project carried through, each child listened to, each teacher trained, and each partner who stays, both at the beginning and when things get difficult.

For the Romanian Angel Appeal team, 2024 was a year of connecting all the threads that truly matter. We listened, measured, mapped out solutions - and brought them exactly where they were most needed.

In schools. In vulnerable communities. In villages where tuberculosis is not just a diagnosis, but a silent burden. In the minds of teenagers who don't ask for help, but deeply deserve it. In the everyday efforts of teachers, counsellors, psychologists and doctors doing their best to keep the system afloat.

We were there. Not just with ideas, but with clear tools. With guides, training programmes, assessments, mobile screenings, campaigns, support networks and spaces

where young voices truly matter. And with The Odyssey of Rodiei 52 - a newsletter turned logbook, where we speak openly about what we've learned, what concerns us, and what inspires us.

Everything you'll read in this report was made possible by a multidisciplinary team that brings together empathy and rigour, enthusiasm and responsibility, experience and the courage to keep striving for better.

We are different in background and approach, but anchored in the same values. We support, complement and challenge each other - and, ultimately, we build together.

I would like to thank my colleagues and everyone who stood by us in 2024: donors, project partners, NGOs in Romania and across the EU, professionals in education, health, research and academia, local public institutions and international collaborators who helped shape and sustain strategic initiatives. Every partnership has been a confirmation that what we do makes a difference.

We hope you won't read this report as a formality, but as an invitation - to discover ideas, results and people, and to feel the reassurance of a committed and reliable partner.

And when you reach the end, we hope you'll see that the next step might be one we could take together.



The Pillars of Our Work



Lung Health

Civic Engagement for Better Community Health

The project aimed at strengthening civic engagement in public health came to a close in January 2024, marking two years of collaboration between Romanian Angel Appeal and the Association for Supporting Patients with Multidrug-Resistant Tuberculosis (ASPTMR).

The project followed two main directions: on one hand, consolidating the **Stop TB Romania Partnership**, and on the other, supporting people affected by or at risk of tuberculosis and/or HIV to become active voices in shaping public health policies.

In its final stages, the project facilitated a strategic planning session bringing together members of the Stop TB Romania network.

This process concluded with the adoption of a new five-year Strategic Plan.



At the same time, the network expanded with five new member organisations - a key step toward broader and more impactful collaboration.

To close the project, an online conference was held, highlighting several of the most important achievements:



A practical guide on citizen participation in public health policy, offering essential insights for anyone seeking to understand and influence public decision-making processes;



On 24 March, iconic buildings in 28 counties, including the Romanian Government headquarters, Victoria Palace - were lit in red **as a symbolic gesture of solidarity with the fight against tuberculosis**;



Two free online learning modules, Public Health for All and Advocacy for Health, developed and launched on RAA's e-learning platform. In the first five months alone, they reached over 295 users - including professionals and engaged citizens alike.



The Lung Caravan: prevention, access, and support for the most vulnerable

Since 2020, through a public-private partnership, we have built a mobile model of community intervention in the field of tuberculosis - with a focus on prevention, early detection, and facilitating access to medical services for vulnerable individuals.

The Lung Caravan provides a complex infrastructure for screening, counselling, and referral, which has managed to reach, over the past four years, more than 200 localities in Romania, benefiting thousands of people from communities with limited access to healthcare services.

In 2024, we are taking the model further by expanding the intervention to small and medium-sized towns, residential centres for the elderly, social centres for homeless people, migrant communities, and detention facilities.

We go where the need is real but often overlooked, continuing, in collaboration with the Marius Nasta Institute of Pulmonology and under the coordination of the Ministry of Health, the **SCREENING TB project - Organising the early detection programme for tuberculosis in vulnerable populations.**

To adapt to the new context, the first step was updating the screening methodology - a collective effort to define a unified intervention framework tailored to the specific characteristics of the target population.

Our team worked on defining the beneficiary categories, mobilisation and information procedures, standardised work protocols, as well as mechanisms for monitoring and quality control of the services.

In parallel, we contributed to the development of a training programme for staff involved in TB prevention - including thematic content on increasing treatment adherence, using community resources to support patients, and health advocacy.

Then, with the methodology in place, in November and December we visited localities in the Bucharest-Ilfov region, institutions and residential centres, where **1,702 individuals** from vulnerable groups benefited from direct information and screening activities in **14 different locations**, including:

The Bucharest Pre-Trial Detention Centre (67 individuals), Jilava Penitentiary (740 individuals), and Giurgiu Penitentiary (429 individuals);

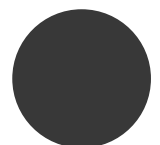
The communes of Jilava and Ciorogârla, Ilfov County (150 individuals) – through outreach activities in vulnerable communities;

Social residential centres in Bucharest (316 individuals), such as CRPCSA (migrants), CSSPFA (homeless individuals), care homes for the elderly and persons with disabilities.

The Lung Caravan is a concrete example of a national intervention that is both accessible and effective, making it possible to identify tuberculosis in its early stages - when treatment is easier to follow, recovery is faster, and the risk of transmission is lower. At the same time, it contributes to shifting public mindsets around prevention and health through the information and counselling activities carried out alongside screening.

We are glad that this effort is continuing, having been well received in recent years, as mobile screening programmes for tuberculosis or other high-risk diseases are not just medical interventions - they are real forms of support that save lives, raise awareness, and help build more accessible bridges between people and healthcare services.

Iuliana Copil, Project Coordinator





The Pillars of Our Work



Mental Health

Creating a Functional Intervention Model for Mental Health and Psychological Support for Children and Adolescents (MHPSS)

In 2024, we developed a pilot intervention focused on the socio-emotional needs of children and adolescents in Bucharest.

From a bird's-eye view, we mapped out the current situation and identified systemic barriers. On the ground, together with our partners, we created tools, training programmes and resources designed to respond to the real and pressing needs of young people.

It was a full and dynamic year, with our efforts channelled across three key levels of intervention:



**Resource mapping and
systemic gap analysis**

Referral Pathway



**Resources and Tools for
the Early Identification of
Emotional Difficulties**

**Capacity Building for
Education Professionals**

**Guidance and Support
for Parents**

**Adolescents as Key Actors
in Piloting Socio-Emotional
Support Programmes**

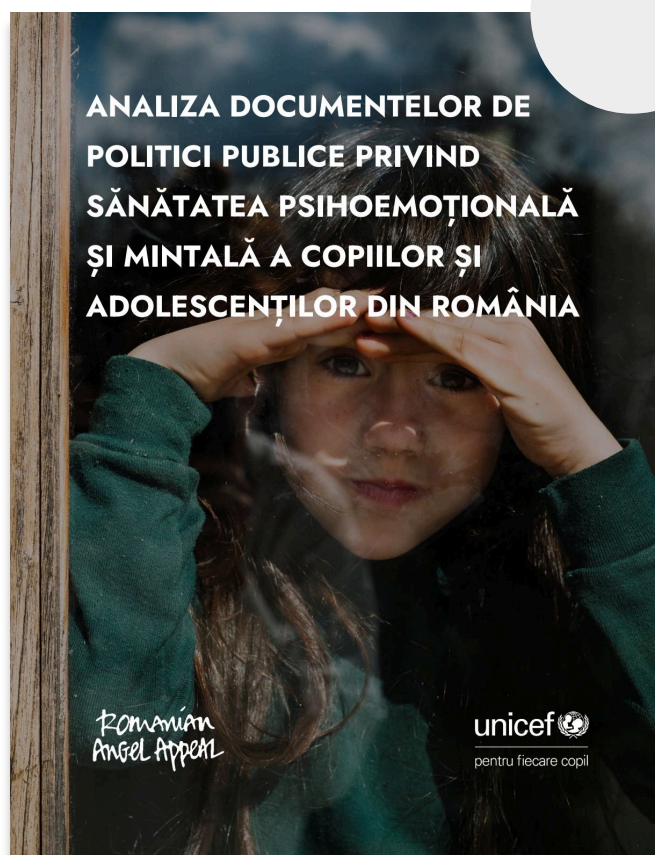
Resource mapping and systemic gap analysis

To ensure that no child has to face emotional difficulties alone, we examined the barriers encountered by the adults around them - parents, teachers, doctors - when trying to provide access to specialised support.

This made it essential to look at the system as a whole - to connect the dots from the moment an adult notices something is different in a child, to the moment that child or adolescent receives the help they need.

The first step was to understand what is currently happening in Bucharest and what is representative of the local context.

By **mapping needs, existing resources and co-creating solutions for delivering integrated mental health services**, we aimed to identify what types of support are available, where they can be found and how they can be accessed. This process resulted in four analysis reports:



A policy review on the psycho-emotional and mental health of children and adolescents in Romania

We analysed the relevant legal framework, the institutions responsible for implementing public mental health policies, the challenges and proposed solutions identified in public documents, and provided a comprehensive overview along with policy recommendations.

HARTA SERVICIILOR DE SĂNĂTATE MINTALĂ ȘI SPRIJIN PSIHOSOCIAL PENTRU ADOLESCENȚII DIN BUCUREȘTI



A map of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services for adolescents in Bucharest

Which compiled and geolocated the services available in each sector of the city, showing their distribution according to the categories of minors they serve, the types of interventions offered, interaction methods, legal status, and payment modalities.

A report on the promotion of socio-emotional wellbeing in schools in Bucharest

Which looked at schools actively engaging in this area – with emphasis on the availability of dedicated spaces for extracurricular activities, existing material resources, and the educational activities being carried out within school communities.

PROMOVAREA BUNĂSTĂRII SOCIO-EMOȚIONALE A ELEVILOR ÎN UNITĂȚI ȘCOLARE DIN BUCUREȘTI





An analysis of the digital resources used by adolescents in Romania

Which identified and classified the types of mental health-related content available online, creating an inventory of digital sources and platforms that address mental health and psychosocial support, as well as how accessible and user-friendly they are for young people.



The analyses we conducted are useful for all stakeholders who can contribute to the emotional wellbeing of adolescents: teachers, authorities, NGOs, and professionals.

The results show which services are currently available, what is missing, and most importantly, how we can do better. They are not just data - they also contain concrete proposals for action, necessary to design a service system that truly responds to the emotional needs of young people.

Fidelie Kalambayi, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager

Referral Pathway

As we gained a clearer understanding of the resources available and the barriers that exist, the next natural step was **to develop a referral system to support the early identification and management of mental health challenges.**

This referral system quickly became a central point of focus - not only within our team, but also at the level of the Steering Committee, where, together with UNICEF Romania, we convened representatives of key institutions from Bucharest and across the country. Among them: CNSMLA, CPR, ISMB, CMBRAE, CCD, DGASMB, AMFB, CMEB, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education.

The resource mapping exercise, enriched by in-depth discussions and partner input, led to the development of three comprehensive flow diagrams: one for the education system, one for the social protection system, and one for the health system.



We aimed to create a map that would help children and adolescents navigate the rights set out in legislation, as well as the existing mental health and psychosocial support services available to them. In essence, we charted the pathways starting from school, the health system, or the social welfare system, showing the steps a child or adolescent takes to reach the final psychiatric or psychological service-focusing particularly on free public services.

Cristina Enache, Project Officer



The barriers became much clearer when they were explained to us directly by the people working within the system - those who, every day, face a mechanism that is often complex and difficult to navigate.

By centralising all this data, it became increasingly evident - both for us and for our partners - that without genuine collaboration between the education, healthcare, and social protection systems, children and adolescents risk remaining trapped in a cycle of inaction. Information fails to circulate, resources are fragmented, and responsibility becomes diluted.



Resources and Tools for the Early Identification of Emotional Difficulties

In 2023, **we set out to develop a self-administered tool for the early identification of emotional difficulties among adolescents.** This initiative also included the creation of training modules to support school and healthcare professionals in working with children, as well as dedicated support materials for parents.

The transition to the implementation phase in 2024 brought both challenges and the excitement of taking a significant step forward.

As a first step, and in collaboration with research teams from ISTT and the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences at the University of Bucharest, we developed and scientifically validated a screening instrument designed to identify mental health concerns among Romanian and Ukrainian children and adolescents: the ISSM-CA (Mental Health Screening Instrument for Children and Adolescents).

The development process was rigorous and structured in multiple stages:

- It began with focus groups involving **over 200 participants** - Romanian and Ukrainian adolescents, parents, teachers, and school counsellors
- It was followed by consultations with **31 mental health professionals.**
- Based on these insights, an initial version of the instrument comprising **132 items was drafted.**
- Pilot testing on two sample groups (301 and later 496 adolescents) followed, with factor analysis leading to a refined and **final version consisting of 27 items.**

Built around three key dimensions - biological, psychological, and social - the ISSM-CA addresses a significant gap in the current mental health assessment landscape in Romania. It is both reflective of the lived realities of today's adolescents and consistent with international standards in the field

By the end of 2024, the tool had been submitted for peer review in a specialised academic journal and is currently under evaluation for accreditation by the Romanian College of Psychologists.

Capacity Building for Education Professionals

The instrument was presented in detail during **training modules aimed at education professionals - including school staff (teachers, school counsellors, school nurses and doctors, school leaders) and general practitioners.**

Based on formative research and consultations with UNICEF Romania, and in partnership with the Institute for the Study and Treatment of Trauma (ISTT), we developed the **Wellbeing and Mental Health Guide for School Staff**, which served as the foundation for the training programme.

Covering topics such as an introduction to social and emotional learning, staff wellbeing, student mental health (anxiety, depression, loneliness), and practical recommendations for using the screening instrument alongside the referral system, the programme was first piloted with a mixed group of 22 participants.

Over the course of two days, they engaged in both theoretical learning and practical exercises, and shared valuable feedback to improve the programme.

In parallel, ISTT, together with RAA and the Bucharest Teacher Training Centre (Casa Corpului Didactic), delivered a “training of trainers” session, providing future facilitators with resources, guidance and practical strategies for delivering the programme - which proved essential in the autumn, when the first workshops began.

Although we were aware of the existing need, the response from school staff exceeded expectations - both in terms of participation and the volume of positive feedback.

“

For me, it was a benchmark for how teachers, regardless of the subject they teach, should position themselves in relation to their students.

Participant feedback

It was inspiring to see so many people eager to make a difference in education and not afraid of doing the work - all gathered in one place.

Written feedback

”

By December, we had already delivered training to 9 groups - reaching a total of 244 participants, including teachers, school counsellors, school managers, and school healthcare staff. Each cohort attended two days of workshops focused on wellbeing and mental health.

The training created a much-needed space for reflection, allowing participants to look inward with honesty and to consider how they could better support the children in their schools - with empathy, patience, and care. A key message emerged clearly: real support for students stems from the active involvement of the entire community - teachers, parents, and professionals working together.



The wave of interest from teachers made it obvious: there is a real need to talk about emotions, relationships, and care.

We built this programme on three key pillars - teacher wellbeing, authentic relationships with students, and healthy classroom dynamics - and what we saw during these sessions only strengthened our belief that teachers can become powerful agents of change, if they are given the space, support, and trust they need.

Oana Pășalan, Education Specialist

Guidance and Support for Parents

Parents have not been left out of the conversation around children's emotional wellbeing. In 2024, together with ISTT, we developed a set of psychoeducational and support materials specifically for them - an informative guide addressing some of the most common mental health challenges faced by children, drawing on the findings of our research, but also going beyond them.

Our plan to bring the topic of social and emotional wellbeing into conversations with the adults who care for children and adolescents will be put into action in spring 2025 and includes:



With care and empathy, we aim to explore, one by one, key topics such as the role of the parent, anxiety, guilt, parental burnout, resilience, emotional regulation, family dynamics, productivity and the support resources available.

Adolescents as Key Actors in Piloting Socio-Emotional Support Programmes

Alongside our work to strengthen systemic intervention and support the key adults in children's and adolescents' lives, in 2024 we made significant steps to connect directly with young people - meeting them where they are, using their language, platforms, and interest

We began developing youth-friendly tools and piloted non-formal interventions designed to help teenagers better connect with themselves, with others, and with the support available to them.

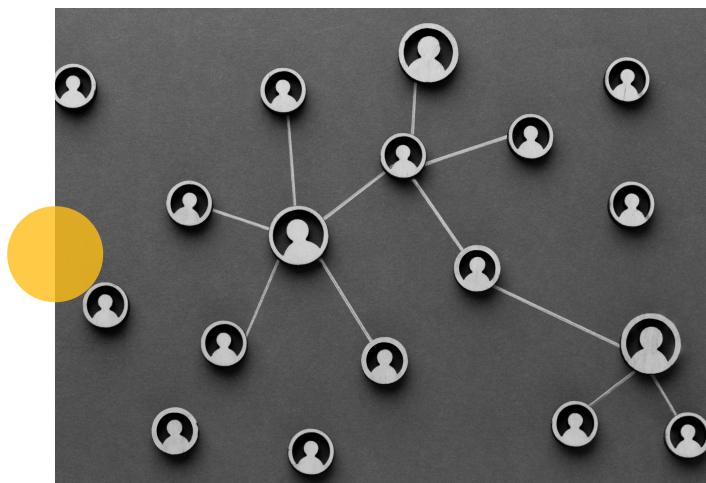


A digital app bringing together key resources for children and adolescents.

From the outset, the app was envisioned as a central hub for all project-developed resources - a single space where children and adolescents can access reliable information about mental health, find help, learn about types of support available, and engage with age-appropriate educational materials.

The RAA team provided ongoing technical feedback and input on functionality, suggesting improvements to structure, content, and integration - with a key feature being the inclusion of the ISSM-CA screening tool.

A peer-to-peer leadership programme for school club leaders.



Twelve adolescents coordinating extracurricular clubs in Bucharest high schools were involved in an eight-month training and mentoring programme.

They met monthly with the RAA team, took part in themed workshops (e.g., PR, fundraising, conflict management, project pitching), and explored non-formal methods based on socio-emotional learning.

Notably, half of the participants began attending the Youth Hub outside the regular sessions, bringing along friends and fellow club members - further strengthening community ties.



For me, the leadership programme was an opportunity to meet new people with similar interests and challenges. I was initially sceptical about how much help the mentors and peers could offer.

Now I realise that without those connections, things wouldn't have gone as well. Many people with different skill sets were there when I needed them.

Vlad Constantin, student and leader of the Japanese Club at his high school



As a safe space already well trusted by adolescents, the Youth Hub reaffirmed its role in supporting young people's wellbeing by hosting at least two active school clubs and offering guidance and resources for several of their activities.



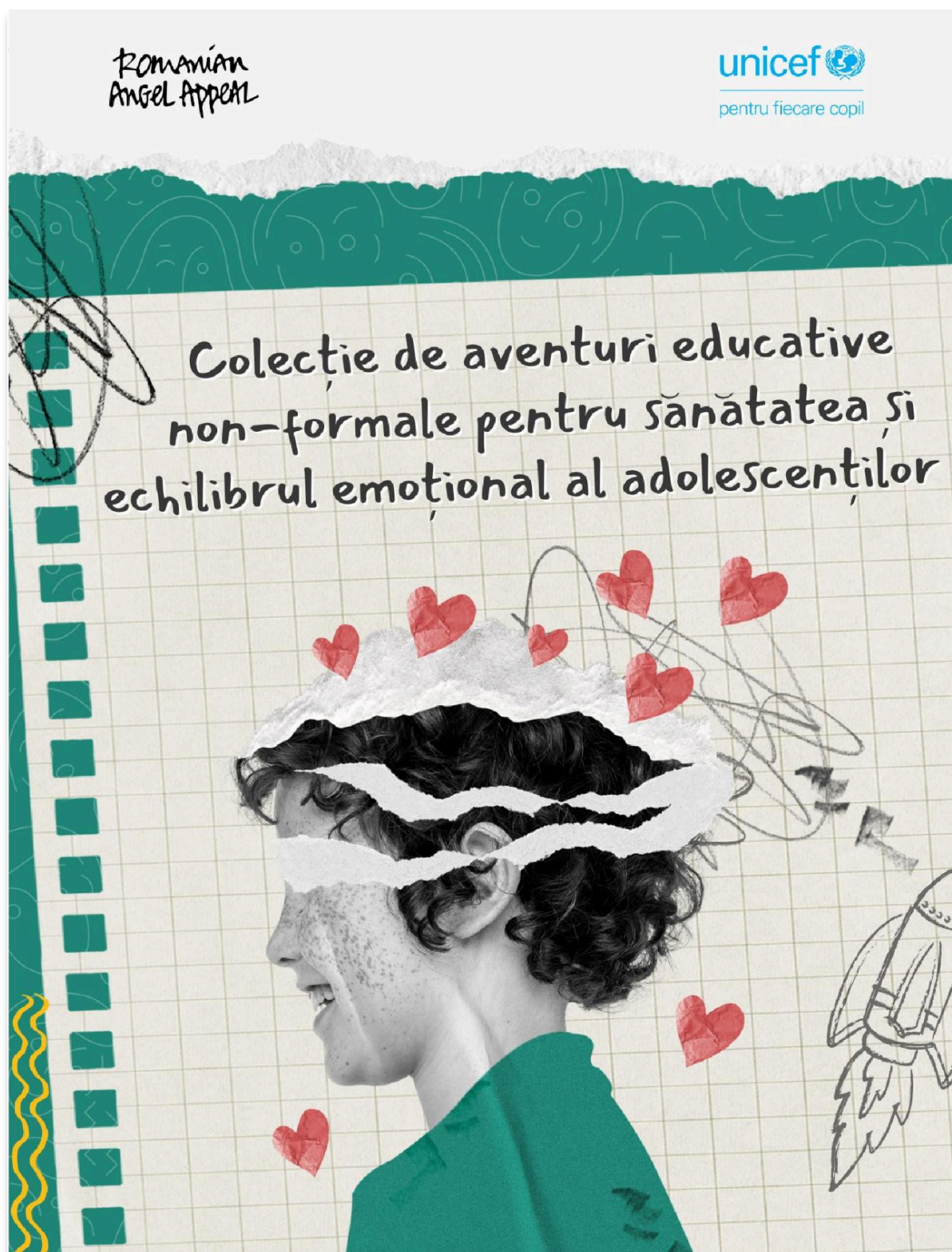
The club leaders' programme was such a pleasant surprise.

Most programmes like this are very rigid and disengaged. But here, everyone was talking and sharing advice and ideas - we couldn't stop! It created such an open and enjoyable atmosphere. It helped me a lot, both technically and socially.

And discovering the Hub? It's like any other volunteering space - only better. I don't come here out of obligation like in other volunteering projects, but because I want to - for the people and the sense of team spirit. For me, the Hub is a place for learning, relaxing, and personal growth.

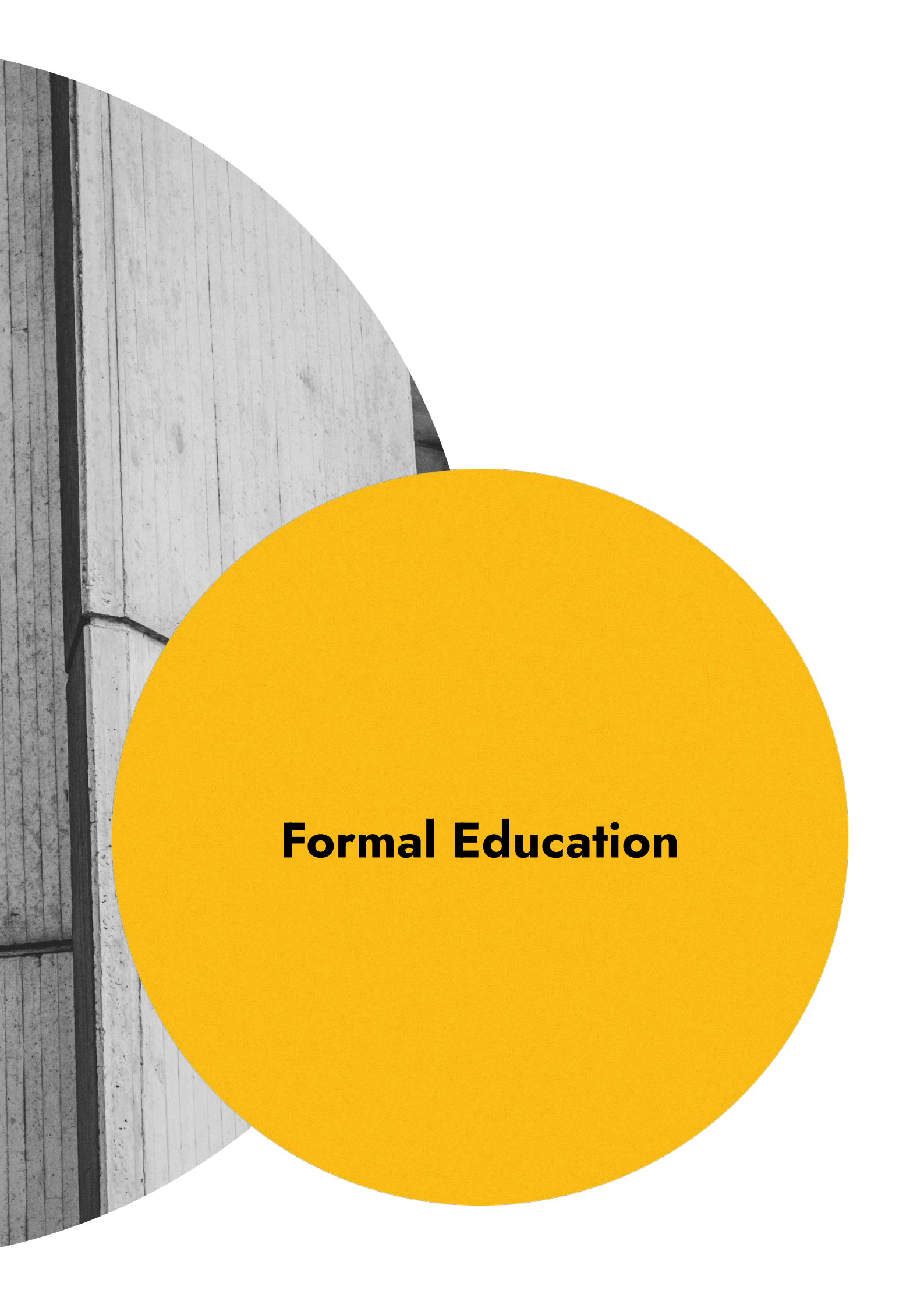
Alessia, student and MUN Club leader

A valuable resource that supports youth work - and can be used by youth workers, teachers, or any professionals working with teenagers - is **Compendium of Non-Formal Activities for Adolescents** by RAA in 2023 and piloted in 2024 through a series of sessions at the Youth Hub.





The Pillars of Our Work



Formal Education

Integration includes a language component

- a teaching handbook for Romanian as a second language

In partnership with teachers, education professionals and university lecturers - and with financial support from the Romanian-American Foundation - we piloted, between 2023 and 2024, a Romanian as a Second Language teaching model.

The approach was inspired by ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) methodology and focused on functional communication tailored to the needs of students who speak no Romanian at all.

In 2024, we paused to reflect on the achievements, the impact and the challenges encountered. Among the most sustainable outcomes were the two teaching manuals produced – the second being a revised and improved version that incorporated feedback

from teachers directly involved in the piloting process.

The manuals, developed under the coordination of a Fulbright specialist and a professor from the University of Bucharest, are available **for free download on the RAA website** and via the University of Bucharest Publishing House. They contribute to building a much-needed **library of resources for teaching Romanian as a foreign language** - an area still significantly underserved within the Romanian education system.

Beyond the classroom, the project also generated a public policy analysis outlining the current limitations in teaching Romanian without a support language. **Key recommendations included:**

Strengthening teacher capacity: although teachers reported major improvements in how they approached language instruction without a support language - and in dealing with trauma - there is still a strong need for continued professional development, resources and institutional support to help them respond to increasingly complex classroom realities;

Fostering interinstitutional collaboration: while the project brought together a variety of stakeholders, the integration of non-Romanian-speaking students remains a shared responsibility that can only be effectively addressed through ongoing cooperation between schools, civil society and academia;

Raising awareness among policymakers on the importance of linguistic integration for refugee children.

These conclusions were validated during a roundtable discussion attended by 20 experts, policymakers and teachers, confirming the need for sustained institutional engagement in this field.

Design for Change - Empowering children through the "I can!" spirit

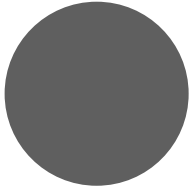
After gaining a deeper understanding of the Design for Change movement and the impact of the FIDS methodology (Feel, Imagine, Do, Share) during the Global Summit in India, we rolled up our sleeves in January 2024 and got to work. We organised the first teacher training course in Romania, with a clear goal: to bring the methodology into our schools.

In a world full of challenges, an adult who truly believes in every child's potential can make a tremendous difference in their lives. It opens up a universe of possibilities where children are encouraged to explore their passions and develop their talents. It can be a wonderful journey where they learn that there are no limits - that effort and perseverance can lead to success.

Oana Pășălan, Project Coordinator



Our first step, supported by funding from the Romanian-American Foundation, was to train 24 teachers from 12 schools, carefully selected to include both formal (through optional curriculum) and non-formal contexts (extracurricular workshops and clubs). These teachers participated in an intensive programme that combined the FIDS methodology with practical exercises, real-life examples and reflective work on their role in empowering children as change-makers.



he 23 projects developed by these teachers were diverse, bold, and strongly rooted in their students' realities - from environmental issues to inclusion, bullying, school dropout, literacy or emotional wellbeing. Sixteen of the projects were uploaded to the global ["Stories of Change" platform](#).

In total, 576 pupils from across the country went through every step of the FIDS process, developing empathy, critical thinking, self-confidence, and teamwork skills.



There's excitement. There's curiosity about the issues they'll identify and the solutions they'll propose. (...) It feels like a gift. When I applied for the project, that's how I saw it. A gift I could offer them.

Cristina, February 2024, at the end of the training days



To better understand the impact of the intervention, we conducted an applied research study between March and June 2024. The study included 47 teachers and 436 pupils, divided across formal, non-formal and control groups.

The results confirmed what we had already observed in practice: teachers reported a high level of satisfaction and a clear intention to continue using the methodology, while pupils showed clear improvements in socio-emotional skills and in their confidence to take civic action.

FIDS and the Design for Change movement created a genuine space for pupils' voices in these 12 schools and gave them the opportunity to experiment, to make mistakes, and to succeed - all with the support of an adult who believes in them.

At the same time, it offered teachers the chance to rethink their role – not just as transmitters of knowledge, but as facilitators of change - more flexible, braver, and more connected to their pupils' realities.



The crate the security guard carries with the school milk and roll is really heavy. Miss, that's a problem! I helped him today, but we should do something about it!

Student during the FEEL stage



The stories collected throughout the implementation of the FIDS methodology were shared through the online campaign "The Wing of Change", through which we invited the public to support Romania's delegation to the I CAN Global Summit 2024 in Dubai - where one of the 16 projects had the opportunity to be showcased on the global stage.

Although the financial target wasn't fully reached, the campaign was a success in terms of visibility: it reached over 356,000 people, generated more than 150,000 video views and 1,288 interactions. Through the voices of pupils, we managed to shine a light on courage and small initiatives that can change the world - starting right in the classroom.

Attending the I CAN 2024 Summit in November was a unique experience. The Romanian team, made up of one teacher, five girls and two RAA representatives, became part of a global community of people who believe that change begins with “I can.”

The students presented their project, discovered other inspiring stories and returned home more motivated, more confident, and eager to spark change.



It was truly inspiring to be part of a global event with over 70 participating countries, fully organised by young people, to see genuine dialogue between teachers and students trained in the Design for Change methodology, and to witness such a wide range of meaningful projects on key themes like mental health, civic engagement or climate change.

We came back energised and hopeful that, with guidance and trust, young people can - and will - change the world for the better

Adela Tarpan, Development Director



The year 2024 brought the idea
of transformative change closer
to schools and local communities
- change that begins in
classrooms, within courageous
communities connected to
children's potential.

Tested, validated, and adapted,
the FIDS methodology
supported the first steps in a
paradigm shift - one in which
pupils are empowered as active
agents of change.

An Adventure Through Reading

In a rural community in Dolj County, reading has become both accessible and exciting for nearly 200 children.

In partnership with United Way and the “Tudor Segărceanu” Secondary School in Goicea, we created a dedicated reading space for children, fully equipped with child-friendly furniture, educational games and a generous collection of books to suit all ages and interests.

The refurbishment work took place between April and May, with active involvement from school staff and local volunteers, who painted the walls, assembled the bookcases and prepared the room for launch. The colourful furniture, well-stocked shelves and welcoming atmosphere quickly transformed the space into a warm, safe and inviting environment where children felt inspired to explore new worlds through books.

The reading room was inaugurated with activities that placed books at the heart of a joyful, shared experience. Despite its modest size, the room remains open to all 198 pupils of the school until 4 PM each day, including after lessons have ended.

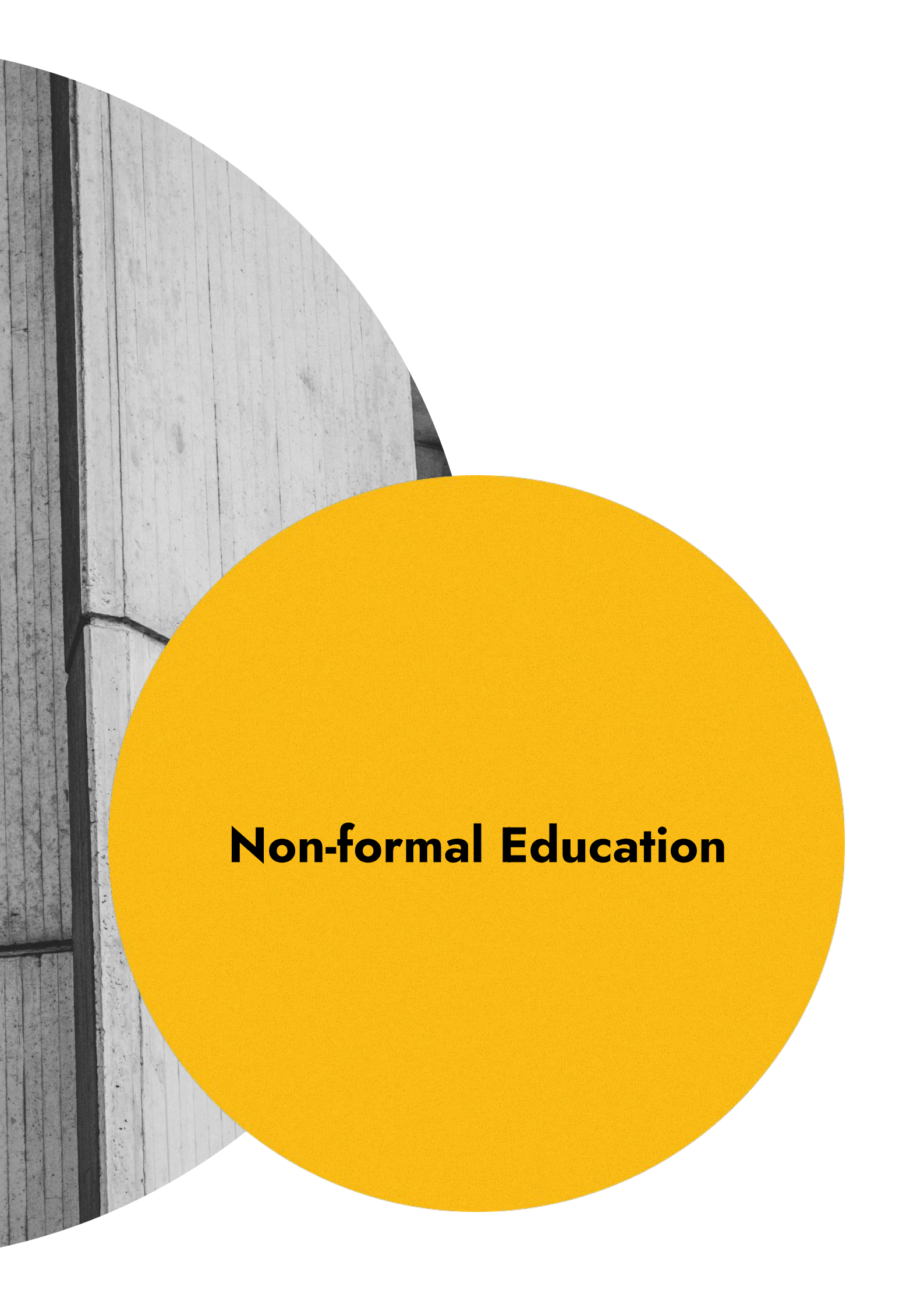


The reading room exceeded all our expectations in terms of how beautiful it is. Children from disadvantaged families had a different look in their eyes - a spark of happiness that they could leaf through any book they wanted, that they could play with the games without being told by other kids, 'If you want to play, buy your own!

Elena Preda, Head Teacher of the Goicea school



The Pillars of Our Work



Non-formal Education

Prepared and Motivated Young People - The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award and Swimathon Participation

After becoming an accredited centre for The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award (DofE) in 2023, we entered 2024 with a clear mission: to offer young people the opportunity to push their limits, build confidence and rediscover themselves - goal by goal.

As part of the Stand by Me project, 30 Romanian and Ukrainian teenagers were supported by 10 RAA mentors through their first DofE journey: the Bronze level.

With the guidance of their mentors, each young person shaped a personalised development path - from volunteering and sports to learning new skills and preparing for the adventurous journey that marks the programme's final stage.

“

At first, I thought it was just another thing to tick off the list. But now I realise how much it helped me - to come out of my shell, to meet people, to create something with my own hands. I felt I was capable of more than I believed.

Romanian participant, age 17



What sets DofE apart from other youth initiatives is its clear, structured approach: each young person sets personal goals and takes responsibility for achieving them. Every step forward is tracked, encouraged, and celebrated - turning progress into something tangible and meaningful.

The final challenge, the Adventurous Journey, was completed by 14 Romanian and 6 Ukrainian participants. This stage proved to be a powerful experience for strengthening resilience, teamwork and self-confidence.



For the journey, the young people organised and took part in a nature-based expedition, involving orientation, exploration, outdoor cooking and collaborative tasks in unfamiliar conditions. It was an opportunity to step out of their comfort zones and build greater independence.

Youth of the Future at Swimathon

To offer teenagers access to experiential outdoor learning, RAA took part in Swimathon Bucharest, where a team of 25 swimmer-fundraisers swam and raised money to cover the costs of the DofE adventure camp.

Swimathon became more than just a fundraising mechanism - it turned into a real-life lesson in solidarity, shared responsibility and the power of building support around one's own journey.

Young people were actively involved in promoting the campaign, with some of them even joining as swimmer-fundraisers themselves. Both the fundraising experience and the adventure helped them not only grow, but also discover inner reserves of confidence, motivation and perseverance.

This experience taught me what it really means to have an open mind. I learned how to step outside my comfort zone and try new things. I also discovered what it's like to work in a team - to look after yourself while also being mindful of others. That, for me, was a very important lesson. I also picked up skills that I know will be useful later in life.

Participant in the DofE programme
and the adventure camp



Ready for Life

What do young people really want? Less theory and more hands-on experience. Trustworthy people around them. Opportunities to test their limits and find their place. Ready for Life offered exactly that - a space where mental health, physical activity, learning and community came together.

Through volunteering at sports events, creative activities hosted at the Youth Hub, and educational workshops, teenagers not only received useful information but were also immersed in experiential learning and a strong sense of belonging.

Although the project's core aim was to promote a healthy and balanced lifestyle, it

also gave young people practical tools to better navigate everyday challenges - from basic first aid and financial literacy to emotional wellbeing and self-care.

Participation in sports events played a double role: encouraging movement and raising funds. The fundraising efforts enabled the delivery of **four themed workshops** on emotional wellbeing and hygiene, sport and nutrition, first aid, and entrepreneurship.

Key events included:

Greenfield - Sports Festival (16-17 September): More than 300 visitors took part in creative workshops run by young volunteers, such as face painting, braiding and bracelet making.

Bucharest Marathon (7-8 October): Seven runners, including RAA staff, volunteers and partners from iBanFirst, supported Ready for Life. At the race kit area, our volunteers created a warm, welcoming atmosphere, while their encouragement helped power the event's positive energy.

1st December Marathon: RAA volunteers provided logistical support (hydration points, cloakroom, runner guidance) and promoted both physical and mental health at our interactive tent through creative wellbeing activities.



Greenfield Sports Festival

Ne orientăm
după soare, vânt și
VOLUNTARI faini!
RAA

Fusi Steban
ca de nevastă!

Romanian
Angel Appeal

Construim o lume echitabilă pentru
fiecare copil, tânăr și adult prin
acțiuni cu impact și rezultate
durabile în domeniile educațional,
social și medical.



Bucharest Marathon



1st December Marathon

MeRAAki Volunteer Programme

The MeRAAki Volunteer Programme was born out of a desire to create a space where young people can learn, grow, and actively contribute to their communities.

Our experience at the Youth Hub has shown us that teenagers not only need safe spaces where their voices are heard, but also opportunities where they can feel genuinely engaged, develop new skills, and discover more about themselves by stepping outside their comfort zones.

MeRAAki has been structured to allow long-term involvement, offering young people the chance to build their skills through projects closely linked to the Foundation's work, and to make a tangible difference in the communities they come from.

Soon after its launch, the programme attracted over **100 young volunteers**, each placed in one of ten teams, coordinated by one or more RAA staff members.

Young people are encouraged to learn at their own pace, to explore, try, fail and grow – within a framework that values progress just as much as process. Their involvement in concrete projects aligned with our strategic priorities gives them a behind-the-scenes perspective and the opportunity to contribute directly to positive change.

While the structured team activities are scheduled to start in early 2025, the young volunteers have already begun familiarising themselves with the Youth Hub and its spirit. They organised our Halloween and Christmas parties, joined creative workshops and hikes, and gathered to watch films and build friendships.

The most intense moment was the launch evening of the new space - which also marked the first official MeRAAki gathering. Forty-five young people visited the Hub for the first time. We played Human Bingo, explored each room, and talked about the programme, about RAA, about the Hub and Erasmus opportunities.





The conversations about creating a youth volunteer programme started long before, but MeRAAki officially came to life during the summer. Coincidentally (or not), our first meeting with the teenagers happened in the same week we moved the Youth Hub into a new space - closer to our main office on Rodiei Street.

MeRAAki is a fresh beginning in every sense. It builds on everything we've learnt from working with young people over the years, while also looking more closely at how we can create spaces for teenagers to find their voice - and to be heard.

The programme also directly responds to the needs voiced by the teenagers themselves: they want to be part of a community, to feel they can make a difference, to have a real contribution - and, at the same time, to be seen, listened to, and taken seriously, including their emotions and interests.

Simina Alexă, Volunteer Programme Coordinator



The Pillars of Our Work



International Community

Experiential Learning and Exchange of Good Practices

Continuing our commitment to solid youth work strategies, in 2024 we organised and coordinated four youth exchanges as part of our Erasmus+ mobility plan. These four mobilities brought together a total of 133 young people aged 14 to 21, and 27 leaders and facilitators from Romania and other European countries.

Our youth strategy is structured around three key priorities:

Equitable access to learning

experiences for young people from diverse backgrounds, including rural areas, those with fewer opportunities, or those facing social vulnerability;

Continuous training for youth professionals

, enabling them to develop empathetic, needs-based approaches tailored to the realities of adolescents and young adults;

Creating a sustainable framework for participation and civic engagement

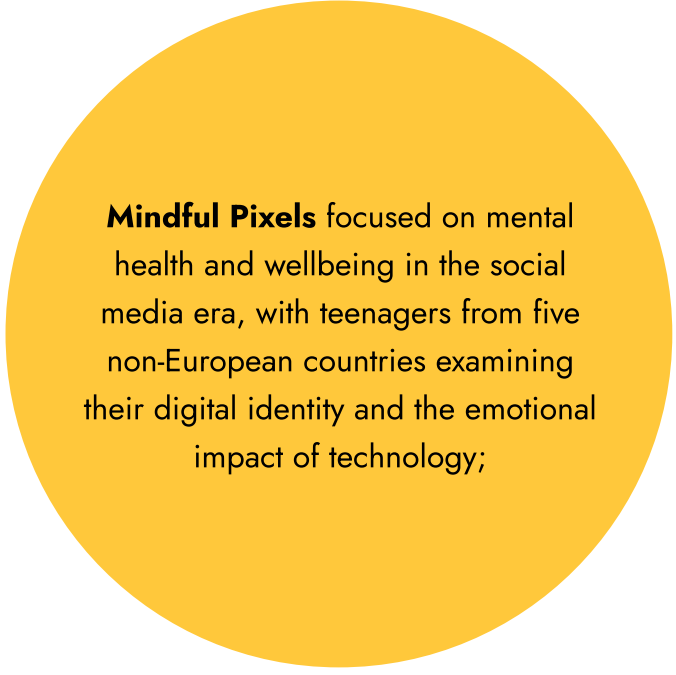
, offering young people meaningful spaces for expression, experimentation and co-creation.

In this way, international mobility activities become not only tools for intercultural learning but also vehicles for developing personal, social and civic competences.

Each youth exchange focused on a distinct theme, reflecting current challenges to which adolescents contributed both their unique perspectives and practical ideas they could take back to their home countries and daily lives:



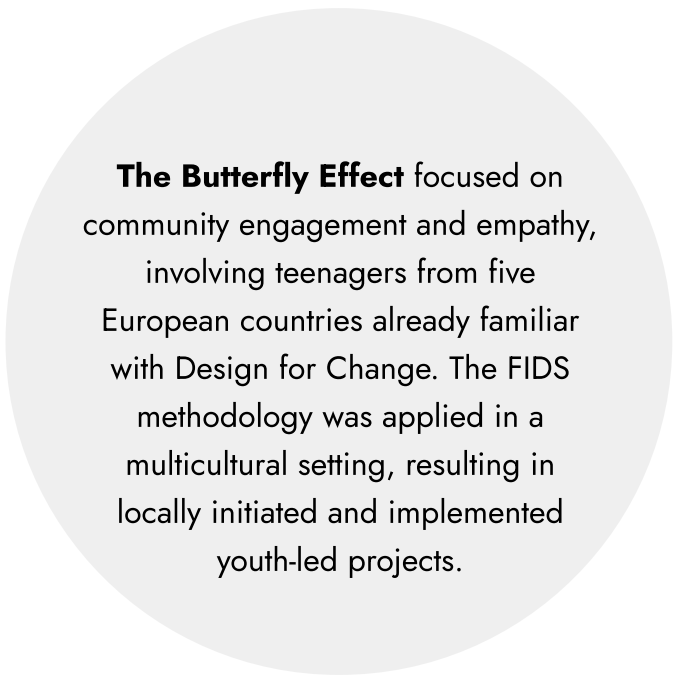
Tech-Savvy Teens explored digital skills and online safety, with participants from six European countries discussing media literacy, misinformation and responsible internet use;



Mindful Pixels focused on mental health and wellbeing in the social media era, with teenagers from five non-European countries examining their digital identity and the emotional impact of technology;



Power of Youth in a Democratic World addressed civic participation and democracy, bringing together young people from five non-European countries to reflect on democratic values and the importance of youth engagement in public decision-making;



The Butterfly Effect focused on community engagement and empathy, involving teenagers from five European countries already familiar with Design for Change. The FIDS methodology was applied in a multicultural setting, resulting in locally initiated and implemented youth-led projects.

The youth exchange was absolutely amazing and a brand new experience for all of us. It was incredible - we got to meet new people, make friends, try new things, and live moments we wouldn't have had if we hadn't been there.

Participant from Ireland



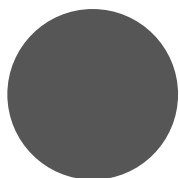
Complementing our youth-focused efforts, we also organised **two international training courses for youth workers**, attended by **22 participants** from Romania, Serbia, Turkey, Spain and Ireland. These training sessions focused on:

- **Approaching mental health in youth work**, through prevention, active listening and empathetic interventions;
- **Applying Design for Change principles** in non-formal education settings, to encourage youth-led problem-solving and community engagement.

Among the participants were school psychologists, teachers, nurses, youth workers and young professionals in training - all eager to better understand younger generations and improve their work with them.

These trainings helped strengthen the capacity of our partner organisations and contributed to the professionalisation of the youth sector, paving the way for meaningful European-level exchanges of good practice.

Behind each activity were clearly defined needs and objectives - from building a network of civically engaged youth, to strengthening transnational partnerships, and constantly adapting our methods to the real needs of young people through piloting, testing, reflection and co-creation.



International Volunteering

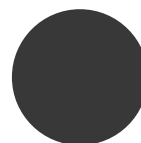
We made further progress in expanding and strengthening our involvement in European youth initiatives by obtaining the Quality Label as a host organisation within the **European Solidarity Corps** (ESC).

The Quality Label is a prerequisite for any organisation that wishes to host or send volunteers through the ESC programme. Receiving this accreditation signals a strong commitment to upholding high standards in the support offered to volunteers, promoting social inclusion, ensuring safe and meaningful learning experiences, and fostering non-formal education.

In 2024, we officially became a host organisation, taking on the responsibility to involve international volunteers in activities related to non-formal education, health, community support, and civic engagement.

The first two international volunteers were recruited at the end of the year, with 2025 set to begin with our very first hosting experience.

Before reaching this point, it was essential to design working procedures and methodologies and to go through a careful recruitment process. This gave us the opportunity to meet motivated, curious, and open-minded young people ready for new experiences.



JoyLab - a lab of inclusion and joy

For us, the **Youth Hub** is a small laboratory - a space where we test, pilot, and explore alongside young people, seeking new ways to support their development. In return, teenagers challenge us and bring us closer to what truly matters to them.

Joy Lab was one such challenge. Supported by the European Youth Foundation, the project was dynamic and locally rooted in Bucharest, aiming to promote intercultural dialogue and cultural appreciation, while bringing Romanian and Ukrainian young people closer together.

A total of **60 young people**, took part - **45 of whom were Ukrainian refugees**, - engaging in five cultural and artistic workshops (dance, music, photography, soap-making, and upcycling). Their creative outcomes were shared with the public during a vibrant event (rain and all) held in a central city square.

Each workshop involved 10 to 15 participants who contributed actively, and Ukrainian teens were supported throughout the process by their Romanian peers through an informal buddy system. In addition, 10 RAA volunteers were specially trained to provide communication and logistical support.



The project was not without its challenges - ranging from language barriers and the unpredictability of adolescence, to individual psychological struggles related to trauma, anxiety, or depression. Nevertheless, Joy Lab proved to be a resounding success, showing that young people are often more alike than they might think - especially when it comes to culture.

The final dissemination event, held on a rainy day in March, brought together **over 100 people**: members of the local community, NGO representatives, and families of the young participants.

At a time when public discourse was increasingly hostile to the presence of Ukrainian refugees in Romania, these young people demonstrated that solidarity can take many forms - and that civic involvement has the power to reshape the narrative.

Green Buddies

Born out of young people's desire to get involved and create change, Green Buddies was a solidarity project written and implemented by young people themselves. Its aim: to cultivate a generation of socially engaged, environmentally responsible youth, equipped with practical tools and a strong sense of solidarity.

Funded through the European Solidarity Corps, the project combined non-formal educational activities, ecological initiatives and community involvement, grounded in the values of solidarity, inclusion and environmental respect.



At its core, the project sought both to build sustainability-related competences among teenagers and to foster a green community focused on hands-on learning and collab.

In 2024, that vision took shape, literally, as we built **an urban garden**. Alongside this, we held eco-education workshops that sparked conversation about sustainability, equality and diversity.



Led by a team of motivated young people, the project began with open discussions about goals and potential local partnerships. Then came the tricky decisions: Where should we build the garden? What exactly defines an urban garden? How do you create balance within such a space? What tools do we need? And - when do we start digging?

Soon after setting the framework, in the courtyard of the Tei Student Sports and Cultural Complex, a vibrant green space began to emerge: a community urban garden designed with recycled materials and local plant species.

The MeRAAki volunteers played a major role throughout the process - 25 of them became sustainability ambassadors in their own communities.

Supported through dedicated training sessions on leadership, communication and eco-friendly practices, the teenagers not only became promoters of the project, but also responsible citizens, mindful of their environment and active in shaping a greener future.

Continuous Training and Lifelong Learning

Applied learning and international exchange of best practices are key principles we integrate both into the professional development of our team and the promotion of lifelong learning.

Looking ahead, our aim is to enable our team to deliver adult education programmes in one of three priority areas: **health literacy, digital skills, and civic participation.**

To this end, in 2024 we continued to explore innovative working models and strengthen international partnerships through:

Job shadowing in Latvia, where five team members visited the organisation New East. They observed how art is used in digital literacy activities for adults, how resilient communities are built, and how disinformation is tackled through inclusive practices such as gamification.

Participation in international training courses, with seven colleagues delving deeper into topics such as problem-based learning (PBL), the use of cultural activities in adult education, Erasmus project management, conflict management, developing emotional intelligence in education, and the use of AI in course design and delivery.

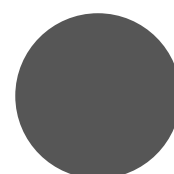
Hosting international experts at RAA, where two members of the New East team led dedicated sessions on their tools and methodologies: one focused on media literacy and its role in civic engagement, while the other explored storytelling techniques relevant to NGO communication and community mobilisation.





In the past year, we have explored new educational methods and taken a greater interest in the role of art, storytelling, and digital technology in adult learning. For RAA, Erasmus mobilities are not just an opportunity to exchange experiences with organizations from other countries. They are also a genuine source of ideas, reflection, and personal development for our team members.

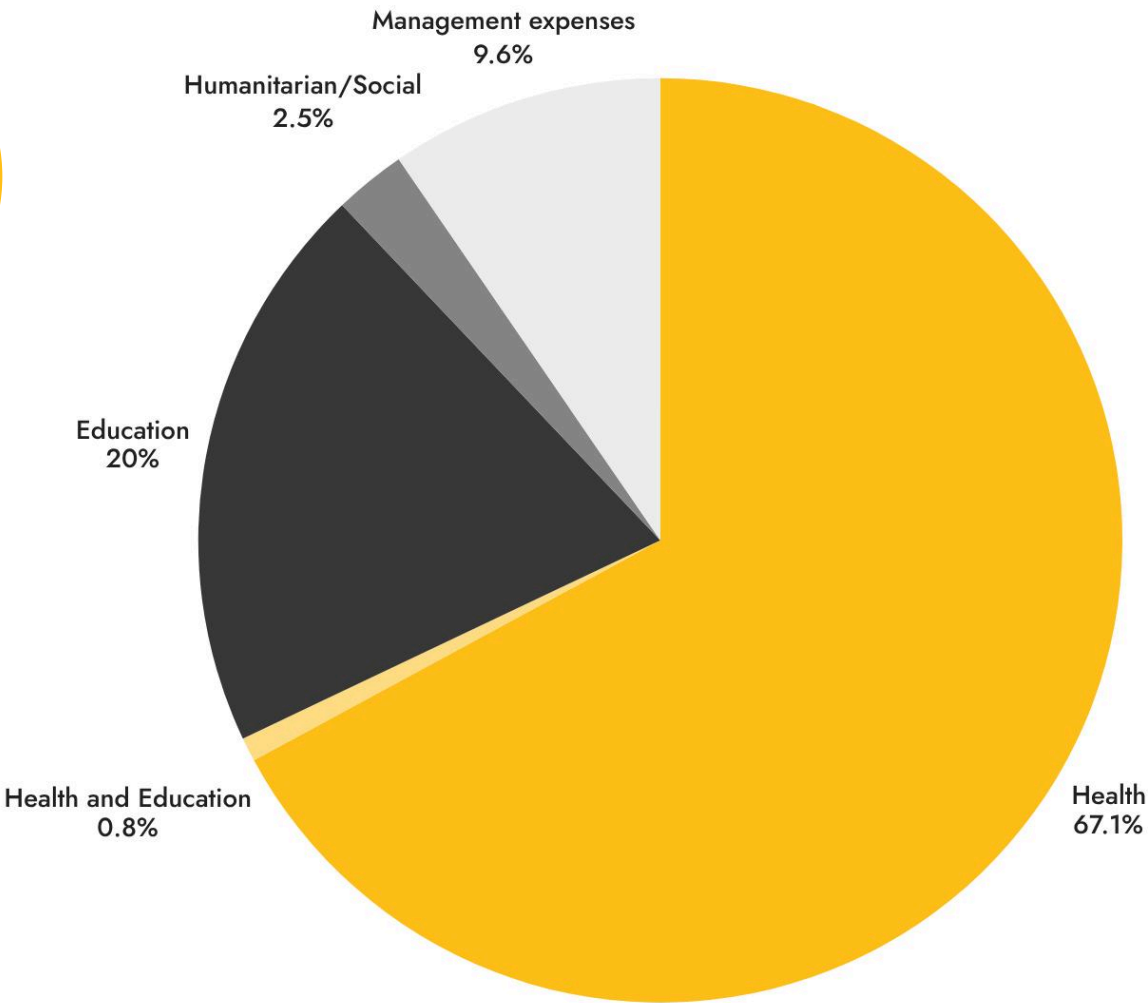
Fidelie Kalambayi, Monitoring and Evaluating Manager



Financial Report



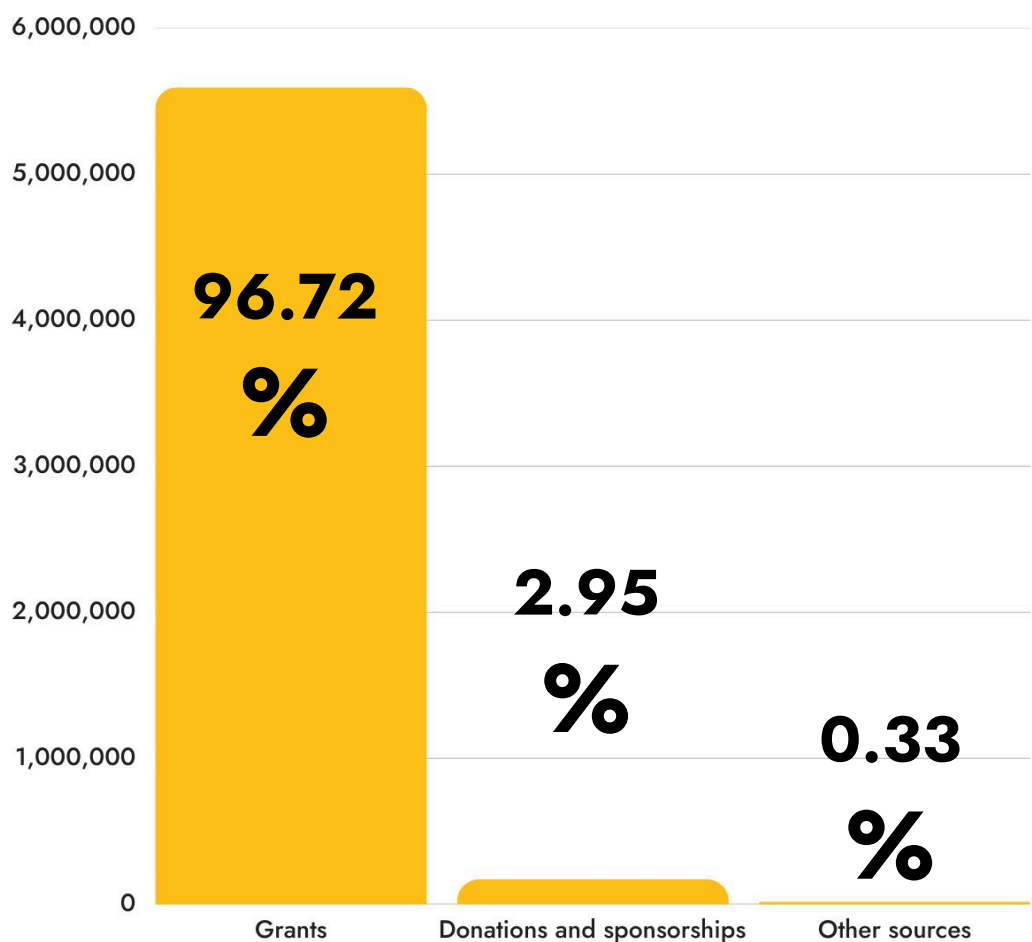
Expenses 2024



OBJECTIVE	EXPENSES 2024	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EXPENSES
Health	RON 3.613.080	67.11%
Health and Education	RON 45.181	0.84%
Education	RON 1.074.554	19.96%
Humanitarian/Social	RON 135.092	2.51%
Management expenses	RON 515.741	9.58%
Total expenses	RON 5.383.648	

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	EXPENSES 2024	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EXPENSES
Health	Addressing health system challenges regarding tuberculosis control in Romania	RON 136.599	2.54%
	TB SCREENING – Organizing the early detection program for tuberculosis in the vulnerable population	RON 154.548	2,87%
	Integrated services for tuberculosis patients and their families - SCI TB	RON 29.158	0.54%
	Cross-border study visits and psycho-emotional support activities	RON 12.289	0.23%
	Creation of a functional model intervention for Mental Health and Psychological Support - MHPSS for children and adolescents	RON 3.280.486	60.93%
Health and Education	Inclusion and health in PORT (Hârșova) through education, arts and sports	RON 45.181	0.84%
Education	Partnership for quality education in rural interethnic communities	RON 114.494	2.13%
	Acreditation in the field of Youth; Acreditation in the field of Adult education	RON 775.675	14.41%
	Increasing young people participation in civic engagement activities at the RAA YouthHub	RON 29.794	0.55%
	Design for Change	RON 154.591	2.87%
Humanitarian / Social	Teaching Romanian as a Second Language	RON 120.214	2.23%
	YOU - Outreach Ukrainian Youth	RON 14.878	0.28%
Management expenses	Organizational development	RON 515.645	9.58%
	Other expenses	RON 96	0.00%
	Total expenses	RON 5.383.648	

Income 2024



SOURCE OF FUNDING

AMOUNT

Grants	RON 5.594.951
Donations and sponsorships	RON 170.862
Other sources	RON 19.003
Total income	RON 5.784.816

SOURCE OF FUNDING

AMOUNT

Grants

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria	RON 149.536
Erasmus +, through the National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training	RON 725.266
European Social Fund - Human Capital Operational Programme (POCU)	RON 72.088
Unicef Romania	RON 4.301.319
FDSC - Foundation for the Development of Civil Society	RON 184.377
FRDS - Romanian Social Development Fund (return of unused funds)	- RON 295.726
European Social Fund - Managing Authority for Health	RON 321.000
NRC - Norwegian Refugee Council	RON 29.938
Romanian - American Foundation	RON 82.218
People in Need, Chişinău	RON 12.289
European Council	RON 12.645
Subtotal Grants	RON 5.594.951

SOURCE OF FUNDING

AMOUNT

Bucharest Community Foundation	RON 26.972
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Community Relations Association	RON 20.000
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United Way Romania	RON 47.680
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SC DAL Travel SRL	RON 15.000
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Europayments	RON 9.427
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Stripe	RON 7.036
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Viva Telecom SRL	RON 2.500
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Gianina Dragan	RON 300
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Flucus Mihai	RON 2.983
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Benevity prin UK Online Giving Foundation	RON 2.090
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French Institute	RON 14.929
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SC Bearing Point SRL	RON 20.000
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Other	RON 1.941
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<i>Subtotal donations and sponsorships</i>	<i>RON 170.862</i>
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Other income	RON 19.003
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Income-generating activities	RON 0
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<i>Subtotal other sources</i>	<i>RON 19.003</i>
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Total income	RON 5.784.816
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Donations and sponsorships

Other sources

Romanian Angel Appeal

2024

Contact email: office@raa.ro

Str. Rodiei 52, sector 3, Bucharest