

ASOCIAȚIA ASCENDIS



Activity Report

From potential to performance!

2023

Coupons

1. Grow a school - digitization and development in schools
2. KATA in the classroom - training scientific thinking for students and teachers
3. Training for teachers
4. Psychological safety for students - future leaders
5. We support reading - book libraries in villages
6. Supporting Reading - Boovie Educational Partnership
7. Volunteering for young people and NGOs
8. Social grants
9. We financially support NGOs
10. Joining forces - Ascendis Consulting supports the NGO environment
11. Financial report
12. Future perspectives

What we achieved in 2023 together

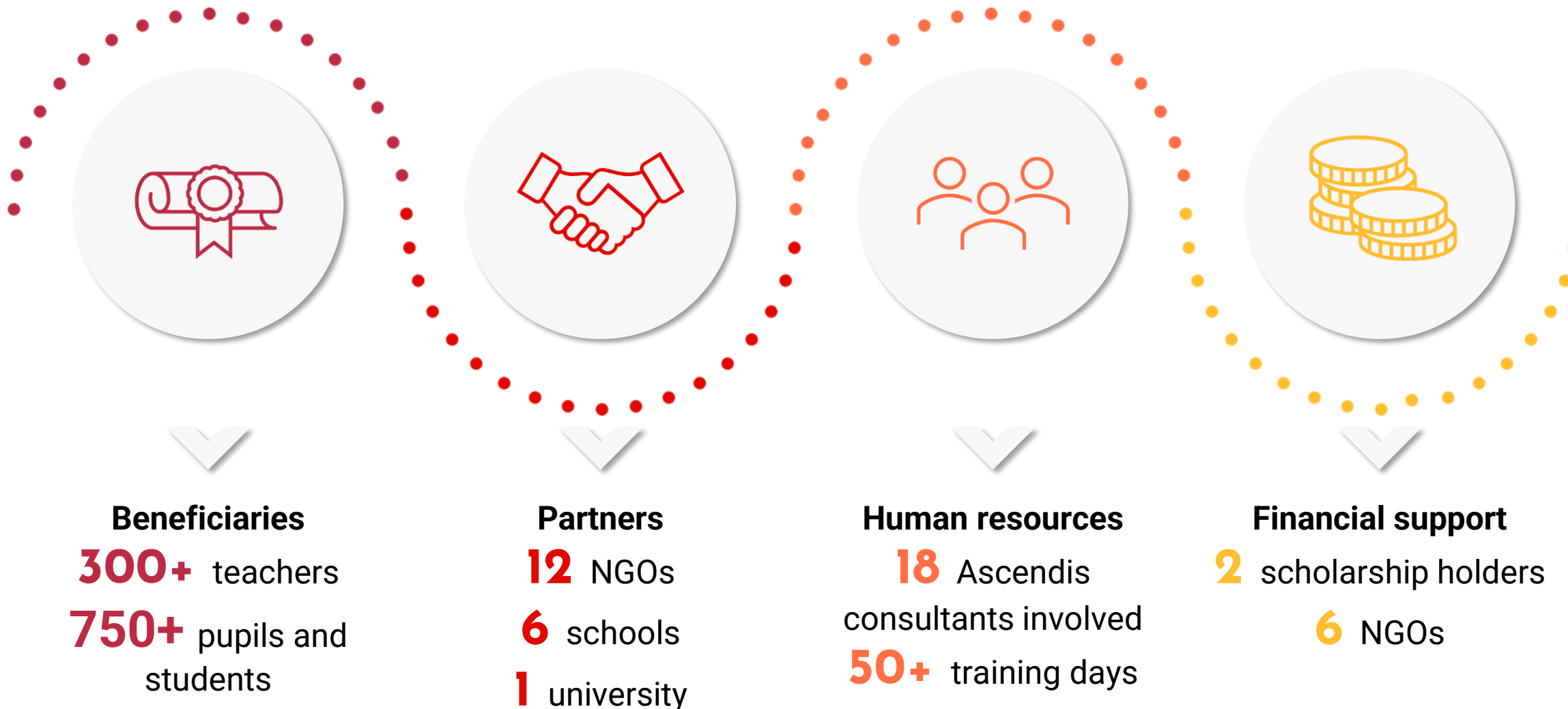
Thank you for joining us this year!

Whether you've been a trainer, helped us with advice and ideas, supported us financially, talked about us or simply followed our work, your support and energy have helped us have a fulfilling 2023.

We launched new programs and continued to support the community through education. Enjoy this time to review our successes summarized in the following pages. They guide us on our journey "from potential to performance".



Infographic





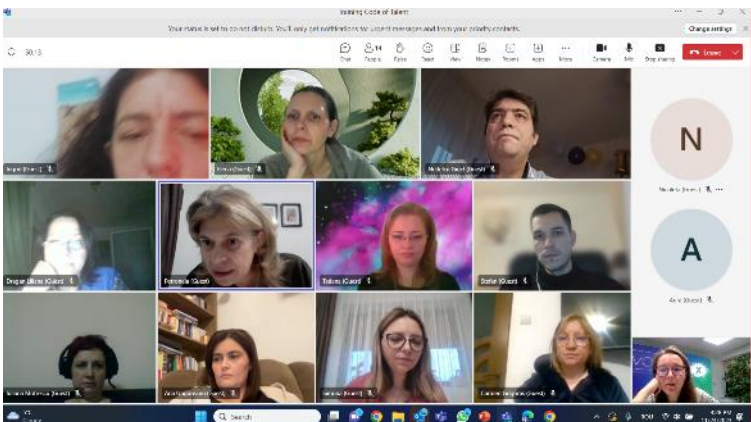
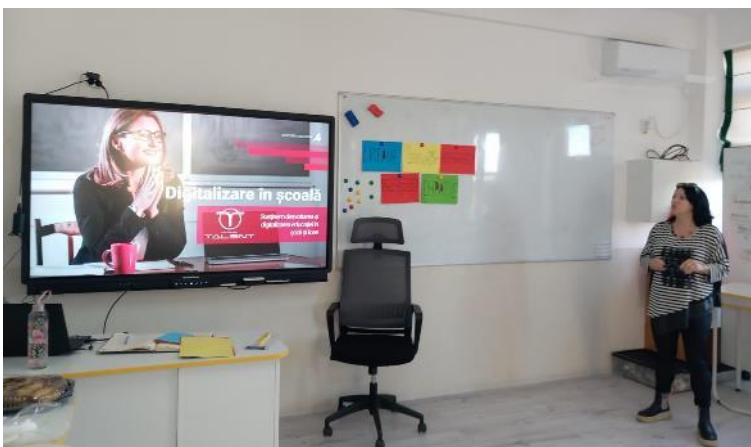
1 GROW a SCHOOL

WHAT and WHY

- ✓ GROW A SCHOOL is Ascendis' flagship program for schools and consists of 2 phases:
 - Digitising learning using the Code of Talent microlearning platform
 - Development in school through modules:
 - psychological safety (teacher programs)
 - career guidance (workshops for students)
 - Innovation incubators (a mix of workshop, hackathon, mentoring sessions and an event, aimed at teams of teachers and students).
- ✓ The first beneficiary schools are "Professor Mihai Dumitriu" High School in Valea Lupului - Iasi and School no. 19 in Brasov, where 35 teachers have been taught how to use the Code of Talent microlearning platform in the educational act and are now developing their own programs in the platform.
 - Examples of programs developed by teachers in CoT: Getting to Know Our Emotions, Cultural Diversity, English book club, etc.
- ✓ In January 2024 we will expand the programme to 5 more schools. During the year we aim to reach 5 more schools using Code of Talent learning
- ✓ *Trainers: Carmen Ciuraru. Marina Marcu*

What participants say

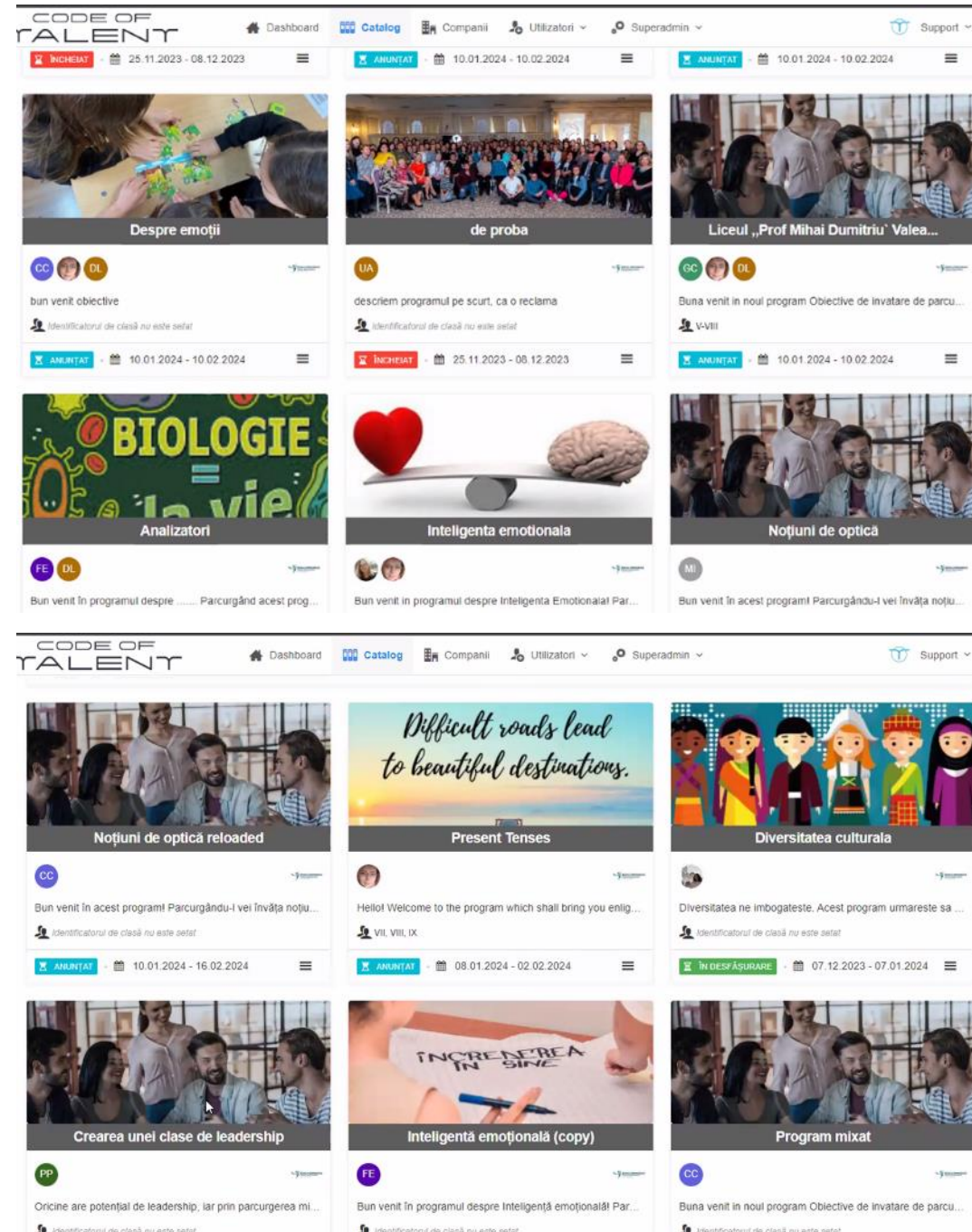
"Code of Talent was a welcome professional challenge for me and a much needed break out of my comfort zone. It helped me clarify my intentions and goals as a teacher who aims to always be grounded in currency, relevance, effectiveness and long-term success. I have extended the challenge to my students, for whom Code of Talent will hopefully be another stepping stone in digital education and the responsible and effective use of technology.", Alexandra Atănăsoaie, English teacher, School 19 Brasov



Library of teacher- developed CoT programs



Workshops for teachers and microlearning programs





2

KATA in the classroom

WHAT and WHY

- ✓ Starting from our motto: "From Potential to Performance" we learned and took over the "Kata in the Classroom" simulation developed by Mike Rother (Toyota KATA, credit katatogrow.com) for schools. By applying KATA educators and students can transform the educational process into an effective practice that coaches:
 - Scientific thinking - generating and experimenting with different solutions to overcome obstacles, and organizing and analysing these ideas
 - Collaboration and communication - by working as a team to select the best ideas and practicing their implementation
 - Flexible mindset - how we practice setting and achieving increasingly challenging goals, even if there are setbacks along the way
- ✓ We reached 5 schools and the University of Bucharest, where 350+ pupils, 25 students and 15 teachers experienced KATA and drew conclusions on how they can integrate this model into their learning, sports, teaching, etc.
- ✓ We want to expand this program nationwide and target more teachers to increase its impact and pilot the simulation for older students.
- ✓ Trainers: Laura Marin, Carmen Ciuraru. Marina Marcu, Naomi Chira, Vlad Pascu, Cristina Năstăsescu, Oana Trucă

What participants say

"We learned how to ask the essential questions to succeed in a project, how to use both scientific and critical thinking to get better and better results, and that each team member is a valuable resource."
Teacher Pick Me Academy Bucharest

"I realized that I had started a beautiful relationship with my colleagues. I learned that if we want, we can progress more and more", 3rd grade student, Ghe. Șincai, Cluj



**KATA in classes of pupils,
students and teachers**



3

Training for teachers

WHAT and WHY

- ✓ The training programs for teachers were based on the concrete needs expressed by our partner organizations:
 - **New We Care Foundation** – a summer camp for 75 teachers from rural schools or disadvantaged backgrounds. The program developed by Dan Burlacu aimed at adapting teaching to the current generation and effective communication.
 - **TechSoup Association** - boot camp dedicated to principals and teachers of technological/energy high schools in the country. The session delivered by Andreea Popa was called "How do we approach the tough conversations in our professional lives"
 - **The high school in Valea Lupului, Iasi** organized a teambuilding for the whole team: teachers, caretakers, support staff - in total about 100 people. A day of energy, involvement and debriefing conclusions for a team that in a few years has grown 5 times and managed to transform a school on the outskirts of Iasi into a community involved and eager to develop.
- ✓ Teachers have always been an important part of all the programs we have developed (KATA, Grow a School) with a huge potential to increase the impact of our actions. We will continue to develop partnerships and dedicate an area of training and support to them in future projects.

Trainers: Dan Burlacu, Dragoș Nicolescu, Andreea Popa, Marina Marcu, Ștefan Ferent.

What participants say

"It was a valuable experience for the teachers, but also for us." - TechSoup Association organizer.

"The teachers enthusiastically welcomed the event and enjoyed the opportunity to participate, leaving the experience with joy." - project manager, New We Care Foundation.

"The domino activity impressed me the most. It reminded me that I don't have to find a 'spy' in the person next to me and a helper. It was a lesson for me who thought I knew it all after 15 years in teaching" - teacher at Valea Lupului High School.



Communication and new ways of teaching



Communication course for principals and teachers



Team building Valea Lupului High School





4 Psychological safety BlueEQ

WHAT and WHY

- ✓ Blue EQ is the international tool for assessing and developing emotional intelligence and creating psychological safety in teams that have the prerequisites for performance.
- ✓ Ascendis trainers obtained Blue EQ certification and provided pro bono access to workshops on psychological safety and emotional intelligence using Blue EQ for 40 young people from 3 NGOs.
- ✓ We want to bring this topic closer to the NGO and school environment in 2024, thus contributing to a learning and development environment with increased potential.

Trainers: Marina Marcu, Raluca Păun, Livia Bărbăscu.

What participants say

"I liked that it started with an assessment of our own emotional intelligence and took us through a journey where, one by one, we reflected on what we each do well, what needs to be improved, how we can influence others through our behaviors and how we can generate an environment of psychological safety, which is much more beneficial to high-performing teams. The Ascendis people were very professional and well trained and accompanied us with empathy and curiosity." - Aniela, psychotherapist, The Social Incubator



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY in the NGO environment



**BlueEQ Workshop
BEST Bucharest**



**BlueEQ Workshop
ROSPIN (Romanian Space Initiative)**



**BlueEQ Workshop
The Social Incubator**



5

**We support
reading [1]
Libraries
Bookshop**

WHAT and WHY

- ✓ We have financially supported the initiative of Cărturești to create libraries in villages, specifically at the Regina Maria School, Vintileasca, Vrancea and at Troianul, Teleorman.
- ✓ The libraries currently have 100 new volumes each in fields such as history, literature, science and geography, mainly for secondary school students.
- ✓ We plan to continue with two more libraries in 2024 encouraging reading for all.

About the libraries

"I want a Bookstore in my village!" is a project in partnership with the bookstore chain Cărturești. The idea for the project, which consisted of creating a Cărturești library in a village in Vrancea, came from Amalia Neacșu, a 6th-grade student at Regina Maria Secondary School in Vintileasca (Vrancea county). "Maybe when I was little I would have wished for a huge Jumbo store or a herd of horses in front of the gate, a bit surreal but a justified wish for that age. Now I'd wish for a giant bookstore in front of my house. (...) In the city there are bookstores, but not in my village. It's unfair...", said Amalia, in the letter with which she participated in the literary creation contest "Hero in my village" within the project "Book in the villages" organized by the Association "Me, you and them" from Focșani.

Libraries in the two villages of Vrancea and Teleorman



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**We support
reading [2]
BOOVIE educational
partner**

WHAT and WHY

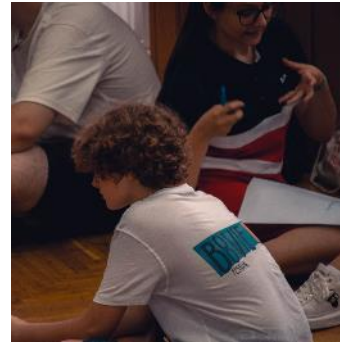
- ✓ This year the collaboration with Boovie went to the next level. We have taken on the role of **educational partner** offering the 2000 participating students and teachers the grand prizes of the festival (4000 euros) and the workshops below:
 - **Workshop for students "Your Superpower: Confidence"** - An experience where students learn what their superpowers are, how they can use them to face any challenge head-on, and how powerful we can become when we trust ourselves.
 - **Workshop for students "Public Speaking"** - A first aid kit for those who are nervous, scared or nervous about public speaking. An experiential, energizing and playful learning opportunity with acting tricks and improvisation games.
 - **Growth Mindset: From Potential to Performance** - A session for teachers to discuss how the growth mindset fosters confidence in growth potential, resilience in the face of challenges and passion for continuous learning; both their own and their students'.

Trainers: Marina Marcu, Vlad Basarabescu

About BOOVIE

Boovie began 8 years ago as a teaching exercise designed to inspire students to read organically, away from the threat of grades or the promise of better grades. Students are tasked with creating a trailer! What is a trailer? A short video that translates the essence of a novel read into cinematic language. The trailer should only be a few minutes long, and because its purpose is to persuade other students to read the work, a "video summary" is not enough. So children are encouraged to read carefully and identify the deeper meanings of the novel to create a truly successful trailer.

BOOVIE 2023



Student workshop
"Your Superpower: Confidence"

Student workshop
"Public Speaking"

Teachers workshop
"Growth Mindset: From Potential to Performance"

BOOVIE 2023



Ascendis presented the grand prizes of the festival worth over 4000 euros. At the award ceremony, Marina handed out the prizes almost midnight in the Council Square in Brasov, in front of an energetic audience - over 2000 students and teachers from all over the country.



7

Volunteering for young people and NGOs

WHAT and WHY

- ✓ Our engine is also powered by the team's initiatives, by your desire to get involved in the community. The themes here are diverse and cover both our shared interest in supporting education and the personal interest of the trainees in supporting causes in which they find themselves:
 - **Camp and annual conference of patients with multiple sclerosis (MS)** - for 7 years Anca Barbu has supported this community through workshops and consulting, along with other fellow volunteers. This year, together with Alina, they have created exciting development and relationship experiences for over 100 children and adults.
 - **EduMath Camp** - Cristi Șandru created and delivered a program for 20 high school students who at the end of the camp created 4 social involvement programs for their community. The youth were concerned with addiction, career counseling and emotional intelligence.
 - **Career Camp Oradea** - Ioana Scânteie teamed up with Naomi and Irina to participate in a local event dedicated to young people. 25 pupils and students participated in workshops on "Jobs of the future".
 - **Personal development for young people from Hopes & Homes centers** - Alina and Anca teamed up again and ran 2 workshops with 30 outstanding young people focusing on personal development.
 - **Workshop on decisions and integrity for high school students** - Nelida and Cristi C. went to "Spiru Haret" high school in Bucharest and conducted an experiential workshop where high school students practiced their ability to make decisions as a team, to evaluate long-term gain and loss and to become aware of the importance of integrity.
 - **Workshops for NGO development** - Marina responded positively to the training (Design thinking & Innovation) and development needs (workshop on values) of two NGOs: ROSPIN and Romania without file.
 - **Self Leadership Workshop for young people** - Marina held a workshop for the students of Liberty Galati's internship program.
- ✓ Thank you for your involvement and we look forward to our continued community involvement together!

EduMath Camp



Career Camp Oradea



Hopes & Homes



Spiru Haret High School



SM Kids Camp



MS Conference





8

Scholarships social

WHAT and WHY

- ✓ This year marked the end of the four years during which Ascendis supported two students to attend high school.
 - Karin got into the Faculty of Medicine in Brasov, as she wanted.
 - Bianca has chosen to continue in the medical field and is attracted to radiology. She chose a postgraduate school in Bucharest.
- ✓ We continue to offer scholarships to 2 sisters, Teodora and Ruxandra, who are managing without parents.
- ✓ We are supporting this type of program in 2024 with the help of sponsors who want to make a difference in the life of a young person by supporting them to continue their studies especially when this means commuting or extra expenses.

What participants say

"Although it was a lot of work for me, I did everything with pleasure thinking about the joy of the children and thanks to the scholarship I got, I was not stressed by the money I spent on the purchase of materials, because as my mother always said "don't worry, it's the money from your hard work, God has rewarded your effort, and you in turn, look, you return what you have received, you can give it to others", Karin, class leader 2023

"At first, when I found out I was going to receive a scholarship that would benefit me throughout high school, I was happy and proud of the results I achieved. The financial aid I received from Ascendis made me a conscientious student because I didn't want to disappoint. In my first years of high school, the scholarship gave me the opportunity to move to Bucharest with rent, as I was from the provinces and there were no high schools in our commune that I could go to. And now, in my final year, I have been able to prepare for the Bac subjects, because I want, once again, to achieve results at least as good as in 8th grade. I thank all the people in the Ascendis Association for all their support and I am grateful for everything." - Bianca, Ascendis scholar



**Karin and Bianca
at the
high school
graduation**





9

We support finance NGOs

WHAT and WHY

- ✓ As every year, we support organizations whose mission and actions we resonate with. In 2023 sponsorships totaled approximately 120,000 lei and supported:
 - **Career Publishing** - we support the publications of our partners at Career Magazine
 - **Grivița Cultural Association** - we laid a brick to build the first theatre together
 - **Conservation Carpathia Foundation** - to support the green economy and the creation of a world-class protected area
 - **The Superheroes Association** - so that Marius Braila and the team can offer free programming courses for children with disabilities.
 - **Press for Real Association** - to support media education workshops in high schools run by professional journalists who train young people to spot fake news.

In 2024, we have committed to support "Press for Real" workshops in 4 high schools per month. We will of course be alongside our partners and other initiatives that support education in various forms.



Press for Real"
workshops for high
school students



10

Sponsorships

Ascendis Consulting

WHAT and WHY

Ascendis Consulting provides support for the functioning of the Ascendis Association as well as for supporting missions/activities in the NGO sector or for granting social scholarships.

In 2023, Ascendis sponsorships totaled approximately 195,000 lei and supported the following NGOs:

- **Casa bună Association** - through which we support access to education, camps and other activities for Roma children in Ferentari.
- **Conservation Carpathia Foundation** - supporting the green economy and the creation of a world-class protected area
- **Fundatia Noua ne care** – after-school centres for pupils from villages
- **Association Give Life** - we contribute to the construction of the children's hospital.
- **Save the Dogs and other animals association** - we contribute to the rescue and adoption of abandoned animals
- **Grow Up Association** - we support reading with Boovie

In 2024 we will continue to stand by our partners and support initiatives and projects that we want to see realised.

Financial report (Nov status)

INCOME	Amount	EXPENDITURE	Amount
Sponsorship income	906,066	Expenditure on projects/human resources for services	564,738
Revenue from 3.5%	-	Expenditure associated with projects	87,959
Income from individual donations	-	Other operational expenditure	84,337
Income from services rendered	54,528	Sponsorships and donations	132,218
Other income			
Total Revenue 2023	960,594	Total expenditure 2023	869,253

New directions for 2024

In the new year, the journey continues under the motto "From potential to performance".

We continue to build on the main directions:

- digitization and school development
- continuous improvement (a way of looking at performance) through KATA and other programs and
- career counseling for young people.

Together with you and our sponsors, we are ready to develop new programmes that support education and performance, together!



How can you support us?



Tell a story about us
Put us in touch with a school in your community
Through sponsorships or donations



From potential to performance,
together.