

“Diaconia” Social Mission of the Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia

The logo for Diaconia, featuring a yellow cross icon to the left of the word "DIACONIA" in white, uppercase letters.

**DIACONIA**

A photograph showing a woman in a blue jacket with "DIACONIA" written on the back, smiling and reaching out to a group of people inside a van. The people are wearing winter hats and coats, and one person has their hands clasped in prayer.

**Annual Report  
2024**

**About the power  
of solidarity and love**

[www.diaconia.md](http://www.diaconia.md)



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

# Diaconia Social Mission

## Who we are

Diaconia is the social structure of the Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia which has been active throughout the Republic of Moldova since 2001.



Who we are 

# Our mission

Diaconia develops models of social intervention, based on human approach according to the image of God, into a sharing and trust-worthy relationship with social partners.

## Our vision

An active society guided by Christian values as result of the permanent and coherent action of the Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia through Diaconia, which represents the model of excellence in supporting the neighbour in need.



## Our values

Faith/Love towards the neighbour/We change because we care/Correctness/Responsibility/Perseverance/ Solidarity.



Discover our projects and programmes:



Support for communities



Care for family in crisis



Assistance for children



Assistance for the elderly



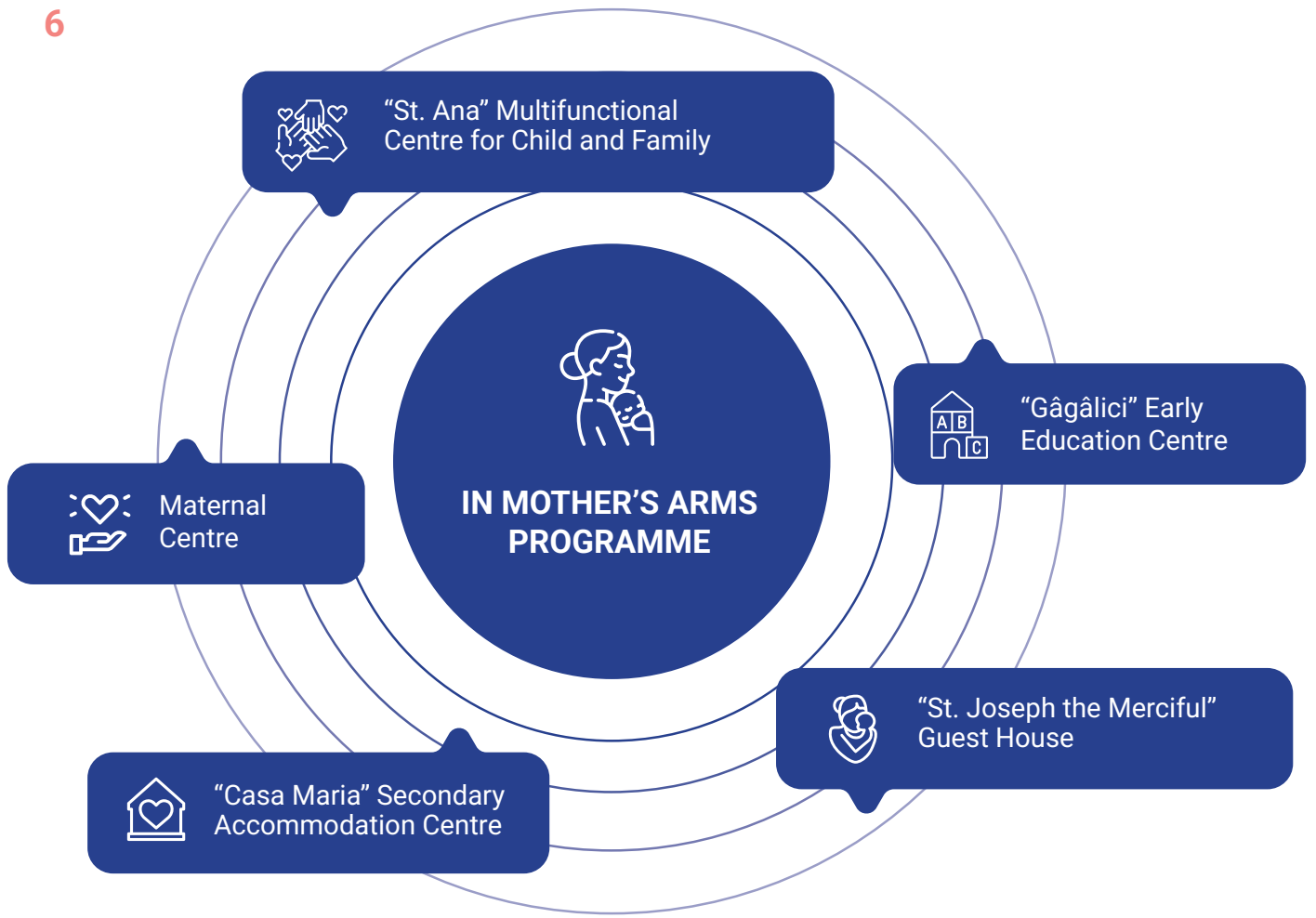
Promotion of volunteering



Advocacy and systemic change

For Diaconia, 2024 was the year in which we built communities with the power of solidarity and love, along with volunteers, donors, partners:





# IN MOTHER'S ARMS PROGRAMME



# 7

**Launch year:** 2011

**Purpose:** To ensure every child's right to grow up in the family.



## The Maternal Centre

is intended for mother-child couples or pregnant women in emergency situations. Here, the multidisciplinary team develops an individual intervention plan aimed at strengthening the relationship between mother and child, developing childcare skills, managing resources to create a mechanism for autonomous living.

The mothers also find a safe and comfortable space to stay with their children.

### IMPACT:

In 2024, through the dedication and commitment of the social workers, and thanks to the acts of kindness from each of our donors and partners:

- **25 mother-child couples** received comprehensive care and assistance in the Maternal Centre;
- **12 mother-child couples** were assisted in the community;
- **180 families** in temporary crisis received support according to their needs.





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*We are pleased to support the Maternal Centre, “In Mother’s Arms”, and to contribute to its mission to provide support to mothers and children in need. We strongly believe in the importance of this project and appreciate the efforts made to create a safe and warm environment for the beneficiaries. We will continue to stand by Diaconia and support this noble cause.*

**Doina Ursachi**

Managing Director, Summit Events



## **B. The “Gâgâlici” Early Education Centre**

is a nursery-kindergarten where children (from 6 months to 3 years old) learn to explore the world through free movement and autonomous play, surrounded by affection and attention.

Throughout 2024, the Centre was attended by **28 children**:

- 6 children, beneficiaries of the Maternal Centre, “In Mother’s Arms”;
- 22 children from the community.

The service is intended for single mothers and families in various vulnerable situations. It also facilitates women’s integration into the workforce by providing them with a safe and warm space for their children.



## C. “St. Ana” Multifunctional Centre for Child and Family

It is a project designed to address the needs of family nuclei facing various crises. It brings together, under one roof, viable solutions for a wide range of needs encountered by refugee women and children, as well as those from the local community.

The “St. Ana” Centre provides individualised social assistance services, legal counselling services, access to educational activities for children, and a safe platform for open and regular interaction between social groups, especially women.



Throughout 2024, 2,023 refugees from Ukraine and 626 local people sought help or support.

### IMPACT:

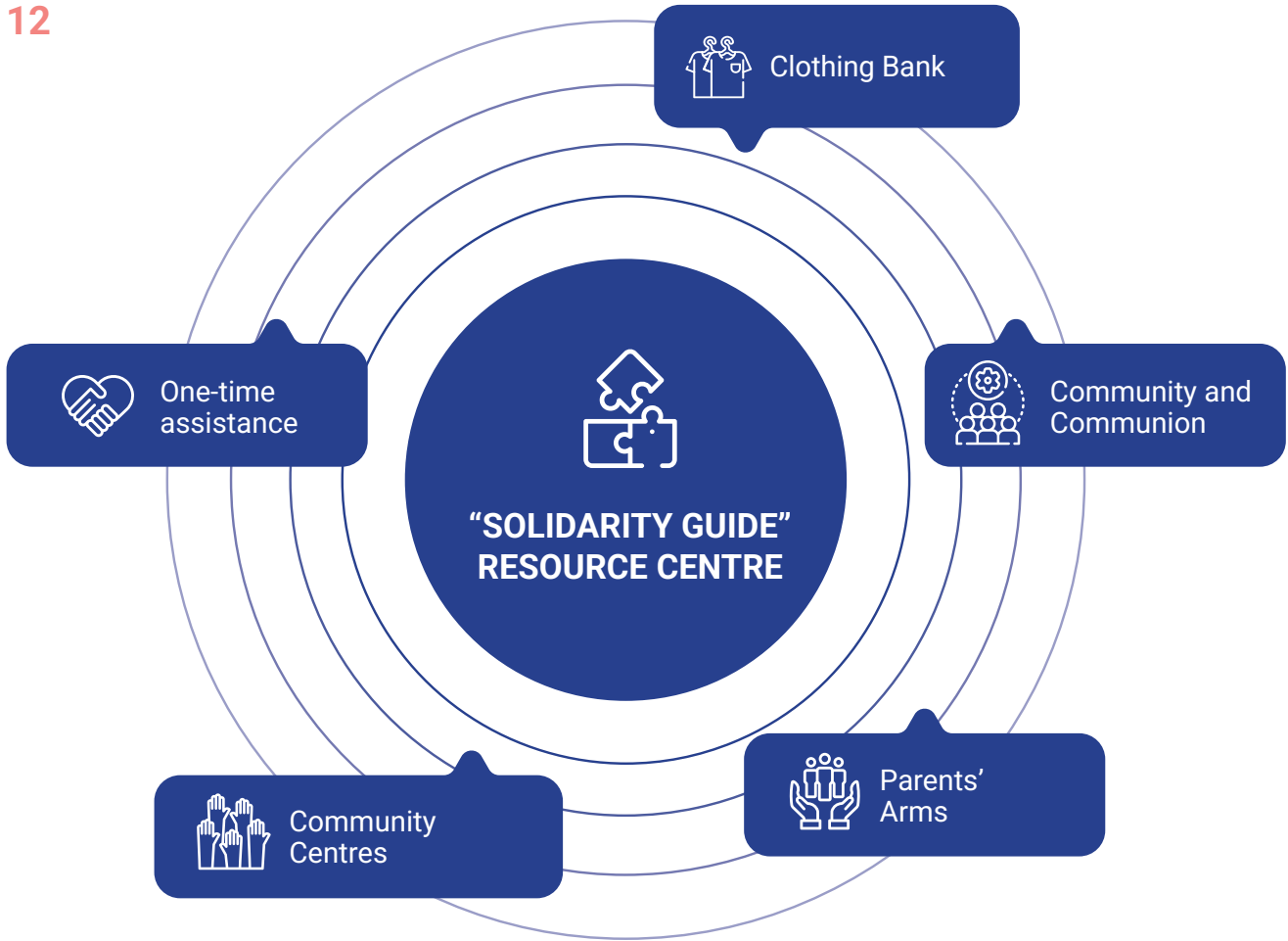
- **345** people received psychological counselling;
- **90** people received legal advice;
- **429** Ukrainian women socialised in a safe environment, benefiting from various creative workshops and sessions organised by the psychologist;
- **437** refugees received vocational counselling;
- **1,600** refugee families and 211 families from the Republic of Moldova received material assistance;
- **86** children benefited from Drop-off service (childcare service for children aged between 3 and 6 for 4 hours daily);
- **129** children benefited from the after-school service.



#### D. “St. Joseph the Merciful” Guest House

It is a service for refugees, offering Ukrainian mothers and children a safe and comfortable place to live, equipped with everything they need.

Throughout 2024, the Guest House hosted 19 beneficiaries: 10 mothers and 9 children received the necessary help and support to regain their independence.



# “SOLIDARITY GUIDE” RESOURCE CENTRE





**Launch year:** 2015

**Purpose:** To support and stimulate social initiatives in the community.

The **“Solidarity Guide” Resource Centre** is the support tool for the community initiatives in identifying needs and finding community-level responses.

## ✓ A. Community and communion

The project involves community development and implies a paradigm shift from direct intervention to initiative through formal and non-formal leaders within the locality.

The goal of the project is to contribute to the creation of revitalised, cohesive and supportive rural communities in the Republic of Moldova.

## ✓ B. Parents' arms

The project supports at a distance the vulnerable families with school-age children by providing material support (food, clothing, hygiene products, school supplies, etc.).



## ✓ C. Community centres

The Community Centres are places where non-formal education activities for children and volunteering activities are constantly organised, and social services are provided based on the identified needs (canteen, wardrobe, psychological support, etc.).



## IMPACT:

In 2024, we supported 64 communities to meet the basic needs of community members:

- **4 Local Initiative Groups** created and implemented projects and events for the development of their communities.
- **40 pupils and 25 pensioners** from 13 communities were supported through the projects: The Parent's Arms and The Rod of Hope.
- **The Community Centres** were active in **7 localities**, where more than **370 children** benefited from recreational and educational activities, and **46 volunteers** were involved in community activities organised here.
- **87 women** received psychological support and participated in various activities at the "Anastasis" Educational Day Centre.



## ✂ D. Clothing Bank

**Launch year:** 2016

The Clothing Bank is a model of excellence in implementing a social solidarity mechanism, through which we have demonstrated over the past 8 years that, with local resources, we can clothe thousands of people.

The goods collected are then distributed through the network of social wardrobes in parishes. The beneficiaries of these donations are people in need: socially vulnerable families, the elderly, the homeless, etc.

### Impact 2024

61

tons of material goods  
collected and distributed

31

beneficiary  
communities

3,900

needy people assisted  
thanks to donations

Support our projects on [www.diaconia.md](http://www.diaconia.md)



Thanks to the partnership and support provided by Monaco Aide & Présence and Petrom Moldova we manage to carry out initiatives worth following. We remain deeply grateful and thank all the people who, in growing numbers, continue to contribute to helping those in need.



*The Social Wardrobe in Saseni serves three localities: Saseni, Bahu and Noroceni. In 2024, around 200 people benefited from its services. Each person is allowed to select up to four items of clothing per day.*

*There is also a tailor's workshop in the village, where project beneficiaries can have the selected clothes repaired or adjusted.*

**Vasile Domentii**  
Parish Priest, Saseni

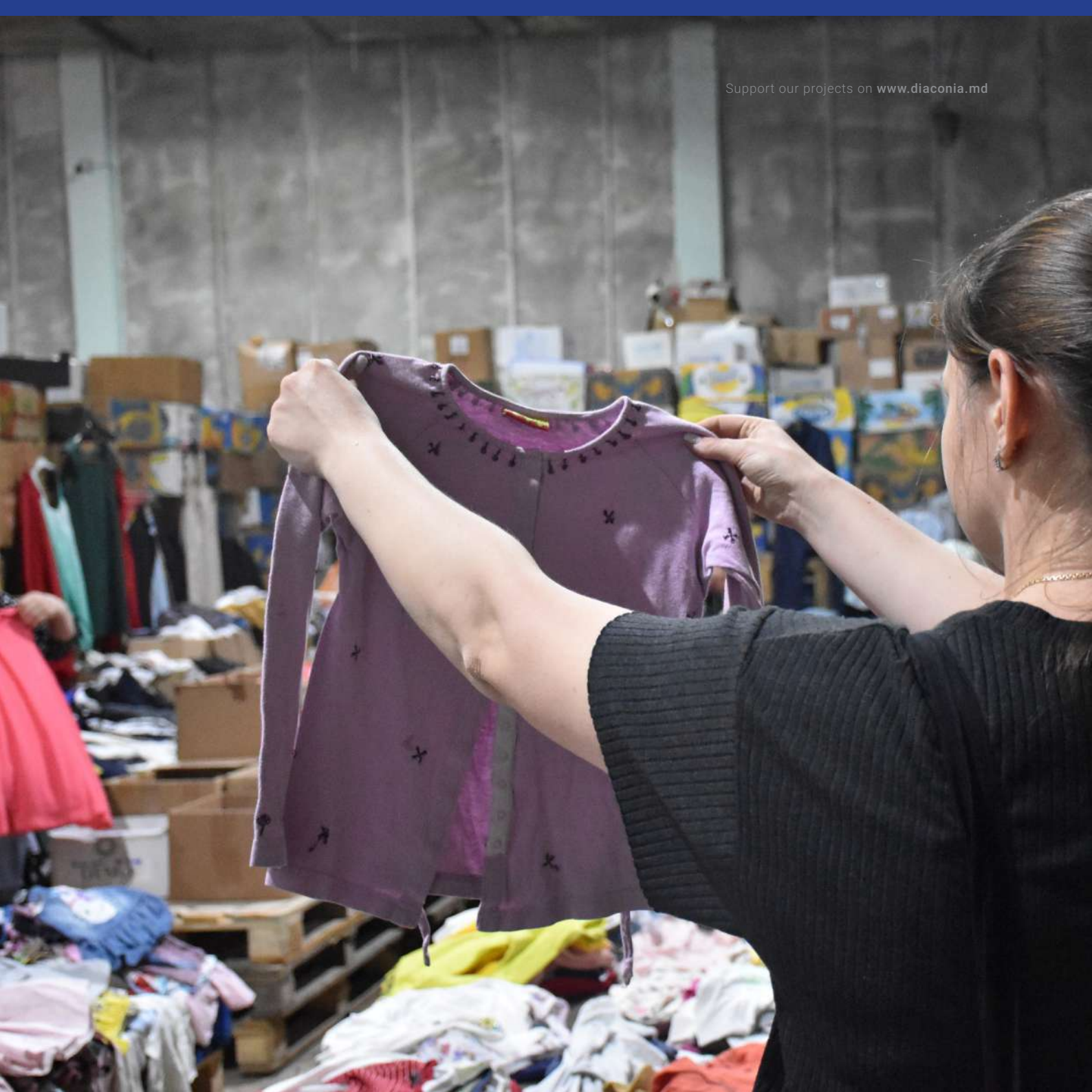


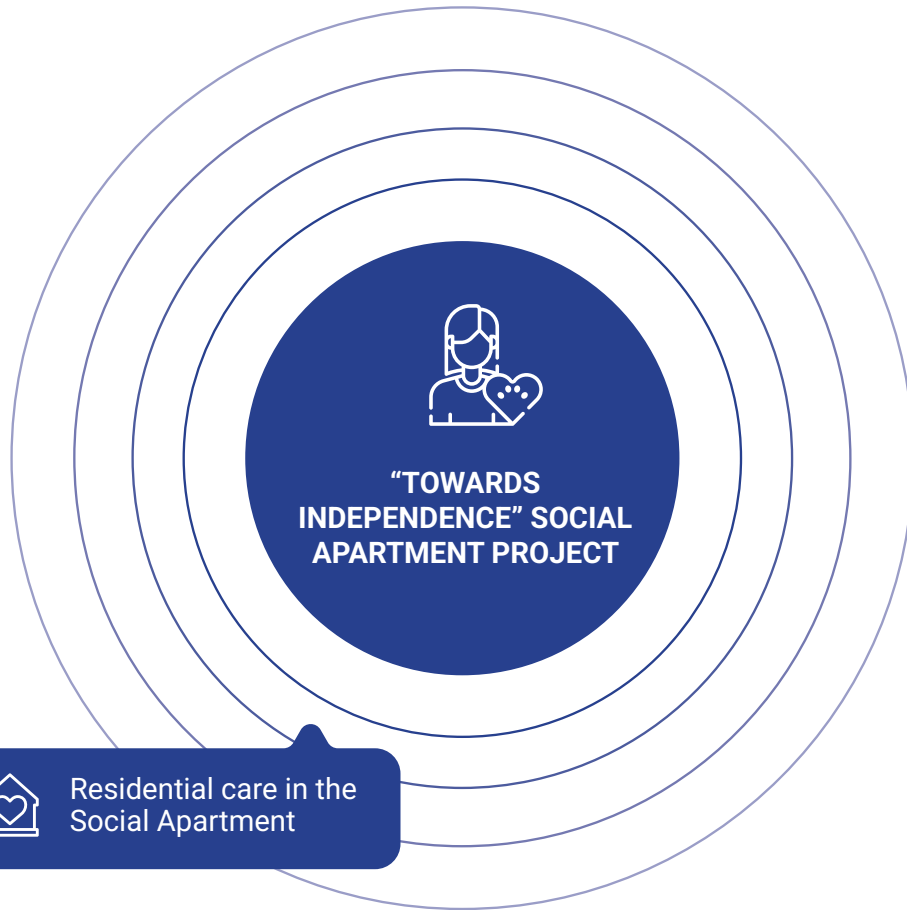
*I am very grateful for the existence of the local Social Wardrobe. I have a low income, and buying clothes, especially in winter, is a challenge. Here, I find warm clothes, shoes, and even some items for children. The clothes are clean and in good condition.*

*For us, it is a place that offers a lot of help to those in need. I hope it continues to receive donations because many people rely on such initiatives.*

**Elena Grosu**  
beneficiary of the Social Wardrobe in Saseni

Support our projects on [www.diaconia.md](http://www.diaconia.md)





Residential care in the  
Social Apartment



# **"TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE" SOCIAL APARTMENT PROJECT**

**Launch year:** 2007

**Purpose:** To ensure the increase of the reintegration capacity of orphaned and socially orphaned teenage girls aged 16 to 18.

- ✍ **The “Towards Independence” project** ensures the social integration of young girls with the status of children left without parental care, who come from residential institutions or alternative care services, as well as girls at risk from socially vulnerable families.

Annually, 6 girls receive accommodation, comprehensive assistance (social, psychological, spiritual, vocational), and the opportunity to learn a profession at a vocational school or short-term vocational courses.

Four of them also have the opportunity to benefit from further support in the second phase of the project, which includes providing a living place and essential items such as clothing, shoes, food and hygiene products.



## IMPACT:

So far, 18 generations of girls have been assisted through the Social Apartment project that has helped them to believe in their own strength, and where they have learned that people can be kind and loving.

Since 2007, 108 girls from all the districts of the Republic of Moldova have been carefully guided on their path “Towards Independence”.

24 girls benefited from the extended phase of the project, in assisted social housing.



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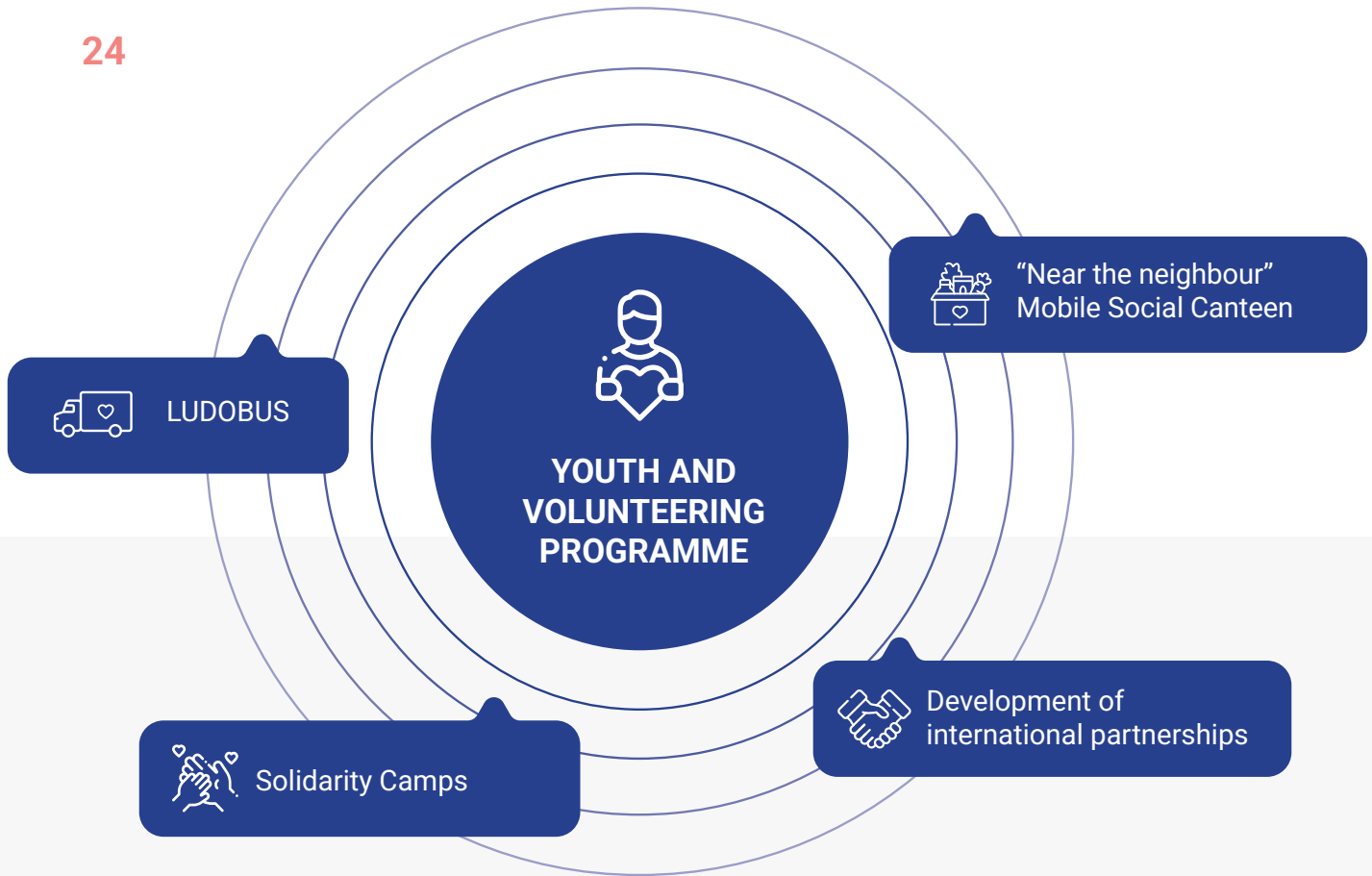
*We strongly believe that the help offered to the young girls in vulnerable situations can make a difference in building a safer and more prosperous future. That is why we support the “Towards Independence” project, initiated by Diaconia, which provides teenage girls with a safe environment and real opportunities for socio-professional integration.*

*Our constant involvement in this project reflects our values of solidarity and responsibility towards the community. We want every young girl who is part of this project to have access to the necessary resources to build an independent future, free from social risks.*



**Veronica Malcoci**  
Head of  
Management Board,  
GRAWE Carat Asigurări





# YOUTH AND VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME



**Launch year:** 2007

**Purpose:** To contribute to the development of initiative and active civic engagement among children and young people.

## Ludobus

Ludobus is an innovative non-formal education service designed to provide children in rural areas with access to play and education. It is a minibus equipped with a toy library, offering diverse activities and games suitable for all ages.

For volunteers, Ludobus represents a new area where they can volunteer throughout the year by putting their creativity at the service of communities while gaining new skills and growth opportunities.



## IMPACT:

In 2024, **20 hardworking and brave volunteers** brought the joy of play to **19 communities** for **1,935 children**.

Both volunteers and children enjoyed unique moments of entertainment, outdoor activities, and creative workshops on topics such as electrical safety and food waste prevention.

This was made possible thanks to our partners Premier Energy Distribution and Kaufland Moldova, who covered the logistical costs of the workshops organised as part of the project.



## ✓ Solidariy Camps

The day camps are organised by several teams of volunteers from both Italy and the Republic of Moldova. The programme of each camp includes games, non-formal educational activities for children, and social activities (home assistance for the elderly, environmental activities, etc.).



### IMPACT:

3 summer camps were organised in **Cenac, Bozieni** and **Porumbrei**, where a lot of fun-loving children gathered.

This year, the camps lasted 10 days each. The activities were carried out by **21 Moldovan and Italian volunteers**.

Team games and creative workshops, focusing on communication and exchange of experiences took place in the three localities.

The young people also engaged in community work (helping the elderly, environmental actions).



## Development of international partnerships

Diaconia signed partnership agreements with two international organisations from Italy: Caritas Ambrosiana and Associazione BIR.

The projects involve long-term activities in the host organisation and training for volunteers.



Our partnership with Diaconia is a concrete example of how ecumenical dialog can be transformed into tangible actions for the benefit of the most vulnerable. The collaboration between our organisation, an expression of the Catholic Church, and Diaconia, an expression of the Orthodox Church, demonstrates how the denominational differences can be transformed into richness when we work together for the common good. This 'ecumenism of deeds' is manifested through the joint service offered to the poorest segments of the population, where differences of approach give way to the shared Christian vocation to serve our neighbour. The day-to-day experience of working side by side has allowed the discovery of the common values and has strengthened the mutual understanding, demonstrating how active charity can be a powerful instrument of unity.

*This collaboration proves that when Churches join forces to serve those most in need, the social impact of initiatives is not only amplified, but a bridge of genuine dialogue is created, deeply rooted in the concreteness of the deed.*



**Sergio Malacrida**  
Head of the International Cooperation  
Department, Caritas Ambrosiana



Discover the full  
message here



## “Near the neighbour” Mobile Social Canteen



**Launch year:** 2013

**Purpose:** It is the tool through which Diaconia cultivates social solidarity, giving everyone the chance to be a good person.

For 11 years the **“Near the Neighbour” Mobile Social Canteen** has been bringing the joy of a hot meal daily to many elderly and needy people in Chisinau.

It is a model of showing care for the neighbour. A place where the elderly find not only a hot meal, but also a reason for joy, born from interaction with people experiencing similar needs.

Also, at the Mobile Social Canteen, people have the possibility to organise a memorial meal. Through this initiative, the traditional almsgiving becomes an act of solidarity and compassion – a gesture of kindness, an expression of love for the neighbour.

## IMPACT:

During 2024, **34,500 hot meals** were provided to hundreds of beneficiaries in the two distribution points (Sergei Lazo Park and Mezon Park), thanks to the involvement of a group of **30 volunteers**.



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*The 'Near the Neighbour' Mobile Social Canteen has become a beautiful experience of my life. By participating in this mission, I have had the opportunity to see the direct impact of our efforts on those who are facing difficulties. Every smile and word of thanks I received has reminded me how important it is to be there for those in need.*

*Together with other volunteers, we create an environment where empathy and mutual support are part of daily life. This deep human connection gives us a new perspective on life and teaches us to appreciate the simple things.*

**Daniel Țătu**  
volunteer, student



# Involvement in systemic change

Diaconia offers experience and expertise in the processes of improving the national legal framework in areas such as child protection, violence prevention, philanthropy.



## IMPACT:

Diaconia was active in 5 national platforms: the Platform for the Promotion and Development of Philanthropy, the National Council of NGOs, the Alliance of active NGOs in the field of Child and Family Social Protection, the National Council for Child Rights Protection, the Communication Platform of the National Agency for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence with civil society.

Within the framework of the “**Partnerships for Inclusive and Resilient Social Canteen Services**” project, the advocacy actions led to two important results:

- 1 **Development of the implementation mechanism** for the Law No. 292/2022 on the prevention of food loss and waste;
- 2 **Amendment of the legislation** to improve existing provisions.



A new project was launched:



## Love for the Neighbour – Empowering the Faith Community to Prevent Domestic Violence in Rural communities



Through this project, Diaconia aims to contribute to:

- 1 **Promoting gender equality** in rural areas of the Republic of Moldova;
- 2 **Preventing domestic violence** by raising awareness and actively involving priests from the Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia.



Within the framework of this project, a conference entitled **“Family under the Protection of Faith: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue on Domestic Violence”**, dedicated to combating domestic violence and promoting gender equality, was held. The event brought together over 90 religious leaders, experts in women’s and children’s rights protection, representatives from the central authorities of the Republic of Moldova and philanthropic organisations from both Moldova and Romania.

The conference was structured in panel discussions and workshops covering a range of topics, such as:

- Gender roles in the Orthodox tradition and their impact on family life;
- Preventing domestic violence through spiritual counselling;
- The importance of gender equality between man and woman/husband and wife for the health and well-being of the family;
- Community actions to combat domestic violence;
- The role of the priests’ wives in the community;
- The role of virtues in strengthening the harmonious family relationships and how to cultivate them.





# With love for Ukraine

Throughout 2024, Diaconia Social Mission continued its active commitment to supporting refugees. During this period, solidarity, empathy and care for those in need were essential, and this support was manifested through the following directions:

## 1. Primary assistance

In 2024, Diaconia, in partnership with Caritas Odesa UGCC and with financial support from Caritas Ambrosiana, managed to respond to some of the urgent needs of the people affected by the war in Ukraine through the **“Bridges of Solidarity”** project.

Thus, 111 people – mothers with children from the Odesa region, Ukraine, benefited from the activities of a summer camp, which strengthened their family relationships.



Diaconia also provided material assistance to refugees and vulnerable people in the Republic of Moldova:

**4,913**

families received vouchers for food and hygiene products, blankets, medicines, winter clothing and footwear

**507**

families received firewood

**1,293**

children received a winter jacket or winter boots



## 2. Comprehensive and individualised assistance

### A. Cash Assistance Programme for Refugees in Moldova

The programme provided cash assistance to people who fled Ukraine and entered Moldova.

Diaconia managed the southern part of the Republic of Moldova. The operators worked in 4 Refugee Documentation and Support Centres opened in Chisinau, Causeni, Cahul and Comrat.

The programme was implemented in partnership with Caritas Moldova, under the overall coordination of UNHCR.

#### IMPACT:

- **58,186 people** received cash assistance and support;
- **3,833 new family groups** were registered at the assistance centres;
- **22,831 families on record** were verified, of which **3,853** were visited at home by the mobile team.





# We change because we care

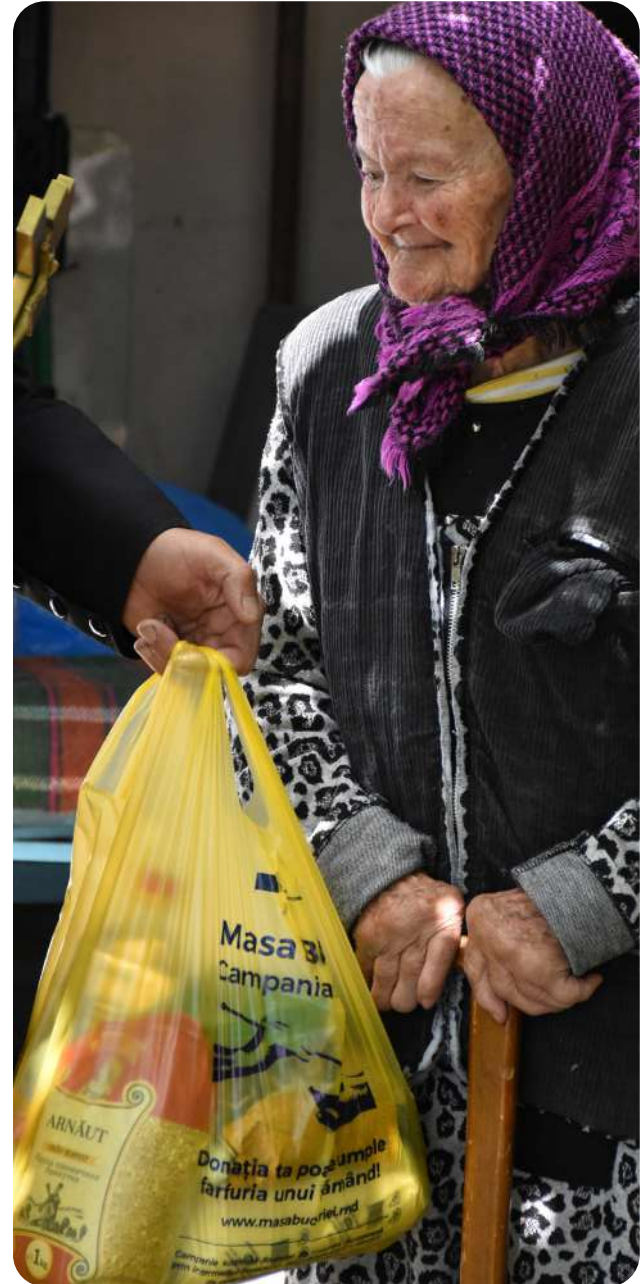


## A. "Table of joy" Easter campaign



**YELLOW CODE OF KINDNESS** for the 15th consecutive year. Year after year, the "Table of Joy" Easter Campaign becomes a true Festival of Solidarity, involving hundreds of volunteers.

Traditionally, the project culminated with the National Collection of non-perishable food products, conducted in the largest supermarket chains in Chisinau and across the country.



**IMPACT:****57**tons of food products  
collected**1,000**volunteers involved  
in the campaign**100**food stores in  
26 localities

All the collected donations were transformed into hot meals, served throughout the year at Diaconia's Mobile Social Canteen, and into food packages distributed to people in need.



## B. Solidarity products

In 2024, the supporters of our causes have chosen to give solidarity items on different occasions.

All those who purchased these small, emotion-filled symbols offered, from afar, together with Diaconia, care and safety to the beneficiaries of the Maternal Centre and teenage girls in the “Towards Independence” Project.



## C. “In Mother’s Arms” Christmas Campaign

Diaconia organised the traditional “In Mother’s Arms” Christmas Campaign on the eve of the winter holidays.

This year, the campaign, through various activities, offered an opportunity to share the warmth and joy of the season with the children supported by Diaconia.

### IMPACT:

- **4,067 martisoare** (traditional Romanian and Moldovan spring ornaments symbolising renewal and good luck) reached all corners of the world, bringing the joy of nature’s rebirth at the beginning of spring.
- **2,843 special greeting cards** brought the magic of the winter holidays to loved ones, partners, donors and the teams of 25 companies.



In this year's edition of the campaign, **80 teams** and hundreds of individual donors responded to the call for solidarity. **300 children** from Chisinau and the surrounding communities benefited from their generosity, and the funds raised mean 365 days of support for a mother-child couple in the Maternal Centre "In Mother's Arms".



# Budget 2024

2.283.697 euro ▲

1.025.116

Eradicating  
extreme poverty  
and hunger,  
emergency  
programmes

490.200

Specialised  
assistance  
programmes  
for family  
and children

120.055

Promoting  
solidarity and  
volunteering  
programmes

410.361

Community  
intervention

237.965

Administrative  
and institutional  
costs



## Members of the board of directors



**ÎPS Petru**

Metropolitan of Bessarabia, and  
Exarch of the Lands, President  
of the Board of Directors



**Nicolae Crețu**

Priest, Metropolitan  
Councillor



**Ana Groza**

Executive director of the foreign  
investors association



**Corneliu Țăruș**

Child protection  
expert



**Steluța Andreeva**

Expert in strategic  
communication

## Solidarity that builds: the Church, a place of love and service for the neighbour



The Church is not just a stone building, but it is, above all, a house of mercy and love, a place where suffering finds comfort, where the fallen are lifted up and the weak are strengthened. In 2024, declared by the Romanian Patriarchate as the Solemn Year of the Pastoral Care for the Sick, we have reminded ourselves with even greater persistence that serving the neighbour is the very heart of the Gospel.

The Diaconia Social Mission of the Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia is not just a philanthropic arm of our Church, but a heart beating to the rhythm of Christian love, gathering merciful souls around it, people who understand that there is no greater fulfilment than to serve others. Through Diaconia's efforts, the suffering of the poor and the sick does not go unseen, the pain of the lonely is not overlooked, and orphans, the elderly and the marginalised find in the Church a refuge of consolation.

Diaconia is the living expression of the fact that the Church is a living community, a family in which everyone finds their place and support, in which love is not just a commandment, but a way of being.

Yours in prayer before Christ the Lord  
† PETRU

Archbishop of Chisinau, Metropolitan of Bessarabia and Exarch of the Lands

# WE CHANGE DESTINIES

## “Near the Neighbour” Mobile Social Canteen

### **They carry the heavy burden of old age with dignity and hope**

For over four months now, Mr. Gheorghe and Mrs. Maria have been coming to the “Near the Neighbour” Mobile Social Canteen. They come here holding on to each other carefully. They take their place in the long line and wait patiently to receive the hot meal offered by the volunteers.

They are neighbours, and the hardships of life have turned them from mere acquaintances into trusted friends. For three years, Mr. Gheorghe has been the eyes and hands of Mrs. Maria, who lost her sight at the age of 82.

Mr. Gheorghe is 70 and has worked in construction all his life. Although he now receives a modest pension, he has never complained about his fate. He lives his days with the joy of seeing his children and six grandchildren, and with gratitude for the kindness he receives from the good people around him.

”

*I love to see these beautiful young people sharing food. They are well-mannered and treat us with great respect*

Mrs. Maria, 85, has lived an active life and was once a chief accountant. But the loss of her eyesight and loneliness following her husband's death have cast a shadow over her days. Even though she has a pension that barely meets her most basic needs, helplessness weighs heavily on her shoulders. Since Mr. Gheorghe became her support, life has become easier.

”

*I am very lucky to have Gheorghe and the meal I receive at the canteen. Ever since I was a child, I have known that if you meet good people, you should hold on to them and treat them with respect*

Every day, the two neighbours come together to the Mobile Social Canteen to feel the warmth and solidarity found there. In fact, the canteen offers them much more than a hot meal. Here, the elderly feel the care and support of a community that has not forgotten them. Every smile and kind word helps them carry the heavy burden of old age with dignity and hope.

These people, with decades of experience behind them but with a less bright present, remain a worthy example, teaching us that through mutual support and the kindness of those around us, even in the most difficult moments, life can be filled with light and meaning.



## ANASTASIS Educational Centre

### Thank you for being here for us

Tatiana, with her husband Serghei and their three sons, lived a modest life in a small village in the Dnepropetrovsk region of Ukraine. Even before the war began, she knew what it meant to carry a heavy burden, as she had given up her career to care for her son with Down syndrome. Despite the challenges, Tatiana's family was happy and united.

But with the outbreak of war, troubles and worries descended mercilessly on them. The financial struggles and their son's health issues kept them from leaving until the spring of 2023, when Russian missiles struck their village. Amid the chaos and turmoil, Tatiana and her husband made the decision to flee their home to save their children. They left with nothing but their identity documents, abandoning everything they had.



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*We had to walk to the border crossing, there was simply no other way. Because we had three children, one of whom has a disability, my husband was allowed to leave the country. When we arrived in Moldova, I took a deep breath, I didn't know what lay ahead, but I was grateful to God that we were all together.*

Once they arrived in Balti, the family found support at the Anastasis Educational Centre. There, they received basic necessities such as clothing, footwear, and food, as well as psychological counselling. They were also informed about the services available for refugees and were given access to the internet so they could stay in touch with relatives and friends who had remained in Ukraine.

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*As soon as we arrived in Balti, we were blessed to learn about the Anastasis Centre, where we were welcomed with great care and warmth and encouraged to stay strong and move forward.*

Thanks to the Anastasis Centre, Tatiana's family was able to adapt to their new reality and to overcome the psycho-emotional and social crisis they were going through more easily. The children started to attend the centre with great joy and received all the necessary support and care.

”

*Now I am at peace, I know my boys are safe. They feel very comfortable here. They love all the activities at the centre, and when they are happy, I am too. Anastasis is our door to Ukraine. We come here and feel at home.*

Today, Tatiana's family enjoys every day lived in peace. Every smile of their boys is a small victory. Despite the painful memories of the past, they have found the strength to move forward, to dream and to build a future in the Republic of Moldova.

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*We are so grateful to the Anastasis team for all the support they have given us. The generosity and kindness we received here gave us a sense of safety and confidence. Thank you for being here for us.*

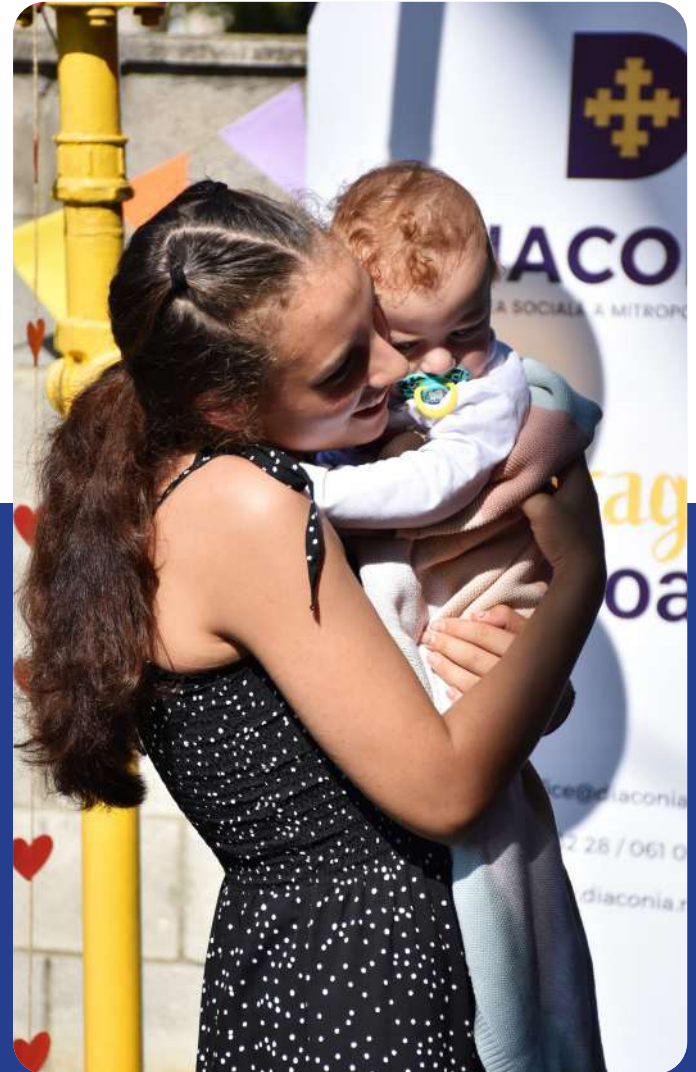


## “In Mother’s Arms” Maternal Centre

### I have finally found a place where I can safely raise my child

When Elena recalls her childhood, she can hardly hold back her tears. She grew up surrounded by violence, alcohol, and constant conflict, a frightening reality that few could endure.

Yet, despite all these obstacles, she found the strength within herself to fight for a different future. At just 16, pregnant and with no support, she found herself completely alone in the world. Her teenage years were overshadowed by the absence of both parents, and the brother who was supposed to care for her turned his back on her the moment he found out she was expecting a child.



- She arrived at the “In Mother’s Arms” Maternal Centre a year ago, opening a new chapter in her life. There, she found not only a shelter but also the support she so desperately needed to move forward. For Elena, the most important thing was to find a safe place to raise her son, Victor. The little boy, who will soon be one year old, now attends the “Gâgâlici” nursery, a service created by Diaconia to support mothers in difficult situations. At the nursery, Victor receives early education, care and attention he needs to develop harmoniously, giving Elena the peace of mind and time she needs to continue her studies.



- The young mother enrolled in pastry classes, learned to cook and developed her culinary skills. With ambition and perseverance, she dreams of becoming a pastry chef and being a role model for her little boy.

Every day Elena reminds herself that no matter what obstacles she encounters in life, she can find within herself the resources to overcome them and create a better future for her little family. And thanks to the social pedagogues and people of good faith who support the mother-child couples assisted in the Maternal Centre, she will be able to become independent.

## 🔍 “Towards Independence” Social Apartment

**Her life has been a series of hardships from the very first moment**



Valeria is one of six teenage girls who have started a new chapter in their lives in the “Towards Independence” Social Apartment.

Her life has been a series of hardships from the very first moment. Her childhood was not filled with joy or peace, and the album of her memories is empty of smiles. Just one month after her birth, her mother passed away, and Valeria was left in the care of her father, who should have become her hero, but unfortunately ended up being the villain in this story. She was raised by her grandmother until the age of 14. After her grandmother’s passing, Valeria moved back in with her father. Unfortunately, rather than receiving the care, love and protection every child deserves, she suffered physical and verbal abuse at the hands of her father and lived in severely deprived conditions.

After six months of nightmare, Valeria’s father was deprived of his parental rights, and the girl was placed in the professional foster care service.

In the summer of 2024, she arrived at the Social Apartment. She was carrying the emotional scars of the harsh environment she had endured, and the lack of support and love was reflected in her behaviour and attitudes – a way of trying to protect herself. She began a new chapter in her life at the Apartment, where she has found a stable, supportive environment and feels accepted. She pursued vocational courses to become a chef and pastry chef, opening the door to an independent life.

Under the guidance of the Apartment's team, Valeria learned good manners and came to understand what a healthy and safe environment truly means. Her behaviour changed drastically, as did her attitude towards people, experiences, challenges, and prospects.

”

*The young girls living in the Social Apartment are an example of courage and determination. Despite the difficulties they face, they show incredible strength, and we admire them for their ability to overcome obstacles. We support them with all our hearts, because even when reality puts them to the test, they continue to fight with hope and perseverance. So far, we have cared for 18 generations of beneficiaries in the Apartment.*

Tatiana Lupu, manager of the “Towards Independence” Social Apartment



# Give with Diaconia

## Why be partners in good deeds?

Every good deed, whether it is a donation, an hour of volunteering, or a simple act of support, makes a real impact on those in need. **Diaconia is not just an organisation, but a community of people who choose to help together.**

## Why join Diaconia?

- 1 **Because the good deed does not wait.** Every day is a new chance to make a difference in someone's life.
- 2 **Because you have the freedom to choose where to get involved.** You can support the mothers in the "In Mother's Arms" Maternal Centre or children at the Community Centres or simply spread the word that any act of generosity is valuable.
- 3 **Because change starts with you.** Together with generous people, teams and families, we manage to offer quick and effective support where it is needed most.

Through our campaigns and projects, the support of those who choose to help with Diaconia becomes:

- A warm meal for a lonely old person.
- A safer future for a mother and her child.
- A pair of warm boots for a child going to school in winter.
- A chance for a young girl from the "Towards Independence" Social Apartment to become independent.

## Opportunities to get involved

- Redirect 2% of your income tax to Diaconia
- Choose solidarity products and support our causes
- Become a Patreon and support our long-term projects
- Volunteer in our social campaigns and activities
- Donate online to provide direct help to those in need

## 2024 - a year of solidarity and sustainable partnerships

The year 2024 was marked by collaboration and solidarity across the entire Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia. We strengthened partnerships and developed joint actions to respond concretely to people's needs. All our work was carried out in close coordination with the dioceses, deaneries and parishes of the Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia, so that the support provided could be better organised and more effective. For the first time, the Church became actively involved in addressing domestic violence, marking an important milestone in our social mission. The year culminated in a major conference held in Chisinau, bringing together the social structures of the Romanian Patriarchate and laying the foundations for a lasting commitment to supporting the victims of violence. We focused not only on immediate help, but also on systemic change, so that our impact could be felt not only at the individual level, but also in decision-making processes. Our active presence on governmental and non-governmental thematic platforms has been a key mechanism through which we have contributed to shaping more inclusive and effective policies.

We continued to feed, clothe, shelter and bring hope. We have been part of the coordinated response to the refugee crisis, remaining close to those who have fled war, offering them not only material support but also a sense of safety and belonging.

We thank all our partners, volunteers, and everyone who joined us in this mission. Together, we have shown that solidarity and faith can truly transform lives.



**IGOR BELEI,**

Executive Director of the Religious Institution "Diaconia" Social  
Mission of the Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia

# Thanks

We deeply appreciate all the volunteers, partners, donors and journalists thanks to whom we have been able to continue implementing projects with impact for communities and beneficiaries in 2024. By showing care and solidarity, we are laying the foundations for a responsible society where every person is supported and valued.



## International donors:

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## Local donors and partners:

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# Out of love for the neighbour





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Misiunea Socială Diaconia

## Annual report 2024

[www.diaconia.md](http://www.diaconia.md)