

Activity Report 2016



Equality and Human Rights
Action Centre

ACTEDO

Activity Report

**Projects and activities carried out by ACTEDO between
January 1st and December 31st 2016**

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Support our projects and activities and help us ensure the access to justice of vulnerable people! Any donations, no matter how small, helps us defend the fundamental rights of those who cannot afford to do it themselves.

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If you are an individual working in Romania, you can support us by redirecting 2% of your income taxes. Find out more at <http://actedo.org/campania-2/>.

Support us through a sponsorship

If you represent a firm or a legal entity, develop your CSR policy and support ACTEDO. For more information, contact us at info@actedo.org.



About ACTEDO

Equality and Human Rights Action Centre – ACTEDO is a human rights nongovernmental organisation, established in 2013 in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. ACTEDO's mission is to promote fundamental rights and gender equality and to act against human rights violations. In order to reach our objectives, we pursue **three strategic directions**:

1. ACCESS TO JUSTICE. We facilitate effective access to justice for vulnerable groups through The Pro Bono Network for Human Rights, the biggest clearinghouse in Romania, created by ACTEDO in 2014. Additionally, we organise training sessions for attorneys and legal counsellors, work meetings with NGOs supporting vulnerable groups, and advocacy activities to promote pro bono lawyering in Romania.

2. GENDER EQUALITY. We implement advocacy activities and influence public policies to prevent violence against women and improve victim support and protection measures. Between July 2015 and April 2016, ACTEDO was the coordinator of the national network Breaking the Silence on Sexual Violence, composed of 20 Romanian NGOs, implementing a comprehensive national advocacy campaign for the development of integrated services for victims of sexual violence, as well as for the ratification by Romania of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention).

3. HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION. We organise training sessions for pupils, students and lawyers, as well as public debates and conferences on different human rights topics.

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National affiliations

ACTEDO is part of the nongovernmental network **Breaking the Silence on Sexual Violence** and the **Gender Equality Coalition**, an informal network that promotes the principle of equal treatment of men and women, supporting, for example, a greater involvement of women in politics or the introduction of sexual education in schools.

International affiliations

ACTEDO is a member of the **European Pro Bono Alliance**, which encompasses law firms and European NGOs that practice and promote pro bono legal services. Also, we are members of **Victim Support Europe (VSE)**, a European umbrella organisation with experience in specialised services, legislation and public policies for victims of crimes.





ACTEDO Objectives in 2016

ACCESS TO JUSTICE	GENDER EQUALITY	HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION
What? Facilitating the access to justice of vulnerable groups. How? Legal aid and representation through The Pro Bono Network for Human Rights. * What? Developing The Pro Bono Network for Human Rights, a clearinghouse specialised in vulnerable groups and human rights issues. How? Training sessions on human rights issues for attorneys; workshops and work meetings with grass root NGOs; meetings with people belonging to vulnerable groups; debates on the access to justice of vulnerable groups; legal research activities; mass media promotion; informal events for Pro Bono Attorneys and other ACTEDO partners; a video promoting the program. * What? Consolidating the pro bono culture in Romania. How? Writing and disseminating the activity report of The Pro Bono Network, together with open letters making suggestions and recommendations to public institutions involved in regulating the legal profession. * What? Defending the right to protest and freedom of assembly How? Writing a practical legal guide on how to appeal in court fines received at a peaceful protest.	What? Developing integrated services for victims of sexual violence in Romania. How? Coordinating the activities of the nongovernmental network Breaking the Silence on Sexual Violence: implementing an advocacy campaign for the creation of the first Sexual Assault Referral Centres; organising a conference on the topic; work meetings with stakeholders and with the network members; organising a fundraising concert to support the member NGOs in their pursuit of these goals; creating an infographic which describes the functioning of the sexual assault centres. * What? Monitoring the implementation of gender equality legislation and influencing public policies on preventing and combating gender-based violence How? Implementing a comprehensive national advocacy campaign; writing position papers on the necessity for Sexual Assault Referral Centres and for the complete ratification of the Istanbul Convention.	What? Raising awareness in the academic environment and among youth on the importance of human rights education. How? Organising human rights education workshops for approx. 100 high school pupils from Cluj-Napoca. Organising a workshop (<i>Legal Aid for Vulnerable Groups. A Norwegian Model</i>) in collaboration with Jussbuss, a legal clinic from Oslo, Norway, at the Faculty of Law, Babeș-Bolyai University. * What? Raising awareness and informing the wider audience about human rights issues. How? Organising a movie & debate night on sexual violence and a workshop on LGBT+ rights. Organising a peaceful protest for human rights. * What? Developing the specialty knowledge of the ACTEDO team. How? Study visits abroad, participation in national and international conferences, training sessions for the ACTEDO team, including volunteers. * What? Promoting human rights legislation and good practices. How? 4 editions of a legal newsletter, distributed among the Pro Bono Attorneys with whom ACTEDO collaborates.

ACTEDO Results in 2016

1. THE PRO BONO NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

A project coordinated by ACTEDO, The Pro Bono Network for Human Rights is **the first clearinghouse** that involves pro bono attorneys in finding solutions for serious social problems, from discrimination and disabled people's access to education and health services to domestic violence, harassment and forced evictions. The clearinghouse is specialized in human rights and its purpose is to facilitate the access to justice of vulnerable groups in Romania when their fundamental rights are violated.

From The Pro Bono Network's official launch (December 2014) until December 31st, 2016:

- ✓ **148 beneficiaries** received free legal assistance and/or representation in court
- ✓ **51 Pro Bono Attorneys** from 7 counties (Cluj, Bistrița-Năsăud, Mureș, Hunedoara, Constanța, Covasna, Dolj) and from Bucharest are members of The Pro Bono Network for Human Rights
- ✓ **4 partner law firms:** Cluj county - David, Corcheș and Associates Attorneys at Law; Chiriță and Associates; Costăș, Negru and Associates; Constanța county - Popescu, Mirăuță, Bucur.
- ✓ **15 cases represented in court** by the Pro Bono Attorneys

In 2016:

- ✓ **33 beneficiaries** received legal assistance and/or representation in court: 7 disabled children wanting access to education and services; 20 Roma people forcefully evicted; 1 disabled woman victim of harassment; 1 underage girl victim of sexual violence; 2 Roma people victims of discrimination; 2 people (parent and child) whose right to health services had been violated
- ✓ **77 requests for pro bono legal assistance** from 19 counties and from abroad (UK, Germany, Egypt, Nigeria, Thailand)
- ✓ **25 eligible cases** for receiving pro bono legal assistance and/or representation
- ✓ **Support** offered by ACTEDO in other serious issues, consisting in: information, situation analysis, contact of other relevant institutions (Embassies, social services, Ministries, etc.).
- ✓ **12 human rights areas covered:** sexual violence, malpractice, parental rights, harassment, workplace harassment, domestic violence, detention conditions, disability discrimination, ethnic discrimination, human trafficking, housing rights, the access to services of people with disabilities
- ✓ **1 human rights training session for attorneys**, organised in partnership with the Centre for Legal Resources (March, Bucharest)
- ✓ **1 report with the project's results in 2015¹**, containing concrete recommendations for the encouragement of pro bono lawyering and **14 letters sent to national public institutions**
- ✓ **1 anniversary reception** for Pro Bono Attorneys, beneficiaries and partners (December, Cluj-Napoca)

¹ Read The Pro Bono Network's Activity Report for 2015 here: <http://actedo.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/The-Pro-Bono-Network-for-Human-Rights-2015-Activity-Report.pdf>

In 2016, The Pro Bono Network for Human Rights received:

- ❖ **EUROPEAN AWARD FOR LOCAL PRO BONO IMPACT** at the European Pro Bono Forum (Amsterdam, November 2016)
- ❖ **3rd PLACE FOR DEFENDING INDIVIDUAL/COLLECTIVE RIGHTS** at the Civil Society Gala (Bucharest, June 2016)



What the beneficiaries of *The Pro Bono Network for Human Rights* say

I would recommend The Pro Bono Network, because they are professionals and extremely helpful. [...] What I liked the most was how fast they were in their responses to our requests and how efficiently they communicated with us. Thank you for existing! – **M. T., case of unlawful confinement and degrading treatment**

Of course [I recommend the Pro Bono Network]. In Romania there are many violations of human rights. Many citizens are discouraged from defending their rights in the lack of accessible legal assistance. – **M.I., violation of the right to accessibility for disabled people**

[What I liked the most in my relationship with the Pro Bono Attorney] was her willingness to help. Unfortunately, the beneficiary represented by our association gave up on taking the case to court, but to us it was important to find people willing to help. [...] Legal counselling services are crucial, especially when it comes to the problems of people from vulnerable groups, people who don't have the financial means to collaborate with a lawyer. – **A.A., NGO member offering support to people living with HIV/AIDS**

I've had a great collaboration with the Pro Bono Attorney in all the steps of the legal process, and what I liked best was that we were included in the development of the legal strategy. – **E.V., NGO member promoting housing rights**

In March 2016, 69% of the interviewed beneficiaries did not know what they would have done/were out of alternatives in the absence of The Pro Bono Network for Human Rights.

What our collaborators say

Your collaboration [between ACTEDO and the Pro Bono Attorneys] has been an important pioneering effort in leveraging innovative operational models for public interest law. Its influence will not only be felt in Romania but also across Europe. We hope that this award [the European Award for Local Pro Bono Impact] will not only serve as an acknowledgement of your significant contribution to the pro bono legal sphere, but will also motivate others to follow in your footsteps. It is truly our honor to present the ACTEDO team and its collaborators with this award. – **Garth Meintjes, President of The Global Network for Public Interest Law (PILnet)**

A lawyer's pro bono work is in perfect agreement with the principle of defending human rights, principle that lays at the foundation of the law regulating the profession. Moreover, pro bono is a

response to the need of vulnerable groups to have access to justice, all of which shows that the pro bono attorney plays a part in guaranteeing human rights, not just in theory, but also in practice.
Dana Ududec, attorney at law.

2. BREAKING THE SILENCE ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Between June 2015 and April 2016, ACTEDO coordinated the national network *Breaking the Silence on Sexual Violence*, composed of 20 NGOs working to end gender-based violence.

Project partners: Association for Liberty and Gender Equality –A.L.E.G. (the initiator of the network), FILIA Centre, Front Association, Association for Promoting the Rights of Roma Women E-Romnja, The Eastern European Institute for Reproductive Health (IEESR), Association of Women Against Violence - Artemis, CPE - Centre Partnership for Equality, **Supporting members:** Society for Feminist Analyses – AnA, QUANTIC Group, Alternative Steps Association, Psihosfera Association, Centre for Mediation and Community Security (CSMC), VIVAD Association, Atena Delphi Association, Transcena Association, SENSIBLU Foundation, ANAIS Association, the Euroregional Centre for Public Initiatives – ECPI, Necuvinte Association, The informal group “NO Means NO”.

✓ **1 national advocacy campaign against sexual violence**, for specialized services and legislation for victim protection (October 2015 - April 2016)

✓ **3 work meetings** with representatives of the Superior Council of Magistracy, Ministry of Justice, National Agency for Gender Equality, and of the Ministry of Health, with the goal of developing a strategy for the creation of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs)

✓ **1 national conference** on services and protection measures for victims of sexual violence – *Sexual Violence: Challenges and Solutions in the Context of the Ratification of the Istanbul Convention* – with representatives of the Government, Council of Europe and civil society, and with approx. 60 participants (February 23rd, Bucharest)



Conference (from left to right): Adela Mureșan (interpreter), Rosa Logar (GREVIO, Council of Europe), Alexandra Columban (Project Manager, ACTEDO), Judge Cristi Danileț (Superior Council of Magistracy)

- ✓ **1 fundraising concert** for the organisations that support victims of sexual violence, attended by approx. 200 people. The performers were Dan (Byron) and the Cluj-based band The Glass Fish (March, Cluj-Napoca)
- ✓ **1 infographic²** which explains visually how the Sexual Assault Referral Centres function
- ✓ **1 petition³** addressed to the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice urging them to create the Sexual Assault Referral Centres
- ✓ **1 position paper⁴** representing the common opinion of the Network regarding the necessary legal changes for the correct ratification of the Istanbul Convention
- ✓ **1 practical guide with information for victims of sexual violence⁵**

3. OTHER ACTIVITIES

- ✓ **1 movie and debate night** organised together with PATRIR on the topic of **sexual violence**, as part of the international events under One Billion Rising (February, Cluj-Napoca)
- ✓ **4 human rights education sessions for approx. 100 high school students** from grades 9th to 11th in Cluj-Napoca (June)



Human rights education. Left: pupils of Eugen Pora High School. Right: Pupils of Emil Racoviță High School

- ✓ **1 study visit in Norway** conducted by the ACTEDO team in order to exchange good practices in the field of legal aid for refugees and asylum seekers (April)

- ✓ **1 debate on the topic of migration and refugees at Eurosfat**, organised together with Europol and the Embassies of Netherlands and Austria (May, Bucharest)

- ✓ **3 training sessions for ACTEDO volunteers** on human rights legal mechanisms, gender equality and project management (May-August, Cluj-Napoca)



ACTEDO during the study visit in Norway

² Infographic: http://actedo.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Infografic_EN-2.png

³ The petition can be accessed at http://facem.de-clic.ro/rupem_tacerea

⁴ Read the document here http://actedo.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Joint-Opinion_NGOs_Istanbul-Convention.pdf

⁵ The guide is available at http://violentadegen.ro/wp-content/uploads/Ghid-pentru-victime_Rupem-tacerea-despre-violenta-sexuala.pdf

✓ **1 legal education workshop for students of the Faculty of Law, Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca**, regarding legal aid for vulnerable groups. The event was organised together with Jussbuss, the legal aid clinic of Oslo University, Norway (November 2016)



Legal education workshop at the Faculty of Law

- ✓ **1 practical legal guide**⁶ on how to appeal in court fines received at a peaceful protest
- ✓ **1 workshop on LGBT+ rights** in contemporary Romania, as part of the international film festival SFG – Gay Movie Nights (November, Cluj-Napoca)
- ✓ **1 work meeting** with representatives of the Ministry of Justice and the Prime Minister's Cabinet on the transposition of EU Directive 29/2012 establishing protection for victims of crime, and for the development of an integrated system of **specialised services for victims of crime** – meeting organised together with Victim Support Europe (November, Bucharest)
- ✓ participation in **4 international training sessions and conferences**: Romanian School for Development (July, Bucharest); women's rights training for lawyers and legal practitioners, Women's Human Rights Training Institute (Sept.-Oct., Sofia); annual conference Women Against Violence Europe-WAVE (Oct., Berlin); European Pro Bono Forum (Nov., Amsterdam)
- ✓ **1 article on human rights education**⁷ in Romania, published on the platform *Educație fără discriminare* (EN. Education without discrimination)
- ✓ **4 legal newsletter editions** distributed among Pro Bono Attorneys
- ✓ **1 march for human rights** („Human rights are for everyone”), on International Human Rights Day (December 10th, Cluj-Napoca)
- ✓ **1 presentation of the situation of LGBT+ people** and the challenges they face in Romania in the event **Cafe Journalism for Justice**, organised by Go Free Association (December, Cluj-Napoca)



Images from the march Human Rights are for everyone

⁶ You can view the guide here: <http://actedo.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Ghid-Amenda-Manifestatii-Publice.pdf>

⁷ Human rights education - <http://www.educatiefaradiscriminare.ro/articole/human-rights-education-reflection-three-question-marks/>

Awards and International Recognition

In 2016, the results and positive impact of **The Pro Bono Network for Human Rights** in Romania was acknowledged nationally, but also abroad, the programme receiving the following awards:

- **EUROPEAN AWARD FOR LOCAL PRO BONO IMPACT** at the European pro Bono Forum (Amsterdam, November 2016)

The award honours the best legal aid local programme from the European Union. It was given by PILnet (The Global Network for Public Interest Law), one of the most important international organisations that promotes the rule of law and human rights through legal mechanisms. The Pro Bono Network for Human Rights was chosen as the winner by a jury of law specialists and European civil society leaders, out of 17 initiatives from all over the EU member states.



- **3rd PRIZE FOR DEFENDING INDIVIDUAL/COLLECTIVE RIGHTS** at the Civil Society Gala (Bucharest, June 2016)

2016 marked the fourteenth edition of the Civil Society Gala, the largest national project for the promotion and appreciation of the activity of the Romanian nongovernmental sector. Over the years, the gala has supported 2.050 non-profit projects that had a real contribution in the community and helped develop civil society. For further details about the winning projects please visit www.galasocietatiicivile.ro.



Left: Dana Ududec and Maria Adriana Țucă (Pro Bono Attorney)

Media Appearances

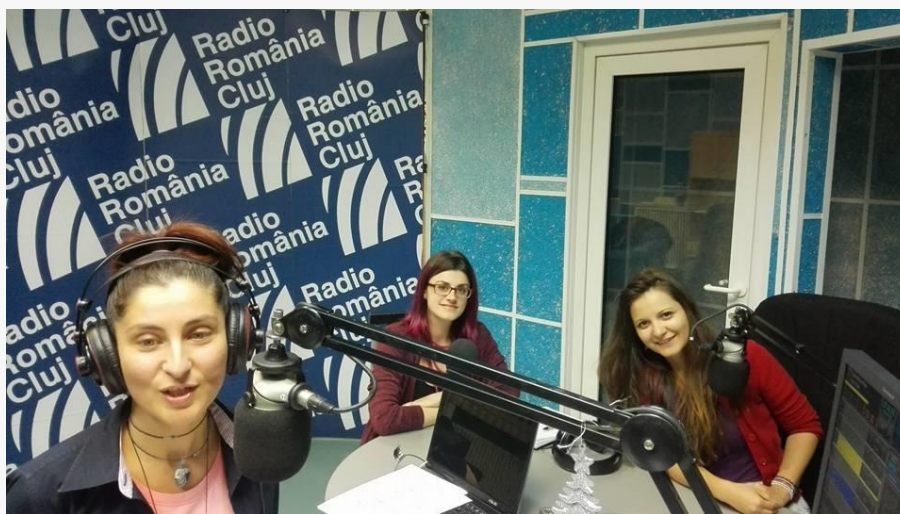
In 2016 ACTEDO came to the attention of the mass media, in local and national press, on television and radio. Below we mention some of the media appearances of the ACTEDO team and our projects.

THE PRO BONO NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. A high impact case taken through The Pro Bono Network, concerning disabled children from Cluj county demanding their rights in court and suing 14 public institutions has been documented by Cluj24h⁸. Iulia Pascu (ACTEDO member) and Dana Ududec (Attorney and collaborator) discussed the case in detail on the set of *Fără prejudecăți* (en. *Without prejudice*), a show of TVR Cluj.



Iulia Pascu and Dana Ududec on the show Without Prejudice, November 25th, 2016

Moreover, ACTEDO spoke about the European Award for Local Pro Bono Impact and about The Pro Bono Network for Human Rights on Radio Romania Cluj.



Alexandra Columban and Iulia Pascu at Radio Cluj, November 24th, 2016.

⁸ <http://cluj24h.ro/cj-cluj-isj-cluj-doua-municipii-si-mai-multe-scoli-chemate-in-judecata-de-parintii-copiilor-cu-nevoi-speciale-vor-ca-drepturile-lor-sa-fie-respectate/>

Other activities and partnerships of ACTEDO were presented by Clujust⁹, Avocatura.com¹⁰, Evenimente Juridice¹¹, Ziarul Clujean¹², Actual de Cluj¹³, etc. Outside of Romania, our programme has been described by PILnet – The Global Network for Public Interest Law¹⁴, but also by the Italian publication Lawyr¹⁵.

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There has also been substantial local and national media coverage for **BREAKING THE SILENCE ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE**. The national conference on February 23rd, 2016, was promoted by the Representation of the European Commission in Romania¹⁶, but also by Digi 24¹⁷, Știri ONG¹⁸, Garbo¹⁹, Juridice.ro²⁰, Radio Craiova²¹ and, on a European level, by Victim Support Europe²².

Furthermore, the activities and objectives of the network were presented in numerous press articles, from which we mention those published by Digi 24²³, Puterea²⁴, Agerpres²⁵, and not least, the interview for Garbo²⁶, given by Alexandra Columban.



⁹ <http://www.clujust.ro/drepturile-omului-au-farmec-retea-pro-bono-pentru-ajutorarea-persoanelor-vulnerabile/>

¹⁰ <http://www.avocatura.com/stire/14975/romania-in-care-se-poate-singurul-centru-de-asistenta-juridica.html>

¹¹ <http://evenimente.juridice.ro/2016/06/cum-a-fost-gala-societatii-civile-ed-14-6-iunie-2016-bucuresti.html>

¹² <http://ziarulclujean.ro/un-ong-clujean-actedo-castiga-premiul-european-pentru-impact-pro-bono-local/>

¹³ <http://actualdecluj.ro/asociatie-de-avocati-din-cluj-care-face-proiect-pro-bono-in-tara-primeste-premiu-european/>

¹⁴ <http://www.pilnet.org/events/266--2016-pro-bono-awards-promoting-rights-of-romania-vulnerable.html>

¹⁵ <http://lawyr.it/index.php/articles/interviews/769-interview-andres-gascon-cuenca-director-of-the-international-human-rights-clinic-at-the-university-of-valencia-spain>

¹⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/romania/news/agenda/19022016_conferinta_rupem_tacerea_ro.htm

¹⁷ <http://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/social/romania-ar-putea-avea-centre-integrate-pentru-victimele-violentei-sexuale-489536>

¹⁸ <http://www.stiriong.ro/ong/drepturile-omului/conferinta-aviolenta-sexuala-provocar>

¹⁹ <http://www.garbo.ro/articol/Social/20014/e-timpul-sa-vorbim-despre-violenta-sexuala-la-adresa-femeilor.html>

²⁰ <http://www.juridice.ro/430430/romania-a-ratificat-conventia-de-la-istanbul.html>

²¹ <http://www.radiocraiova.ro/calendarul-zilei-23-februarie-2/>

²² <http://victimsupport.eu/news/national-events-to-mark-european-day-for-victims-of-crime/>

²³ <http://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/social/csm-si-societatea-civila-cer-infiintarea-unor-centre-de-urgenta-pentru-victimele-violentei-sexuale-478034>

²⁴ <http://www.puterea.ro/social/batuta-violata-umilinta-agresiuni-ale-catalina-chirita-parlamentari-justitie-fundatia-sensiblu-134588.html>

²⁵ <http://www.agerpres.ro/comunicate/2016/06/08/comunicat-de-presa-reteaua-rupem-tacerea-despre-violenta-sexuala-20-35-51>

²⁶ <http://www.garbo.ro/articol/Social/20785/interviu-alexandra-columban-activista-pentru-drepturile-femeilor.html>

The ACTEDO Team

ACTEDO is composed of 3 founding members who are also members in the Board of Directors: Adela Dumbrăvan, Iulia Pascu and Ioana Tuță, and 1 Associate member, Alexandra Columban. At the same time, the association collaborates with Dana Ududec (attorney at law) and Oana Rus (financial adviser). In 2016, the organisation had 5 paid staff, and 6 volunteers and interns who supported ACTEDO.



From left to right:

Row 1: Iulia Pascu, Alexandra Columban, Adela Dumbrăvan, Ioana Tuță.

Row 2: Dana Ududec, Andreea Hoțopan, Oana Rus, Daniela Toma.

Row 3: Alexandru Cîrciumaru, Raluca Alexa, Kassie Scott, Nima Nematollahi.



Centrul de Acțiune pentru
Egalitate și Drepturile Omului

ACTEDO

Financial Information

For implementing its activities, ACTEDO received the following grants and sponsorships:

Project	Duration of implementation/ financing	Financing source	Financing amount
<i>The Pro Bono Network for Human Rights</i>	July 2014 – April 2016	EEA Grants 2009-2014	Total eligible costs: 59,593 Euro, out of which ACTEDO contribution: 6110 Euro
<i>Breaking the Silence on Sexual Violence</i>	July 2015 – April 2016	EEA Grants 2009-2014	Total of eligible costs: 43,847 Euro, out of which ACTEDO contribution: 1740 Euro
Study visit in Norway	April 2016	EEA Mobility Grants 2009-2014	6241 Euro
Human rights education in high schools	June 2016	Internship grant for USA student, through Cluj School of Public Health, Babes Bolyai Univ.	1000 USD
-	January – December 2016	Donations from individuals and legal persons	34,623 RON

