

„We grow up together”

Project description

Implementation period: October 2009 - September 2011

Financers: Enel Cuore Foundation and Intesa Sanpaolo Bank

Location: Arges, Bucuresti, Caras-Severin, Constanta, Dambovita, Dolj, Hunedoara, Timis

The overall objective of the project is to diminish the negative impact on children generated by their parents’ economic migration to Italy and other European countries.

Specific objectives

1. To identify children at risk due to their parents’ migration to Italy or other European countries.
2. To create several programs aimed at offering school support, school counseling and social counseling for children.
3. To develop leisure time programs, to facilitate the socialization between children and to ensure the permanent communication with parents from abroad.
4. To develop support and counseling programs for children's relatives or for other persons that take care of the children whose parents are abroad.

The program is designed to have an integrated approach on the "children left behind phenomenon": working with the children to improve their life: school support activities, psychological counselling, leisure and socialization activities; working with the parents and care givers to better understand and care for the children; collaboration with the authorities to advocate, propose and push public policies and practices for the children; and national public campaign to raise awareness and gain support from the general population.

Activities:

1. Detailed analysis of the children left behind phenomenon (in the care of grandparents or other relatives) in Timis, Caras Severin, Hunedoara, Dambovita, Arges, Bucharest, Constanta: statistics, effects, behaviors etc.
2. Developing partnerships at local level with schools and public authorities. Eight local working groups comprised of representatives of the local authorities with responsibilities in the area of child protection: the schools included in the project, County Schools Inspectorates and Social Assistance County Departments have monthly meetings to discuss and propose solutions for and about the implementation and results of the project, the evolution of the children left at home phenomenon, the children's needs, school abandonment prevention, local policies and other topics related to the effects of migration.

3. Establish the target group for the project. Set up a methodology of working with children with migrant parents through after-school programs for the project (the methodology consists in guidelines for the centers' administrative activities and the selection, evaluation and activities with the children).

4. Development of eight after school centers to provide additional training for children, educational guidance and individual counseling. The centers' staff consists of a teacher, a school counselor/psychologist and/or a social worker. The activities are carried out with support of volunteers ensured through cooperation with local high schools.

School orientation and school support activities are carried out on a daily basis. Also, on a semi-daily basis, children benefit of individual and group psychological support sessions.

5. Leisure time activities for children. During weekdays children are involved in socialization activities (games, sport, art therapy etc.) that develop both the group communication skills of children and their ability to relate with others (children and adults). On weekends and holidays the centers organize excursions outside the city, touristic sights, museum visits, trips to the park, theater, cinema, etc.

6. Each center is equipped with two computers and Internet connection to allow and encourage the children to develop a regular communication with their parents working abroad.

7. The specialists involved in the project maintain familiar relations with the caregivers, provide guidance, training and counseling through meetings and home visits.

8. Awareness campaign on the phenomenon of "children left behind" trough the media and advocacy activities at local and national level.

Expected results:

- 8 local working groups comprised of representatives of the local authorities with responsibilities in the area of child protection constituted and functional.
- a clear image of the phenomenon of children with parents working abroad in the eight counties where we carry out our activities
- a methodology for providing support to children with parents working abroad, through after school centers with a clear set of criteria to establish and enroll the target group.
- 24 specialists trained in working with these children, 80 volunteers trained and actively involved;
- fitting up the 8 locations for After school / Children's Clubs programs;
- local press conferences for launching the project;
- 520 children enrolled in the project – direct beneficiaries of the project's activities – and other 40 000 people informed on the program and the utility of the intervention