

ELECTRONIC INFORMATIVE BULLETIN

Salvați Copiii (Save the Children Romania) - Superbrand

An evaluation carried out by Superbrands organization and published in Capital magazine revealed that Salvati Copiii is one of the most famous Romanian symbol brands (which carry an emotional value, international organizations or institutions with a certain fame), together with “brands” such as the Bucharest National Theatre, European Commission, PHARE, red Cross, Voronet Monastery, Vama Veche etc.

Counseling Center for Parents

Launched on March 9th 2006, the Center is one of the results of the project “Promoting alternative methods for educating children”, a project started by Save the Children Romania in November 2005 and carried out in Bucharest and 17 Counties in Romania, in partnership with the County School Inspectorates and County Centers for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance.

At the Center for parents, a team made up by four psychologists who participated in the training courses organized by Save the Children Romania in November 2005 and February 2006, is providing information and counseling for pre-school children, with the view to promoting models that should facilitate the communication between parent-child, parent-kindergarten and, later on, parent-school. At the same time, training courses are organized at the Center, for the educators from Dambovită County interested in promoting alternative methods for educating children.

Information campaign on preventing drug use among youths

Carried out within the Education for Health Program, the campaign was developed by the project volunteers in Iancului Square, Tineretului and Herastrau Parks; the target group was made up of youths between 15 – 25 years old and parents with teenager children.

The campaign was based on the volunteers’ discussions with the beneficiaries and on distributing information materials for each age group (Educational brochure for student IX – XII grades, flyers containing information about the negative consequences of drugs, the multi-media CD *Drugs – the Big Cheat*, brochures for parents). 20 volunteers discussed with 350 youths and 130 parents about the risks and consequences of drug use.

Research report on the use of legal and illegal drugs

A Research report on the use of legal and illegal drugs among the Romanian adolescents and youths, aged between 11 – 22 years, was prepared within the project “Preventing drug use among adolescents and youths”, financed by the Ministry of Health – The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The research was carried out in July 2004 – January 2005 by Save the Children Romania and Bucharest University – the Faculty of Sociology. It revealed the fact that 8% of the children aged between 11 and 14 years are smoking and 4% of them are drinking alcohol. 4% of all the respondents (11-22 years) stated that they had used at least once an illegal drug. 1% of the children aged 11-14 years used an illegal drug at least once, 3.3% of the ones aged 15-18 years and 10.9% of the ones aged 19-22 years stated that they

had done the same. Regarding the type of the illegal drug used regularly over the past 12 months, 0.4% of the children and youths questioned used cocaine, 0.2% marijuana and 0.1% heroine. According to the statistics provided by the Ministry of Health, the incidence of ITSs, including HIV, increased dramatically over the last three years, while the youth's knowledge regarding sexually transmitted diseases is incorrect or incomplete.

The aim of the program is to reduce the incidence of ITSs and drug use among adolescents and youths, by teaching them healthy, responsible behaviors (Arges, Brasov, Bucharest, Caras-Severin, Constanta, Dambovita, Dolj, Galati, Hunedoara, Iasi, Mures, Neamt, Suceava, Timis, Vaslui).

Promoting alternative methods for educating children

The training course for the school counselors was organized by Save the Children Romania with the support of the Bucharest School Inspectorate and Bucharest Police.

The sessions were carried out by 8 trainers; the participants were 30 school counselors from schools and high schools in Bucharest. The counselors who participated in these training sessions will act as disseminators of the information gathered within the course and will carry out activities for children, parents and teachers from the schools they are working at.

Integration of refugee children in the Romanian society

Save the Children Romania marked 21st of March – the World Day Against Any Forms of Racism and Discrimination – and the respective week by organizing various actions with the aim of sensitizing the public opinion regarding the problems related to the refugee children's integration in the Romanian society.

The volunteers of the program "Integration of refugee children in the Romanian society", together with refugee children, organized in 4 schools from Bucharest activities which included promoting the rights and needs of refugee children, debates on the issue of discrimination and interactive games.

Free discussions on the issue of racial discrimination were organized at the Stolnicu Center, together with drawing workshops, where the children could freely express their feelings and opinions regarding racism, discrimination, equality and rights. The aim of these discussions was to facilitate the promotion of their own identity, of their cultural values and to understand that every person has rights, which must be respected irrespective of race, color, sex or age.

These actions, organized by Save the Children Romania within the week against racial discrimination, included also a campaign of distributing information materials, with the aim to sensitize the public opinion regarding this disfavored category.

Regional project for combating trafficking in human beings

Save the Children International Alliance started a regional project for preventing trafficking in children. It is carried out in seven countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Romania, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro. In Romania, the project is implemented by Save the Children Romania in 16 Counties (Arad, Arges, Braila, Buzau, Caras-Severin, Calarasi, Constanta, Dambovita, Dolj, Giurgiu, Hunedoara, Ialomita, Iasi, Mehedinti, Teleorman, Tulcea) and Bucharest.

The aim of the project is to contribute to the protection of the rights of the children who were trafficked and the children with the risk of being trafficked; its specific objectives are:

- To reduce the vulnerability of the children with the risk of being trafficked through prevention activities;
- To increase the number of trafficked children who are identified, referred to the protection system and to whom immediate protection services are offered;
- To increase the number of trafficked children who were successfully reintegrated.

The activities to be carried out within the program include:

- Identifying the national and local mechanisms for child protection (Bucharest, Timisoara, Galati);
- Research on vulnerability to trafficking (Bucharest, Timisoara, Iasi, Galati);
- Workshops in schools (in the first year, there will be pilot workshops in Bucharest, in years 2 and 3 they will be organized in Timisoara and Galati as well);
- Setting up and supporting 9 work groups and the local strategies;
- Training sessions for community leaders (in the communities identified as being the most vulnerable);
- Counseling with the view to preventing trafficking (Bucharest and Iasi);
- Public information events regarding the risks of trafficking (in the rural communities);
- Printing and distributing informative materials;
- Issuing a report on creating local strategies and disseminating it;
- 3 training sessions for the border police;
- Promoting child rights at the level of the responsible government institutions (participating in the inter-ministerial group);
- Periodical meetings with the responsible local representatives;
- Research on assistance services;
- Publishing and disseminating the research report;
- Providing psycho-social support to the boys and girls who were trafficked;
- Advocacy;
- Disseminating the project results.

The Code of Conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in tourism

Within the Code of Conduct project, a pilot training for the professionals working in the tourism industry was carried out in February at Sofitel Hotel, Bucharest.

The aim was to raise the employees' awareness regarding the cause and consequences that sexual abuse has on children, to give them information on the ways in which they can get involved in order to prevent potential situations in which children may be exposed to abuse within the hotel and to present the stipulations of the Code of Conduct. At the same time, the trainees received information about the activities carried out by the Accor Group at a global level with a view to preventing sexual exploitation of children in the tourism industry.

The participants were almost 60 employees of Sofitel, who work at reception, concierge, housekeeping, because these employees have direct contact with the clients of the hotel, hence the possibility to notify potential cases of child abuse.

The feedback received from the hotel employees was very enthusiastic; most of them recognized the need to develop such trainings in other hotels as well and also asked for more information about the authorities / institutions to which they can notify cases of child abuse / negligence / violence.

Building Capacity in Advocacy to End Violence against Children

The Workshop on the Global Capacity building on Community and Child Centered Advocacy was organized by the International Save the Children Alliance (Task Force on Violence against Children) within the general framework of the United Nations Study on Violence Against Children.

The objectives of the workshop have been developing participants' skills on:

- creating national advocacy strategies by identifying key objectives, targets, allies, opportunities and obstacles;
- developing, implementing and supporting longer term local and national advocacy to end violence against children, based on the follow-up to the UN Study;
- practical and ethical issues concerning children's participation in advocacy;
- understanding the importance of linking and coordinating national and international advocacy;
- building capacity of others by sharing good practices;
- applying tools for monitoring and evaluating the impact of advocacy.

Child safety on-line

Microsoft Romania organized a roundtable to discuss the issue of the risks which may appear when children use the Internet. A research carried out by the Association for Technology and Internet from February 27th – to March 10th 2006 on children's activities on the Internet showed that:

- Many children spend a lot of time on the Internet, some of them more than 4 hr. / day (approx. 25%);
- 45% of the children accessed accidentally or intentionally pornographic or nudity sites and almost 50% accessed sites with a violent content (neither the children nor the parents realize that this is something serious);
- The mostly accessed services are Instant Messenger, e-mail and web and the most accessed sites are those with music, then games and hobbies, but also the informative / educational ones;
- There is no real communication between parents and children regarding the sites that children are accessing on the Internet and there is no efficient control. 80% of the children talk to strangers and 20% of the children admitted that they had disclosed personal data on the Internet.

Save the Children had a presentation on the extent of the use of Internet with regard to child rights violations:

“Although it seems very hard to believe, Save the Children teams of social workers discovered that the e-mail is a method which the street children use very frequently to connect to potential abusers, known in the street as “sponsors”. This correspondence is initiated by pimps, abusers in their turn, who are interested to communicate very fast both with the adults searching for child victims and with the children or adolescents who accept such relations. This example shows very clearly the extent of on-line communication. E-mail, chat, file sharing systems are very well known and exploited by children and

youths, willing to communicate. But, through one click, the children can get in contact with strangers, who may ask the children to date them.”

Solutions for deinstitutionalization

Save the Children Romania finalized the project “Independent life skills – solution for deinstitutionalization”. The program was carried out for two years; its general objective was to ensure the optimum conditions for deinstitutionalization, for creating and developing skills for an independent life and for the professional integration of children and youths.

The project was financed by the USE Government within the ChildNet program, which is a partnership within the USAID, World Learning and the National Authority for Child Rights Protection (ANPDC).

According to the statistical data provided by ANPDC, 31.107 children lived in care institutions at the end of June 2005, this representing 38% of the total number of children who are in the evidence of the specialized public services. Out of them, 11 542 children were 14-17 years old, who would leave the institution when turning 18 or after having finalized their studies. The lack of a family, which should provide social models and support in finding their way in life are major obstacles for the social and professional reintegration of the children and youths who live in institutions.

Within the project, Save the Children Romania provided assistance services for 300 youths aged 16 – 18 years. They participated in training course to obtain qualifications for a profession, economic and entrepreneurship courses, psychological and socio-professional counseling. At the end of the project, 239 children and youths benefited from alternatives to institutionalization (family reintegration and the possibility to live in social apartments). 97 youths found a job and 29 are going to college.

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