**Curative Pedagogy and Social Therapy in Romania**

Curative pedagogy is a part of inclusive education and it is an alternative of traditional education .

In 1990 the work of curative education started in Romania. Today there are successfully working several centers – and more and more people become aware of this new approach, which is still absolutely new for Romania.

**Seventeen years ago, a group of persons came from Switzerland to Romania** to bring hope and light for children in need of special care – and not only.

They have brought not only a new image of man, but a lot of commitment and support in order to change the conditions of life for the children in Romania; children that were neglected and not considered as human beings.

In Simeria**,** was created first curative education and later social therapy.  There were 10 years of hard work (setting up buildings, a training seminar, structures for education including protocols with the local authorities and running the center). It started in 1991 with 21 children and after 10 years, they were more than one hundred.It has created a Romanian model of curative education to proof that these children have a chance, they can be educated, they are able to do something with their hands, and that they can be integrated. To run this model, the Hans Spalinger Association offers the land, buildings, buses, equipment and the methods while the state is covering the running costs.

Meanwhile, during this phase of pioneer work, the Center of Curative Education Corabia was set up in Bucarest, which at present integrates 70 children (with the help of Sonnhalde Gempen), and, at Urlati,  the “Casa Rozei” Centre that has now turned its attention to social therapy.

To protect the initiatives, to guarantee and sustain the centers and the method, the local associations set up the Federation of Curative Education in Romania which made a protocol with the Ministry of Education. Soon after that (2005), the new law for special education in

Romania, included curative education as an officially recognized alternative.

This special school provides educational and therapeutic-recovery assistance for students with mental disabilities(moderate,mild/severe profund or associated) and neuro-motor impaired students.Also,teachers of the school are trained in developing and implanting educational programs for students with physical disabilities who cannot walk,schooled at home in homebound.

The Curative Pedagogy and Social Therapy Center ‘’Corabia’’,offer appropriate services for children with special educational needs,respecting their human dignity and offer the opportunity to open and develop their potential for their integration from educational,socio-cultural and economic point of view,to help them live with dignity as citizens with full rights and making valuble their contribution to social life.

It is also very important the continuation of integration when school is finished, when the children become adults, in the frame of  social therapy. In Romania, there are 3 places (Simeria, Urlati and Asociatia Prietenia Pantelimon-Bucharest).

The Prietenia Association, an NGO set up in Romania in 1996 with the help of the Swiss partner Sonnhalde Gempen, has made considerable efforts to reproduce in Romania the Swiss social and professional integration model for mentally disabled people. Prietenia Association and the Swiss partner, Sonnhalde Gempen .The Prietenia Association is a non-governmental organization set up in 1996 with the objective to provide assistance and support to children, teenagers and adults with special needs. The organization desires to obtain the social integration of children and adults that have learning disabilities, a group that faces difficulties to succeed in the Romanian educational and professional system.

The organization is formed by parents,teachers and other persons that desire to help disabled children, young people and adults. 80 percent of the children and of the young people assisted by the program have severe mental disabilities associated with neuromotor deficiencies (Down syndrome, autism, epilepsy, severe mental retard, language disabilities, behavior disorders, spastic paresis). The long term partner of Prietenia Association is Sonnhalde Gempen, a Swiss organization that works with disabled people since 1971 . Sonnhalde Gempen has joined the efforts of Prietenia Associatio n in 1996, with the objective to reproduce their model in Romania. There were created programs for disabled children and their families within the Pilot Centre of Curative Pedagogy and Socialtherapy (CPCTS), a school based on alternative pedagogy using the curriculum of the Waldorf educational model. In August 1996, Prietenia Association, Sonnhalde Gempen and the Ministry of Education have signed a cooperation agreement .The CORABIA center is an alternative educational center that provides the disabled children with means to learn and to develop, providing them support to be integrated in schools; the center also offers programs for families, with the purpose to reduce school dropout and institutionalization.

The Pantelimon Center –Prietenia has opened in November 2006, with the main objective of providing a position for the professional integration of the CORABIA graduates. The Pantelimon Center provides social and professional integration for 33 mentally disabled young people from Bucharest and the Ilfov county; occupational therapy – weaving, carpentry, handicraft, tailoring, housekeeping and gardening; complementary therapy – painting, music, dance, gymnastics, eurhythmy; transportation; counseling; experience exchange programs and recreational activities; and teaching the specialists of the Prietenia Association various types of therapies, including occupational therapy. The long term vision and strategy of the Prietenia Association is to create a stable and sustainable environment where at least 150 disabled persons are integrated and capable to live their lives ”with maximum autonomy and minimum social support”. In addition, the long term strategy aims to increase financial autonomy by attracting new and diversified sources of income and by growing the self-generated incomes.