



Betania Association Bacau – Romania

Mission and purpose of the organization

Established in 1995, Betania Association is a humanitarian organization which supports all disadvantaged categories of the community. Its mission is accomplished by social, health and education projects.

Since 2004, the Betania Association has been recognized as a public utility organization by the Romanian Government.

Accreditation and licensing

All services offered by the Betania Association are accredited and licensed.

What we do

- We work individually and intensively with **autistic children**, preparing them for a successful integration in schools and kindergartens;
- We offer excellent opportunities for **young people discharged from foster homes** in Bacau and Bucharest, facilitating their integration in the community and ensuring their preparedness for a decent living;
- We ensure protection, counseling and reintegration in the community of **victims of trafficking in human beings**;
- We prepare **young people with disabilities** for integration on the labour market;
- We help the recovery of people with orthopedic and posttraumatic disorders of the musculoskeletal system, patients with rheumatic and neurological diseases by **hydrokinetotherapy, speech therapy and psychological counseling services**;
- We support **poor families**, people with disabilities, families with many children, **homeless people, detained people and young people**, by providing financial and material assistance, psychological and legal counseling, social welfare and support for finding and keeping a job;
- We support people in financial difficulty in order to settle some **serious medical conditions**;
- We provide **scholarships to pupils and students** with modest socio-economic situations.

ONGOING PROJECTS

The biggest projects of the Betania Association are:

- The Centers for Young People's Integration in Bacau and Bucharest;
- The "Dolphin" Center for Children with Autism in Bacau;
- The "Dolphin" Center for Children with Autism in Roman;
- Hydrokinetotherapy and Speech Therapy Recovery Services;
- Multifunctional Center for young people with disabilities;
- Counseling, Information and Support Center for families in crisis situations;
- "Emergency financial support" project".

Counseling, Information and Support Center for families in crisis situations

This project was established in 1995 aiming at keeping the children in their families, continuing with their school courses, reintegrating/integrating children or young people who have abandoned their studies, and preventing the institutionalization of children and family breaking-up.

The beneficiaries of this social project, more than 1000 per year, are orphans, widows, mono-parental families, people with disabilities, older people, families with many children, street children, homeless people, emergency medical cases, people detention, and young people.

Beneficiaries' selection is made in the hearing programs of the Information Center, in the counseling and support programs for families in difficulty, depending on the gravity of the applicants' situation. After the initial assessment of the family, the social worker makes a proposal on the intervention plan for each case. For maximum efficiency, the team seeks information and support from the institutions responsible for child protection (school, hospital, town halls, police) for the social integration of the beneficiaries.

The intervention plan consists of financial aid, material support (clothes, medical supplies, school supplies, food, and furniture), psychological counseling and support for finding and keeping a job. The social worker and the project coordinator visit the families on a regular basis for plan's implementation, advice and family monitoring.

Depending on the severity of the cases, families can be supported for 6 to 12 months. Thus, 120 families without financial possibilities and in crisis situations receive financial and material support every month.

The annual cost of the project is EUR 50,000 in contributions from foreign partners.

The results of the project are: improved standard of living for the families supported, their education, beneficiaries' employment for definite and indefinite periods.

The Emergency Financial Support Project

The emergency financial support is given to those with serious social and medical problems, after the evaluation committee has undertaken a social investigation and confirmed the seriousness of the case.

In medical cases, emergency financial support is given for treatment, chirurgical emergencies, transplants, implants, transport of invalid people or people without financial means to clinics/hospitals from inside or outside the country.

Some pupils and students benefit from a monthly or biannual financial support for the payment of tuition fees and/or for accommodation and meals.

The persons without income or with low financial means receive emergency financial support to settle extremely serious social problems.

The Center for Young People's Integration in Bacau

Bacau Betania Association has started the project for the integration of young people in 1998. It was one of the first projects of the organization.

The Center for Young People's Integration aims at the social integration of the young people discharged from the placement centers and the integration in the community of the troubled young

people. This project is designed for young girls who were protected by the Bacau General Direction for Social Welfare and Child Protection, and those who are in a risky situation.

The Center for Young People's Integration provides a stable environment for a period of 1 – 2 years, for young girls aged 16 years. They have the opportunity of forming and developing their daily life skills, their work capacities and skills and cultivating their communication and interrelation skills. The Center's capacity is 22 places in 3 family type houses. They are made of a living room, kitchen, two bathrooms and four bedrooms.

In addition, the Center has a tailor's workshop, where those interested can learn this profession. The admission of young girls in the Integration Center is concluded by signing a program acceptance agreement. Its beneficiaries are not a stable group for a definite period. Once the important steps are taken for the social integration of part of the young girls, they leave the center and others take their place.

In the first 6 months, the beneficiaries of the project get all the center services for free. In the next period, the beneficiaries support half of the rent and then, in the last period of their stay in the center, they pay the full rent.

The project objectives are: development of life skills in young teens from foster homes and those in difficulty; continuation of studies, qualification, requalification and vocational integration of young girls; social integration and socialization; development of a proper attitude towards work; implementation of an accommodation system for young girls in order to prepare them for an independent living; implementation of a system of professional support, training and retraining of young girls to find a job.

Results

From its establishment up to the present time, the Center for Young People's Integration has provided accommodations, jobs, an opportunity to continue the studies and to have a decent living for 226 young girls with ages between 16 and 26 years.

The Center for Young People's Integration in Bucharest

The Center for Young People's Integration in Bucharest provides the 6 beneficiaries with the following social welfare services: accommodation for a definite period (until the completion of studies) in a three-room apartment situated in Bucharest; support for the continuation and completion of high school or university studies; psychological assistance; facilitation of relations with public institutions, with a view to integration into the community; financial and/or material support for daily living; employment and vocational guidance; monitoring and support after leaving the Center for Young People's Integration.

Project's beneficiaries:

- Young women from foster homes;
- Young women unable to continue their studies.

The young girls are staying in a three-room apartment, fully furnished and equipped, located in a central area of Bucharest. Young women are given the opportunity to live in a family-type environment conducive both to develop independent living skills and to develop of communication and networking skills.

Project's objectives: completion of university studies for 6 young women; social integration and socialization; development of independent living skills; development of personal budget management skills; support for finding a job after completing their studies.

The "Dolphin" Center for Children with Autism

The Dolphin Center works since 2005. It is accredited and licensed to provide the following services:

Psychological assessment and behavioral and skills assessment

The service is designed for children from outside the Center, from Bacau County and other counties. The assessment is carried out over a period of at least two sessions. At the end of the assessment process, the family receives the assessment report and the intervention plan for 6 months.

Individual and group educational and therapeutic intervention (ABA/DTT, PECS, TEACHH)

The service has a capacity of 14 places in 2 groups of 7 children. The daily program has 6 hours, Monday through Friday. The 6 hours of daily therapy include one hour of individual therapy and 5 hours of group therapy. The therapeutic program is aimed at forming and developing skills in the following development areas: receptive language, cooperation, expressive language, social interaction, functional communication, visual performance, motional and vocal imitation, personal independence, fine and raw motility, play and spare time, reading, math and writing.

Features: rigorous environment and activities structuring by using visual media (schedules) made up of icons tailored for each child.

The intensive service of individual behavioral therapeutic intervention ABA/ VB

The service has a capacity of 10 places. The daily program has 4 hours per day of intensive individual behavioral intervention, Monday through Friday.

The therapeutic program aims at forming and developing skills in the following development areas: receptive language, cooperation, expressive language, social interaction, functional communication, visual performance, motional and vocal imitation, personal independence, fine and raw motility, play and spare time, reading, math and writing.

Individual behavioral therapeutic intervention in outpatient system

This service provides a variable number of sessions – between 2 and 20 sessions per week – for the children outside the Center, depending on the parents' choices and the results of the assessment.

Information and counseling service for parents and theoretical and practical training

Courses whose duration and topics shall be determined according to the requests.

Results:

- Total requests addressed to the Center: 256 (for psychological evaluation/integration into the daily program of the Center or the outpatient therapy and consulting service);
- Beneficiaries integrated into the day program of the Center, from 2005 up to the present time: 76;
- Beneficiaries integrated into the outpatient program of the Center, from 2005 up to the present time: 139;
- Beneficiaries evaluated and directed to other services: 27;
- Counseling and information beneficiaries: all the families of the children in the Center's program (outpatient and day program), from 2005 up to the present time: 149 families.

Hydrokinetotherapy and Speech Therapy Recovery Services

Kinetotherapy is an important therapeutic tool in recovery. Our service treats disorders of the spine, musculoskeletal system, skeletal system and rheumatic diseases as well. Patients with neurological diseases (*hemiparesis*, *tetraparesis/paraparesis*), may benefit, through the execution of specific kineto therapy exercises from an improved/enhanced health status.

Rachitis, *obesity* and other metabolic disorders can also be treated by kineto therapy. Similarly, congenital diseases, such as neuromuscular dystrophy, congenital luxation, quadriplegia or inflammatory and degenerative diseases of the nervous system.

Through the specific exercises it provides, kinetotherapy is a solution for the health problems of children and adults, teaching them at the same time that exercise helps creating a healthy way of life. Kinetotherapy is based on systematized motion in the form of physical exercise, aimed at the achievement of the goals proposed.

Hydrokinetotherapy is an important way to relax and tone the body.

Services provided:

- Underwater gymnastics finds wide applications (from healthy children or with neuromotor disorders to young people and adults);
- Swimming courses for children and babies.

Speech therapy

Speech therapy service is designed both for young children for early diagnosis and intervention in case of language disorders, and those of school age and adults, helping to correct deficiencies of speech, articulation, rhythm, rynolalia, writing and reading.

The Multifunctional Center

The Multifunctional Center operates since 2011. The purpose of the Center is to organize various activities for education and socialization of young people with physical and/or mental disabilities which are not integrated into the community, which attend no form of education and have no vocational training in order to find a job.

The Center's activities are tailored to the individual needs and particularities of the beneficiaries: theoretical and practical courses (gardening, animal care, executions of jewelry, candles and soap, cooking, computer use, English), melotherapy, painting, graphics, drawing, sports and walking.

The Center has a capacity of 20 beneficiaries. The Center consists of two very spacious rooms where two groups of 10 persons are trained, lounge, bathroom and kitchen.

Activities are conducted daily, Monday through Friday, from morning until evening, based on a weekly schedule. Two instructors-teachers and volunteers provide training to beneficiaries.

Products made in workshops are sold. Revenues support the Center's activities.

Before the implementation of this project, young people with disabilities had low or non-existent possibilities to spend their spare time or to socialize. The Multifunctional Center has not only responded to these needs, but became a second home and family for them. Now they are useful and have learned to do a lot of things. Now they are helping their families applying at home everything they have learned from us. In addition, they make a profit from the sale of the products made.

Projects completed

"Betania" Day Center for Children with Disabilities

Established in 1998, "Betania" Day Center operated until 2011 in a special building, built for developing this project and it was founded to *support, rehabilitate, educate and teach the child with physical and/or related deficiencies*. The service offered were: **kinetotherapy** and hydrokinetotherapy (massage and medical gymnastics, swimming pool, light therapy, packing with paraffin, electrotherapy, occupational therapy); **speech therapy** (language disturbances therapy, disturbance in reading and writing); **educational and therapeutic activities** (personal autonomy, cognitive learning activities, development of latent potential); **psychological evaluation** (periodical examinations using the Raven Test, the Portage Scale, counseling, psychotherapy); **social welfare** (promoting the beneficiaries' interest before public authorities, schools, institutions); **sensorial therapy** (children with sensorial difficulties are provided with visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and kinesthetic stimulation); **social** activities (participation in sport competitions like Special Olympics, in

the community's life, shows); serving meals which are organized inside the groups (2 meals/day); daily **transport** of the beneficiaries from their residences to the center and back.

Due to the improvement of the legal framework and the acceptance of children with disabilities into the regular, special and integrated educational system, "Betania" Day Center has ceased its operation after 13 years. The total number of direct beneficiaries that the Center has supported and recovered during the 13 years of operation is 464.

The "Tulips" Center for Abused, Neglected and Exploited Child

The "Tulips" Center was established in October 1999 (the first center in Romania dedicated to child protection – for victims of any type of abuse or serious neglect in the family environment) and was closed in 2011. The Center has operated in a building with a capacity of 20 places, specially built and financed by the Betania Association. After the accreditation of Betania Association as a supplier of social services, the "Tulips" Center had become, in 2005, an emergency centre for abused, neglected and exploited children.

The team of the Center consisted of 20 specialists and its mission was to provide specialist support for overcoming traumatic experiences, to provide comfort, moral support and necessary materials for recuperation of lacks and for harmonious subsequent development.

The project's goal was *to prevent, identify and intervening in the abuse, neglect or exploitation cases committed against the children by their families, legal tutors or other people.*

During its 12 years of operation, the Center has had 600 beneficiaries.

Health investment

Betania Association has received, since the beginning of its activity, requests to support and invest in the health system. Within the health investment, we have 4 types of projects, which are listed below and which we are very proud of, especially because currently both the patients and the medical personnel who carry on their activity in the medical institutions we have invested in enjoy the same substantially improved conditions:

- Renovation of medical dispensaries in the rural area and construction of rural medical dispensaries with Dutch volunteers (Blagesti Commune, Racova Commune, Valea lui Ion Commune, Huruiesti Commune, Izvorul Berheciului Commune, Gaiceana Commune, Colonesti Commune 2013, Motoseni Commune 2014);
- Renovation and equipage of medical departments of Bacau County's hospitals (the 4th floor of Bacau Maternity Hospital, Pediatric Infectious Disease Department, Bacau Pediatric Hospital, Moinesti Municipal Hospital, Aids Pavilion within Bacau County Hospital, C.R.N.M. Racaciuni Gasteni);
- Renovations and equipages of departments within the hospitals in Bacau County
- Donations of sanitary materials and medical devices;
- Emergency financial supports granted o various people for surgical or medical treatment.
- Betania Association has invested, since the beginning of its activities, in projects for sustaining the health system, trying to help as many beneficiaries as possible with the amounts allocated to these projects.

Investments in education

Looking at the project names carried out by the Betania Association in the schools in Bacau County, one could think that the main beneficiaries are scholar institutions. It is partially true because our main beneficiaries are, as usual, the children. Our permanent concern is the well-being of children and young people, regardless of their position in the society or their material or family situation.

The children – in this case – the pupils, are those benefiting after our investments from a better education and then a higher chance of getting a job. This is our final purpose: *well trained young people, which will be able to ensure their living and their families' living.* But not only this; the beneficiaries' list is much longer for all of us. For example: young people with qualification in new

professions, needed in the job market, who develop the economy and the society; schools that have learned to adapt themselves to labour market demands, active schools looking for new sponsors, new possibilities for collaboration, schools teaching and developing partnership, schools launching new initiatives.

Projects for equipping the workshops for practical training

In the last years, Betania Association has invested in 40 laboratories in various schools, colleges and high-schools:

- IT labs;
- Auto – service workshops;
- Carpentry workshops;
- Workshops for practical training as garment worker;
- Qualification courses as chef, confectioner and waiter;
- Multifunctional laboratories for electrical measuring, electronics and telecommunications;
- Multifunctional laboratories for the food industry;
- Physics laboratories;
- Equipping of workshops for practical training as house painter, dyer, mosaic layer, plywood fitter, and bricklayer- stonemason.
- Workshops for training as worker in the field of hygiene and human body aesthetics.

Renovations and repairs of schools in the rural environment:

- The renovation of Grade School I-VIII of Albele Village, Bacau County;
- Sarata School's renovation, Bacau County;
- Construction of the Kindergarten of Sarata Village, Bacau County;
- Construction of the Valea Sosii Grade School I-VIII, Poduri Commune, Bacau County;
- The renovation of Andriesesti School, Bacau County;
- Construction of the Turliuanu Grade School, Beresti – Tazlau Commune.

Betania Association periodically receives donations consisting of various goods, which are delivered to schools in Bacau County: school desks and chairs, school supplies, clothes for the children coming from families with low incomes, computers, amplification equipment, food, etc.

Last but not least....

During its existence, Betania Association has made many friends and partners. Today, their number and the number of those who know how to appreciate the efforts made for the community is impressive. The projects which have been realized and the ones which are about to be accomplished came and come to life through their support. Since the beginning of its activity, Betania Association has had the local administrative authorities as partners. Our cooperation with them became increasingly closer, turning into a real partnership. The year 2005 represents a new stage of the cooperation with the local administration, **the Bacau Local Council, Bacau County Council**, namely the co-financing of the services provided by the Betania Association. At their turn, our friends from The Netherlands were always next to us and supported Betania's projects with important amounts. BETANIA's team also has a very important role. Day by day, the 50 people are next to the people who need them. And the number of those really needing our help is not small. The professionalism and humanity go hand in hand in the development of our projects.

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