

Romania

Professor Toma Mares, President of FICE Romania

2006

1 The Foundation of the National Section

The basis of FICE Romania was set in Trogen in June 1990 when a group of Romanian experts working in an institute for child protection and attending a training course had the opportunity of meeting Steen Mogens Lassen, President of FICE. He convinced the Romanian delegation — Prof. Toma Mares, who was responsible at a national level for orphanages, Ionel Marineci, a sociologist, and Pintili Penciu, a director of orphanages — to found a national section by introducing them to the goals and opportunities of FICE membership. This team of experts, together with Tudor Opris, a writer and journalist, Prof. Ioan Neacsu and others, founded *The National Association for the Protection of Children in Residential Care* in Romania in September 1990.

At the beginning important support for the development of FICE Romania was given by Aad Nevroon of Betania PCK, the Netherlands, Dr Steen Mogens Lassen of FICE Denmark, Gerhard Schemenau of Schottener Reha, Germany, David Lane, FICE UK, the Pestalozzi Children's Village Association, Trogen, Switzerland, FICE Hungary and many others whom we thank a lot.

After two years of activity, FICE Romania received associate membership of FICE in Luxembourg in 1992 and full membership in 1994 at the FICE Congress in the USA.

Since 1997, its official name has been *Federația Internațională a Comunităților Educative — Secțiunea România*.

2 Organisation and finance

Specialists in the field of social protection received very well the initiative to create an organisation in Romania aiming to defend children rights by organising activities and developing projects and programmes. This created favourable conditions for the rapid and stable development of numerous branches in many areas of the country.

FICE Romania has its own office; it is based on voluntary activity and, depending on the projects for which it is receiving support from others, between three and ten paid staff. FICE Romania is self financing through \$3 per year paid by each member which covers 15% of costs; the remainder is covered by sponsorships (40%), charitable donations (30%) and other fund-raising (15%).

3 Membership

FICE Romania has a Council of 59 specialists, which elects the President and a National Committee of thirteen members (three vice-presidents, a secretary and the heads of the commissions). This committee is elected in a general meeting every four years. The National Committee meets annually and discusses the activities and approves the programme of measures and the financial plan for the next year.

It has 180 organisational members (institutions for protecting children, orphanages, special schools for disabled children, university social work and psychology departments and schools where there are children with problems) organised into seventeen branches. More than 5000 members work in these organisation — psychologists, pedagogues, sociologists, social workers, journalists, lawyers, doctors, professors, researchers in institutes for education, teachers and others.

4 Activities

4.1 As a National Section

Eighteen international seminars in Romania attended by specialists from FICE national sections in England, Austria, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, Hungary, Slovakia, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Poland, Israel, SUA, Italy and others. We have organised seminars with FICE national sections from the Netherlands, Finland, Poland and Israel in those countries.

4.2 With other National Sections

Over 400 specialists from Romanian care institutions (directors, social pedagogues, educators, psychologists) have taken part in training supported by Schottener Reha in Germany.

Roughly every two years FICE Romania has organised together with FICE Finland, FICE Netherlands, FICE Hungary and FICE Switzerland exchanges of specialists involved in the protection of children in need. These have involved more than 300 participants. Special mention must also be made of the joint projects that FICE Romania has undertaken with FICE Israel. Over the past eight years we have organised training and seminars and the publication of books, CDs and videos in Israel or Romania. So far more than 150 Romanians have visited Israel.

4.3 In relation to the country as a whole

FICE Romania has published 21 books providing information that can be applied in practice covering: education, prevention and positive work from more developed countries and from our country. We have lately published them in English and Romanian so that the problems we have been addressing can be known by all other national sections too. For eight years we have had a magazine for social work and social pedagogy edited by FICE Romania *Social protection of children* to which Gerd Schemenau of Schottener Reha together with other specialists from his institution make an important contribution. Among the editors

are Dr Carol Kelly, President of FICE USA, Dr Emmanuel Grupper, President of FICE Israel, Dr Søren Hegstrup, President of FICE Denmark alongside other professors and important Romanian specialists. Their contributions are very valuable for the training of specialists from institutions.

Since 1991 FICE Romania together with Gerd Schemenau has undertaken research and surveys in many areas of Romania and on the basis of these legislative proposals were made like setting up family type institutions and children's villages similar to Trogen. Other proposals concerned the training of staff in institutions, better staffing structures, better living conditions for children and their greater integration into society, changing the regulations concerning the operation of institutions, reintegrating children into their families, adoption and an ethical code for staff in institutions. In addition new arrangements for appointing judges to specialise in cases involving minors have been set up. We also contributed to the laws concerning the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse and the reduction of violence in schools. Day centres for children from poor districts have been set up in which children can study, supervised by the teachers, have meals and receive counselling from specialists. This initiative has prevented school drop out and reduced the number of children without a home. We would like the programme to cover all children from all schools.

5 Future

We have strategies, action plans and programmes concerning: opportunities and social attitudes, raising awareness about children rights, preventing school and family rejection, preventing and fighting against drug abuse and addiction, promoting child and adolescent health, preventing and reducing violence in schools and families, the development of relationships with specialists from other national sections in the training of staff from specialist institutions, the development of voluntary work and so on.