



Conference

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“For You” Foundation – Romania

**Couples and relationships**

## Finding

- Couples have been formed both, between people with mild and strong intellectual disabilities and between people with severe intellectual disabilities.
- Relationships have been concluded between both people with intellectual disabilities from families and people with disabilities coming from institutions.
- Some couples were formed between Foundation beneficiaries, who were aware of the activities or were formed prior to receiving our services.

## Finding

- Some relationships have materialized in **marriage** and the formation of a **family**.
- There are rare cases in which couples were made up of **people with intellectual disability** on the one hand and **people without disabilities** on the other.
- Some couples, after their formation, maintain more or less the **connection** with the families of origin, whether or not they benefit from their support.

## Finding

- Some couples / **families** of people with intellectual disabilities have **children**.
- In very few cases, the child resulting in a family of intellectual disabilities is further increased in the **extended family** of one of the parents, after they have separated.
- There are situations where the child has benefited from a **social measure**, has been institutionalized or placed in foster care for another family.

# Finding

- Some **relationships** have resisted and resisted after years, while others have ended.
- Some couples have separated, have not wanted to know each other, or have stayed friends, spend time **together**, meet at events, but have never wanted to live together or have intimate relationships.
- Some **friendship relationships** between Foundation beneficiaries who lasted for many years, unfortunately broke down after their initiative to **marry**, due to the **opposition** of one of the families, although the other family agreed; and currently one of the beneficiaries is **psychological counselor** weekly.

## Finding

- A series of **relationships** have come to an end and disintegrated many times, with recipients returning to the **couple** formula, with or without intimate relationships, most often due to **behavioral disorders** and **addictions** associated to the mild or severe mental disabilities.
- Another cause of **separation**, break-up of a relationship, couple, even after a period of many years, was the lack of a home, the impossibility of **independent living** and **insufficient incomes**.



## Maria and Gheorghe M.

- Both have lived in institutions before they became Foundation beneficiaries.
- They met and became a couple when both were institutionalized in a home-hospital in Oravita.
- They were married in 2006 and were born to a son, currently 10 years old.
- About 7 months, Maria lived with her infant in a "Mother and Child" Center in Resita.
- Since February 2007, both have the support of the Foundation "For You"; originally lived together in a social home. They have not worked, they have accumulated debt, have had misgivings during which the Foundation has given them support, including an educator helping them to raise their children.
- The little child with health problems was hospitalized for several months; after having arrived in the institution and in foster care / family care in Lugoj, where he is still present.
- The relationship of the couple broke down and did not resume. They did not formalize divorce, they live separately, but they have the same family name. Both are beneficiaries of the Foundation "For You", they have lived and live in protected homes (Dinu, Dora, Respiro) and benefit from the Foundation's day center services.
- With the support of the Foundation, the two parents keep in touch with their son, but they visit it separately, several times a year.



## Luminita C. and Vasile B.

- Luminita has fled several times from the family because of the abuses she has been subjected to, has long lived on the streets or in social centers; Vasile lived in institutions.
- They were known as Foundation beneficiaries.
- They have formed a couple since 2002.
- In the period 2001-2010 they lived together for many years, alternating the Dinu protected home with independent living, and from 2010 in a Respiro Center.
- In the years 2011-2012, they intended to marry but conditional this for a living in an independent home based on their own income - which has not yet been achieved.
- They live separately from 2015, since Vasile lives independently. Luminita no longer wants to have relationships or move with Vasile in his rented apartment.
- They sometimes spend time together, on weekends, they meet at events.





## Ildiko and George F.

- Both come from the family.
- George was hired by the Foundation as a chef aid, Ildiko was and is assisted employee.
- Couple relationship concretized by marriage.
- The marriage certificate is null, George being placed under a ban.
- They have a little girl 12 years old.
- Their relationship ended with approx. 5 years ago, George leaving the country.
- The Foundation has provided legal counseling and couple advice and financial support for the girl.



# Support

**Support from the Foundation in terms of relations has resulted in:**

- **Individual and couple counseling of people with intellectual disabilities involved in a relationship;**
- **Psychological support in tense moments between members of the couple;**
- **Counseling the members of the families of origin of persons with intellectual disabilities involved in the affective relationship;**
- **Sex education for couples, contraception and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, offering contraceptives;**
- **Logistic support for moving members of the couple together;**
  - **Counseling and support for the child care in the couple;**
- **Support facilitating meetings between people with intellectual disabilities to spend time together;**
  - **Psychological support in closing relationships;**



# Tutelage

- We are a guardian for 6 beneficiaries of our social services
- Authorities have not identified other tutors
- We have difficulties in dealing with Banks, Post, Pensions, and other institutions
- Bureaucracy is excessive
- The reports that we have to carry out periodically to the authorities are always a challenge
- The right of decision of persons with intellectual disabilities is non-existent



# From the substituted decision to the assisted decision

- Legal protection for people with intellectual disabilities is a problem unresolved by Romanian legislation.
- Article 12 of the UN Convention on Disability: Equal recognition before the law requires Member States to provide persons with disabilities with legal assistance on an equal basis with others in all areas of life.
  - Under the Convention, protective measures must not restrict or abolish the legal capacity of a person under a ban, but support it in making any kind of decision.
  - The Convention requires States Parties to take all appropriate and effective measures to ensure the equal right of persons with disabilities to own or inherit property, to manage their own income and to have equal access to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of Financially credit and to ensure that people with disabilities are not arbitrarily deprived of their possessions.



## From the substituted decision to the assisted decision

- Due to the specificity of disability, people with intellectual disabilities are exposed to abuse and need protection, but they must not hinder the exercise of civil rights.
- In Romania, unfortunately, the only mechanism of protection is to place a court ban, which completely deprives the person of any right.
- At the end of last year, the "For You" Foundation concluded a project "I'm an adult: live independently!" (A project co-financed by a grant from Switzerland through the Swiss Contribution to the enlarged European Union), in which launched a campaign to modify the Civil Code, so that people with intellectual disabilities in Romania will have been banned from enjoying their civil rights by introducing the assisted decision mechanism.
- Our actions, common with other organizations, must continue to have a goal for the benefit of people with intellectual disabilities.

# Thank you for your attention !



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