

## **Adevărul de seară**

### **Sibiu: drug and alcohol addicts can count on ROSAAC**

Author: Sebastian David, June 8<sup>th</sup> 2009

The Romanian drug abuse and addiction Coalition - ROSAAC - was founded by a Dutch man.

Nine non-governmental organizations that are fighting different types of addictions, from alcohol, drugs, to emotional problems and behavior disorders, joined forces in order to get better results and to be able to access finances, at a conference at Șura Mică.



Mr. Sjaak Monster from Holland (right) is the heart of this Romanian coalition.

The nine organizations of different confessions, established in Bucharest, Câmpina, Cluj-Napoca, Târgu Mureș and Iași began working together in 2002. At that time, the foundation of ROSAAC was laid, at the initiative of Mr. Sjaak Monster, a trainer of international renown for the assistance and rehabilitation of those with various addictions. Over that past seven years, the relationship among the nine organizations has developed significantly. Finally, at Șura Mică the member organizations of ROSAAC decided to seek legal recognition in order to be more efficient in their battle for Romanians with addictions.

### **The therapeutic chain is complete**

Through the collaboration of the member organizations of ROSAAC, the therapeutic chain necessary for treating addictions is complete, according to Tabita Cernica, vice-president of the organization and representative of the Preventis Association, a Cluj-based entity dealing mostly with drug addictions. „Practically we are able to offer everything from prevention to ambulatory counseling treatment in day centers and post-treatment therapy. Each of us, being so small, couldn't handle the complete therapeutical chain. This way we collaborate and send one another patients.” The nine organizations almost can't handle the growing number of addictions to drugs and alcohol. Last year all

the ROSAAC centers in Romania (totaling 66 employees and 100 volunteers) offered ambulatory counseling to 126 people, and day-center services to 375 addicts of different kinds; meanwhile 16.000 children benefited from the campaigns for prevention of addictions.

### **Two thirds become abstinent**

At Șura Mică, under the administration of the Blue Cross Association, for 15 years, the Nazareth Institution has been offering post-treatment therapy for men addicted to alcohol, drugs, medicine or gambling. Because at Șura Mică only men are treated, a women's treatment center, Isle of Hope, was founded at Șelimbăr. The first center has a capacity of 20, while the second can serve 15.

According to the director of the Nazareth Institution in Șura Mică, Dr. Lux Holger, the limited capacity of the ROSAAC centers means that what we are able to do is nothing more than a drop in the bucket, for in Romania there are approximately one million persons addicted to alcohol. Even so, the day-centers, treatment centers, and counseling centers are very busy; and of those who seek our help, after having received hospital treatment, two thirds become free of their addiction. „Our results are comparable with those of much better-equipped clinics abroad. In general, one third of those treated move from addiction to abstinence after one round of treatment. Another third improve with one round of treatment, but become abstinent only after a second round of treatment. The remaining third do not succeed at breaking their addiction and can only be protected for the short term; when they leave our centers they are unable to remain abstinent. It is significant that the life expectancy of an alcoholic is 20 years less than that of the rest of the population,” concludes Dr. Holger. One evidence of the need for more centers such as those in Selimbar and Șura Mică is the fact that there is a waiting list for the women's center; and it is believed that the ratio of women to men among alcoholics is 1:2.

*„It is difficult to find funding; each organization works on its own, and we are funded by donations and the contributions of the patients.”* **Tabita Cernica, vice-president ROSAAC.**

*„We have patients from every level of society, from doctors, priests, and engineers to the uneducated. The state offers detoxification programs, after which the patient is discharged. We offer counseling and post-treatment therapy.”* **Lux Holger, Director of the Nazareth Center, Sura Mica**