

European Down Syndrome Association news

ROMANIA ALDO-CET (Asociatia Langdon Down Oltenia Central Educational Teodora)



Founded: in 2000, as a non-profit association/parents group

President: Maria Vislan

Members: 57

Finances: We get member fees, financial support from the state and donations.

Main goals

- to promote a human rights approach and an environmental approach to disability issues, based on a new social model of disability, not on former medical or charitable approaches.
- to promote and support the development of disabled people and their parents by designing and operating appropriate services that will enable them to fulfil their full potential in a community that respects and appreciates them.

ALDO-CET:

- provides centre-based learning support for disabled persons aged from four to eighteen;
- advocates for the placement of persons with Down syndrome in appropriate educational services;
- supports the value of social inclusion and where possible, inclusion into mainstream kindergartens, schools and jobs;
- promotes rehabilitation of persons with Down syndrome through sport and dance and leisure time;
- translates and distributes literature to increase the awareness about Down syndrome and its acceptance in Romania, and provides vital information to parents;
- runs programmes to offer people opportunities for group inter-relations and individual attention in problem areas.

Services

We offer counselling, physiotherapy, art-therapy, psychological support, social support, school support, library.

We organise seminars and courses as well as family activities.

Publications

Our journal "Traind cu sindromul Down" is published twice a year. We have some flyers with general information and guidelines for parents.

We have translated "Copiii cu sindrom Down Dezvoltare motorie si interventie" into Romanian, a book that is relevant to physiotherapists and also to parents.

Awareness campaign

At 21.03 2006 we declared this day also to be our national Awareness day. The first World DS Day was celebrated with different activities in schools, a public conference and performances.

Projects and campaigns

Our main projects in the next years:

- Teodora Centre – day care centre and the sheltered workshop
- Early Intervention Programme: "New Approach to Down Syndrome" (especially for developing motor skills)
- Rehabilitation by dance and sport with the project: "Different ways to see the world".
- Setting up a Romanian network of all the organisations specialising in Down syndrome.
- Collecting statistical data about the general situation of people with Down syndrome.

General information

There are many problems in Romania e.g., the transition from school to the work situation, access to employment and independent living.

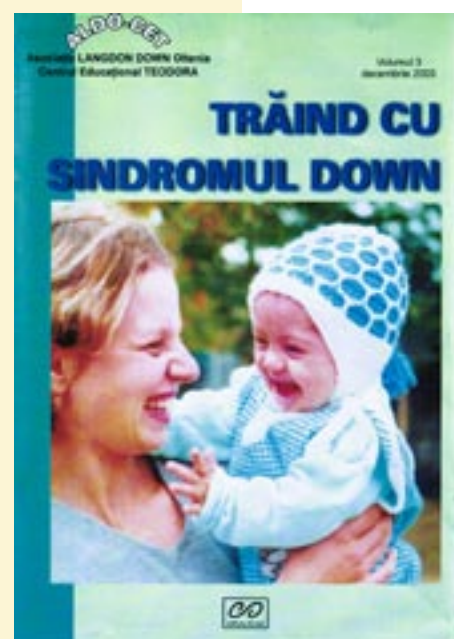
There is not enough information about Down syndrome; we need more professionals in rehabilitation, education, inclusion and vocational services.

Things that should be urgently changed:

- putting the law into practice properly



Maria Vislan,
 president of ALDO-
 CET and mother of
 Irina, a teenage girl
 with Down syndrome



- respecting human rights
- improving education and providing opportunities for inclusion.

Numbers

We do not know the number of babies born with Down syndrome.

Neither do we know the number of persons with Down syndrome living in Romania. We have identified 1630 persons in 5 counties (Romania has 41 counties).

Situation of babies and toddlers

Services like medical care, physiotherapy or early intervention are only developed in urban areas. Some of them need to improve their quality standards.

Situation of school-age children

- Less than 5% of children up to 6 years old are in mainstream kindergarten
- About 3% of children are in mainstream schools
- All other children go to special schools or Waldorf schools.

Situation of adults

Adults work in some sheltered workshops. There are no other working options at all.

Adults live with their families or in almshouses (homes for the poor).

Independent living for people with Down syndrome does not exist in Romania.

We only know of about 10 persons over 50 years. Others live isolated with families or in homes. Their situation is completely hopeless.