

## **REPORT OF THE PROJECT TEENAGE MOTHERS - STAGE I , March 2024**

As is known, the teenage mothers project was started in 2017 by all the Soroptimist clubs in Romania in partnership with the Soroptimist International Union Denmark, the union that finances this project.

Through this project, our club help minor girls who have become or are about to become mothers, as well as their babies. We do this primarily by providing aid in specific products for babies but also for mothers. The granting of financial aid in products is conditional on the continuation of school by these teenage mothers. During the development of the project, some of the mothers continue to be supported by the project and others are newly entered into the project. The money is received by our club from the Soroptimist International Union Denmark.

We also help the respective students by providing psychological counseling in the schools where they study and continue their studies. Implicitly, we check the situation in the families where they are established, meaning their own family or the so-called "new families" where these girls live together with their cohabitants and/or their partners' families. We do this through the school counselors we collaborate with. Another important component of the psychological counseling of these girls is that of convincing the girls not to abandon their children. We are convinced that the natural mother is the best educator of her child, and the one who gives her true, unconditional love. It is known that a successful adult was a beloved child!

We believe that our project attracted the attention of the school authorities in a positive sense, which had the effect of intensifying sexual education in schools to prevent pregnancy. Although there is no legislative framework in our country for the teaching of specific sex education lessons, we were informed that the psychological counselors and the leaders of the students' classes approached this issue constrained by the realities they face in school. In a way, public opinion blames the schools where there are pregnant students, considering the school as the factor responsible for this situation, although it is known that the problem is much more complex and the family has a fundamental role in the education of children. It is a vicious circle because in fact, in most families in our country, the subject of sexuality is taboo!

### **The new target group of the project in this new stage of the project**

In this new stage, our club distributed aid to 9 teenage mothers.

- 1 student, Denisa from Osica, remained in the project since the beginning of its implementation;
- 8 student learn in the School P.S.Aurelian -Slatina who enter the project for the first time in this new stage.

The situation of these 9 teenage mothers included in this group is presented in the attached table. The Table contains centralized situation regarding the teenage mothers and their children and some personal contact data of the mothers. We received these situations from

ISJ Olt and DGASPC Olt. These students are from rural areas and they are studying at technological high schools because in such schools they are studying certain specializations. After finishing school, they can get a job in their field of training and thus support their child.

### **The club's collaboration with the county authorities in this project**

In order to identify all the cases that were the subject of our project, our club collaborated very well with the Olt County School Inspectorate - ISJ Olt and also with the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Olt - DGASPC Olt. We found in these institutions very good collaborators who help us a lot to implement the project.

We must specify the fact that the target group of the project consisting of 9 teenage mothers has a peculiarity: eight of the girls come from the same school. The educational institutions with which we collaborate suggested us to invest the money in this extremely numerous group of girls because of the high density of cases in relation to other schools. It is a phenomenon that has attracted the attention of the authorities regarding its causes. We cannot know the cause, but according to the authorities, the phenomenon of drugs has gained momentum in the schools of our country.

As we informed you in the former stages of the project, the members of our club were supported by the school counselors. The coordinator of the project, Gratiela, kept in constant contact with the directors of the classes where the teenage mothers study and of course also with the school psychologists and counsellors of the schools. Thus, through communication with the schools, the most difficult cases were identified. It was requested by the club team, including attendance at classes and involvement in the learning process.

The 700 RON received by each mother from the government, together with your substantial aid, helps these girls to continue their studies and take care of the babies. For each of the 9 girls, the project implementation team received sheets describing the family and school situation of these students. Tables with the products needed were also received for the nine girls. For elaboration of these table , the mothers were assisted by the school counsellors.

We must specify that this year as well, our club collaborates with these county institutions also in another educational projects.

### **The distribution of aid to 9 teenage mothers**

Based on the shopping lists specific to each teenage mother, our club purchased clothes, shoes, milk powder, pampers, strollers, cots, tricycles, bottles and many other products necessary for raising babies, which we distributed to these 9 teenage mothers for their babies. In this new action to distribute the financial aid received from the SI Denmark Union, our club invited some volunteer mothers who helped us in buying and distributing the aid . These "normal" mothers represent an important vector to popularize our project among young mothers.

We have realised the Centralizer with all expenses for material which were made in this first stage of the project. Gratiela of course prepared this very comprehensive and accurate table of all the money used. This document was prepared based on all original documents. One archived document that includes all the invoices and tax receipts with which the club bought the necessary materials for teenage mothers and their children.

In the Centralizer, we have included the value of the products, including the added VAT, as these amounts are highlighted in the invoices or tax receipts on the basis of which the respective products were paid for. This situation was verified by Maria Neatu - the treasurer of our club, who is an accounting expert.

### **Total amounts spent in this first stage of the project implementation.**

In this first stage of the project we take from the bank 8000 RON and we have spent 7869,62 RON as you can be seen from the Centralizer with material expenses. The amount of 130,38 RON will be reported for the next stage of the project for which of course we have the second part of the money received from your union.

We thought of the project in two stages of granting aid to teenage mothers so that we can observe if they meet the conditions imposed by the project. Our club has planned the next stage of the project in October of the next school year 2024-2025.

### **Media coverage of the event granting aid to the 9 teenage mothers**

Our action was popularized, the local television Olt-TV was very open to our actions and broadcast the actions of the project.

This is the link for the interview given by Gratiela on television Olt-TV. Also the description of the project was realised.

<https://www.olttv.ro/olt-tv-new/social/2024/03/05/raza-de-speranta-pentru-mamele-minore>

We must specify that our project was highly appreciated on social media. Whatsup and Facebook groups sent congratulations to this very important project. The idea that the studies should not be abandoned by these girls related to the condition of not abandoning the babies impressed all the people who know our project. All the more so as it is considered that our country is going through a difficult period, including at the level of school education. I will give you a recent example. In the stage preceding the gymnasium entrance exam carried out at the national level, only 30% of the students achieved grades above 5. In the Romanian education system, the grading system is from 1 to 10. Students take the gymnasium entrance exam at the age of 13 -14 years. Romanian society appreciates this situation as disastrous. The teachers defend themselves by blaming the parents, the parents accuse the school. In my opinion, the parents are right. How did the teachers quantify the performance of the students so that they are actually students in the 8th grade, given that over 70 % of them got very bad

grades at this exam? All this time, the Romanian state pays teachers' salaries for their non-performance. Of course, there are exceptions, there are also special teachers, but very few, as the statistics show!

Pictures from these actions of buying and granting aid to the nine teenage mothers.

Of course, we will write an article about these actions in the project in The link magazine.

Also we will update the PFRs corresponding to the Teenage Mothers project.

We send to you in attachment:

1. Report of the Teenage Mothers project - the first part of this new extension of the project;
  2. The centralized situation regarding purchases and prices of all products purchased in the project:
  3. Table with the situations of 9 teenage mothers that we received from ISJ Olt and DGASPC Olt;
  4. An archived document that includes copies of all invoices and tax receipts with which the club bought the necessary materials for teenage mothers and their children.
  5. The letter from Andreea – nr.1 in the table of mothers
  6. The letter of Andreea in English
- Pictures from these actions of buying and granting aid to the nine teenage mothers.

On behalf of all the members of our club, we thank you for the financial help you give to our club for the continuation of this important project.

In friendship,

Gratiela Popa- Vicepresident of the club and coordinator of the project Teenage Mothers.

Victoria Ciucu –Programme Director of the Club SI Slatina.

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