



Monitoring report on respect for the rights of persons with intellectual and/or
psychosocial disabilities in institutions

at

Valea Nirajului House Complex, Mures County Family-type home Băăușeri

proiect derulat de:



în parteneriat cu:



Monitoring report
Valea Nirajului House Complex, Mures County
Family-type home Bălăușeri

Date March 24, 2024, from 13:20 to 14:35
Name Family type house Bălăușeri
Address Principală Str., no. 259, Bălăușeri commune, Mureș county
Team [REDACTED] (Program Manager "Advocacy for Dignity"), [REDACTED] – legal expert, psychologist, [REDACTED] – doctor specialized in pediatric psychiatry, [REDACTED] – psychologist specialized in clinical psychology.

Context The monitoring visits took place within the "Advocacy for dignity" program run by the Center for Legal Resources, access being granted based on the Cooperation Protocol concluded with the Monitoring Council (Law no. 8/2016) and the Cooperation Protocol concluded with the Public Ministry.

Monitoring visit

The CLR team arrived at the family-type home (hereinafter F.T.H.) Bălăușeri when the children served lunch in the living room from the ground floor of the building. We were greeted by the education instructor, Mrs. [REDACTED] who was alone on her shift. During the monitoring visit, Mrs. [REDACTED] informed the manager of the Niraj Valley House Complex, Mrs. [REDACTED] of the presence of the CLR team in the family-type home. During the visit we had discussions with Mrs. [REDACTED] and all the children present in the house.

Building structure – living spaces

The Bălăușeri family-type home is a one-story house located on the main street of the commune. On the ground floor there is the kitchen, a pantry, bedroom (used by staff on night shifts) and storage space for some materials (e.g. detergents), living room (where meals are also served). Upstairs are the children's bedrooms, the study room (where some of the children's files are also found in a locked closet). The house has 3 bedrooms for children, one is with 4 beds, (currently the boys' bedroom), and the other two bedrooms are with two beds each (currently allocated to girls). The house has annexes and a courtyard. Even if it has a shabby appearance (hollowed wooden stairs, old room doors and some of the furniture) the house is clean and the atmosphere in the house is harmonious and warm (both relationships between children and relationships between children and staff).

Bălăușeri F.T.H. residents – schooling, daily program

At the time of the monitoring visit, 8 children lived in Bălăușeri F.T.H., 6 of whom were present. One of the children attends the courses of the Special High School for the Visually Impaired in Cluj-Napoca and comes to Bălăușeri only during holiday periods.

Residents who were in Bălăușeri F.T.H.:

1. B.J. – C.T.F. entry year 2011
2. K.D. - C.T.F. entry year 2020
3. K.I. - C.T.F. entry year 2020
4. H.E. -C.T.F. entry year 2017
5. B.L.B. - C.T.F. entry year 2012
6. T.A.O - C.T.F. entry year 2012

Children's age ranges from 10 years to 18 years. One of them is blind (the boy who was recently admitted to the F.T.H.) and two children have special educational needs (S.E.N.): an 18-year-old boy and a 10-year-old girl. They have a recommendation for additional support from teachers in certain subjects, they are not enrolled and do not have the indication to attend special school, but

attend mass school. Currently, the boy attends a hairdressing course in Sângiorgiu de Mureş. With support from the staff in the house he gradually began to recognize money and its value, he goes to school alone, he is sociable and communicative. Bălăușeri F.T.H. employees prepare him for an independent life within the community. He still needs help, but staff are optimistic that he will be able to find a job in the near future.

One of the house rules implies that, every Friday, the children, together with staff working on that shift, clean the whole house. Around religious holidays, deep cleaning is done. Each child is involved in household activities. They prepare meals together (they set the table, they are involved in preparing the menu), they wash and spread laundry, they clean the yard and the garden of the house. According to Mrs. Enagy Elisabeth, when children leave, "they must stand on their own feet, they must know how to take care of themselves".

A practice of the Bălăușeri family-type home is that every Sunday all children and employees (even if they are not on shift) go to church together.

R.R. – 20 years old, left the social assistance system during the year, more precisely on 26.01.2024. He is currently employed, lives in rent. He managed to receive financial aid to pay the monthly rent for a period of time. He was also financially supported in the process of obtaining the driving license. He rented a house where he will live with his brother, after he also leaves Bălăușeri F.T.H. He is currently employed by a company in Targu Mures, where he installs pavements. At the time of the monitoring visit, R.R. had also come to visit his brother and former colleagues.

B.L.B. – she has been in Bălăușeri F.T.H. since the age of 7. She is currently 11 years old. The mother is in prison for aggravated murder (she killed her husband, whom she buried in the forest). The little girl, along with her maternal grandmother, witnessed this traumatic event. From the date of entering the social assistance system in Mures County until the date of the monitoring visit, i.e. over three years, she participated in approximately 15 psychological counseling sessions. They take place in Targu Mures, not in Bălăușeri, where she is transported by D.G.A.S.P.C. (General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Protection) car. B.L.B. is also found in the records of the Integrated Ambulatory of Mures County Clinical Hospital within the pediatric psychiatry service.

From the documents made available at the time of the monitoring visit, it is not clear that B.L.B. had undergone continuous psychological therapy with psychotherapists specialized in trauma, even though she was diagnosed with chronic PTSD, only psychological counseling sessions. Most likely, 5-6 sessions per year. We can assume that the meetings with the D.G.A.S.C. psychologist were aimed at psychological evaluation, not counseling or psychotherapy. F.T.H. staff was not aware of any indications and recommendations to follow when interacting with and taking care of B.L.B.

The most important support she receives is from the children in the house with whom she has a good relationship and from her staff. She is currently going through episodes of hypermnesia of evocation in which she tells in detail the events she witnessed.

B.L.B. kept in touch with her mother, with whom she communicated by phone and letters, but did not visit her in the penitentiary. She is visited by her grandmother (but she rarely arrives in Bălăușeri, due to her financial situation - she does not have a stable job, lives in Targu Mures and works as a day laborer). According to the statements, B.L.B., at her request, was transported and accompanied to visit her grandmother in Targu Mures. According to the other girls, B. has discussed her problems with the psychologist/school counselor before and has moments when she tells them about the event. She is generally quiet, but fits well into the collective of the house where she seemed at ease. She interacted very well with the CLR team, she offered us some of her snacks.

A.T. – another girl from the F.T.H., is 15 years old and has been in the system for 2 years. She comes from a disadvantaged family in Targu Mures (the family neglected her). Very often she had to beg in order to feed herself. The girl says that things were not right in her family, they were alcoholics (mother and brother), and some were also drug users. The girl drew up her application form for admission to the social assistance system on her own and received the protection measure

in Bălăușeri F.T.H., because she wanted to escape poverty. She is pleased with the fact that she is second in class at school and that she got a good grade at the national final exam (being 8th grade) in her mother tongue – Hungarian. She is very determined to learn extra – they have a tablet in the house, she wanted to access online tutoring, in math. She has plans to get to the Reformed High School in Targu Mures and from there, depending on how well she does, to join the police or the army.

A.H. – 17 years old, of Romanian origin, says that she has undergone several forms of institutionalization in Germany, Austria and Hungary, being in Romania for 7 years, where she is best. She still keeps in touch with her mother and sister, but they are out of the country all the time. She is very happy with where she is, with the friends she has made in the house. She is, along with the other F.T.H. girl, also in the 8th grade, with slightly lower grades in the assessment, but she has plans to get to a boarding school in Targu Mures and become a manicurist.

Both girls were temporarily accommodated in Siru for 4 months for relocation.

The girls declare that they have access to medical check-up, if necessary. They were also taken to the dentist. They can collect their monthly allowance – from which they usually buy clothes, sweets, maybe other types of hygiene items (they mention that they receive toothbrushes, toothpastes, shampoos, soaps). About the employees (3 ladies and a gentleman) they say that they are good to them, they cook together, they work in the garden, they help them with homework and take care of them. They get along very well in the house, both girls among themselves and with boys, they are like brothers, they do not fight, they do not smoke, they do not consume alcohol. This house is their new family, where they have a good time, they play together, they take care of the cats in the yard, and the boys can go out when they want to play football. At school it is fine, there are not many children in class, they do not feel in any way that they are treated differently.

J., 18 years old and D., 17 years old, ended up in the F.T.H from the family, but they find it difficult to explain under what circumstances due to the fact that they express themselves with great difficulty in Romanian language. They show us the spaces of the first floor of the house, but also the annexes and the yard. They say that, although they would love to return to their family, they are satisfied with life in the house. They are really surprised when asked about possible aggression from staff, they say this has never happened. J. attends barbershop classes, but says he doesn't like it, and the staff at the house has identified an alternative: to try bakery in a nearby village. The two claim they have the freedom to go out in the village and they showed me the football field where they usually go to play.

Food

Generally, the food is prepared with the help of children, chores in the house are distributed among them, according to a displayed schedule, which, beneficiaries say, is respected. At the time of the monitoring visit, lunch consisted of: first course – garlic soup with sour cream, and second course – mashed potatoes with chicken schnitzel and garlic sauce. Food is delivered to them periodically, and they decide what to cook.

Personal

Bălăușeri F.T.H. has four employees in its staff. Mrs. [REDACTED] who holds the position of education instructor, her sister and two other employees (husband and wife). The manager of Valea Nirajului House Complex is Mrs. [REDACTED].

Mrs. [REDACTED] has been working in the social assistance system in Mures County for 30 years. She was a nurse at an institute for children with disabilities in Targu Mures (on Trebely Street), then she was transferred to an institute for children with disabilities in Ceuașu de Câmpie. Due to personal problems, she left the social assistance system for two years. She returned to the system, this time as an education instructor, after attending specific training courses.

Work shifts are 12 hours of work with 24 hours off.

There are notebooks where all the organized activities that children carry out outside the center are noted, from medical examinations to legal counselling, visits to the military center, activities within the community.

Conclusions:

- The atmosphere in the house was harmonious and pleasant;
- We appreciate the way children are involved in household activities, which is the most natural way to prepare for an independent life;
- Inadequate approach to B.L.B.'s situation by D.G.A.S.P.C. representatives by failing to ensure coherent and continuous psychotherapy (provided either by D.G.A.S.P.C. employees or by contracting specialists).
- Sustained and active involvement of case managers, for example by identifying ways to access tutoring for the two 8th grade girls (there are courses held by volunteers, available on the internet, for example: MOV – Tutoring offered by volunteers – Asociația Lume Bună -The Good World Association), to increase the chances of success at the national final exam.
- Organization of additional Romanian language courses for beneficiaries. Given the fact that it is very difficult to express themselves in Romanian language, the possibilities for integration into the community are limited geographically.



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