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Conference Abstract

Community Resource Centres: Strategic instruments for improving the situation of vulnerable groups in rural areas

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Abstract

Introduction: The lack and insufficient development of the medical-social services addressing vulnerable groups in Romania has determined the focus of Sastipen since 2008. Sastipen seeks to develop different methods and techniques for improving the health status of the country's vulnerable groups, particularly the Roma population.

Aims: The "Community Resource Centres" concept is embodied by modular housing systems within the communities. On the one hand, the centres represent a solution to the lack of medico-social interventions from local administrations by increasing the disadvantaged population's access to medico-social services. On the other hand, the centres aim to develop a complex intervention mechanism at community level, leading to long-term sustainability through an integrated approach.

Results: Between 2008 and 2013, "Sastipen – Roma Centre for Health Policies" [1], in partnership with other national and local NGOs and national, district and local authorities offered integrated services (e.g. medical and social counselling, educational counselling, labour market advice) to approximately 14,000 beneficiaries from 17 vulnerable communities in Bucharest and in the North-East, centre and South-East regions. The services offered by Sastipen Centres contribute not only to improving healthcare status but also to increasing active participation from members of vulnerable groups. Special attention was given to Roma persons living in rural areas, given their high risk of social exclusion and low access to medico-social services.

Conclusions: Based on our experiences, the integrated services that Sastipen provides through the Centres appear to complement the ones provided by the local administration. Sastipen successfully offers specialised support in health, social assistance, education and job-seeking for members of vulnerable groups through the development and implementation of innovative instruments.

Keywords

Sastipen, Roma, vulnerable groups, community integrated health services, Community Resource Centres, Romania

References

Community Integrated Care and Social Services, Romania, February 21st, 2014.

1. Sastipen. [2012]. Available at: www.sastipen.ro

Presentations slides available from: <http://www.cred.ro/v3/index.php/conferences/131-conference-community-integrated-health-and-social-services.html>