



IL CHICCO

Strategic partnerships: the story of Il Chicco in Romania

The mission of Il Chicco Association (Romania) is to offer hospitality, care, psycho-physical rehabilitation, and education and training for the social and professional integration of socially disadvantaged people.

Il Chicco started with its **first sheltered home in Romania in 1993**, when it managed to be entrusted with looking after children and young people who were "confined" in the "Popesti" Institute of Child Neuropsychiatry, about 60 km from Iași, in the Moldavian region of Romania.

From that day until today, more sheltered homes, day centres, workshops, educational farms and a series of activities have been set up, which allowed every person who meets the Chicco to develop the best way. This is also a testimony that **deinstitutionalization is the only way to give a person the dignity of a full life.**

In 25 years the Sheltered Homes have welcomed 68 children and abandoned young people: 50 of them taken from the terrible conditions of the Romanian state institutions, 14 given in adoption by the Court and 4 from psychiatric institutions.

As a result of the love, caring and life spent in common every day, as many as **32 young people are now on social reintegration programmes, and 10 of the children have been adopted or entrusted to Romanian families.**

Today the Chicco offers a wide range of individual and group socio-psycho-pedagogical rehabilitation plans, thanks to the strengthening of the multidisciplinary team, a specific training and the functional improvement of the spaces used.

The services for fragile families and the participation of the community in public events have encouraged the social inclusion of these young people and helped them to overcome the stigma with respect to people with a disability, which is still widespread in Romania.

IL CHICCO & THE FAI:

The FAI has been supporting Il Chicco since **2003**. It is a relationship based on the needs that are constantly reported to the foundation. The contributions and donations are provided in order to sustain all the activities.

Since **2015**, the FAI has encouraged the collaboration between Il Chicco and the Sementera, an Italian association of therapists and doctors, who have trained Il Chicco staff on how to use the amniotic experience in the association's rehabilitation programmes.

In 2017 the FAI decided to go further and to divide its intervention in two parts:

- A contribution to the investments made (for example, for setting up the amniotic therapy centre and renovating the accommodation) and for covering the operating costs of the new system
- A fund for promotion and support services, coordinated and partly carried out by the FAI offices; the aim is to develop Il Chicco's planning and fundraising skills but also to be able to open the amniotic therapy centre.

This is how a strategic partnership was set up, consisting of **meetings, study visits and many hours of training to carry out planning, fundraising, relations with public administrations and institutions, in order to improve the management of the association.**

Through this fund, Il Chicco has a wide margin of action, which allows it to travel and promote itself, participate in the most important occasions for giving its testimony, carry out training and let its children's voices be heard.