

Care Management Plan

Romania



OVERVIEW

Company Mission

Our company mission is to make it the norm for young men and women from developed countries to live and work as volunteers in a developing country; they should work on projects which have a clearly favourable impact on host-communities. In this way, we will continue to create a multi-national community with a passion to serve and to inspire.

Care Programme Mission

Our Care programme mission is to provide sustainable care and educational support to disadvantaged and orphan children and vulnerable groups to enhance their physical, social, emotional and cognitive development.

Background Information

Although Romania is no longer in the headlines as a country with overcrowded and poorly maintained orphanages, there is still a long way to go to improve the standard of care to children who have been abandoned or put into care facilities. Since Romania joined the European Union in 2008, new reforms, regulations and laws were put in place to protect children's rights. Enforcing and monitoring these new rules has proven difficult however and the amount of funding and attention given to care homes is still lacking in a big way.

Romania has 170,000 abandoned children; 18,000 are abandoned every year and only 40% of them come from Romanian families, the rest come from Roma parentage (gypsy families). As a consequence, there are not many people willing to work in state run orphanages because of the poor pay, understaffing, commuting costs and the lack of training and support from the state. A report made by Hope and Homes for Children Romania showed that in 2011 Brasov had a 454 children living in orphanages, the second highest abandonment rate of any city in Romania. Children living in orphanages have poorly developed social skills, shorter attention spans, lack confidence and are often ill due to poor sanitation and infrequent hospital visits.

A report issued by Hands to Hearts International showed the causes for abandonment in Romania. Firstly, poverty and ethnicity play a key role. Parents of Roma descent are more likely to abandon their children due to poverty, lack of education and information regarding contraception. Secondly, children with disabilities are at a special risk of being placed in an orphanage. Lastly, children from violent and abusive households are usually placed in institutions. Orphanage care is most damaging for children under the age of five, and especially for children under the age of three, since it is during these critical years that children develop the physical, cognitive, psychological, and social foundation for the rest of their lives.

Partners

Our most important partner is the Child Protection Agency (CPA) in Brasov. The CPA is a government organisation that is responsible for running all foster homes, orphanages, centres for children with disabilities, correction centres for teenage delinquents and day care centres for abused children and their mothers. Their mission is to make sure children's rights are respected and each child gets the support they need.

We also partner with the following private organisations:

- Casa Mea: a foster home
- Atelier Sacelean: a centre for disadvantaged children and gypsy children
- Prejmer Day Care Centre: a centre for disadvantaged children and gypsy children
- Raphael Foundation: a centre for children with disabilities
- Poplars Foundation: a centre for adults with disabilities

GOALS

In order to work towards our Care programme mission, we have set the following goals to achieve in the placements where we send volunteers:

(1.) Increase literacy

In Romania, all children placed in the state's care are enrolled in school. What we try to avoid is the early drop out of school, the repetition of a school year/grade and low marks. Our volunteers help children make progress in school by overseeing educational activities.

(2.) Improve English

Having an understanding of the English language will greatly enhance a child's chances at finding a job once they are out of the care system at age 18. Learning English at a young age can greatly increase a child's language ability and interest. English language education will continue throughout the child's schooling, so the children will have a valuable head start.

(3.) Promote early childhood development

Early childhood is the period from birth to eight years of age. It is critical to a child's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development.¹ Early education and preschool programmes enhance children's language and maths test scores, behavioural skills and long-term educational attainments.²

Systematic measurement of early childhood development has multiple benefits. We aim to assess each child in fields of physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. Slow development can hinder a child's chance in primary school and lead to problems in later years. We will be able to highlight these needs and provide essential resources to support orphaned children.

(4.) Improve the level of stimulation to each child

Government run orphanages in Brasov are extremely underfunded, understaffed and the staff is often under qualified and poorly paid. All these factors take their toll on the level of care given to the children as they do not get the individual attention they need. Our volunteers give each child extra

¹ [http://www.unicef.org/lac/Inequities_in_Early_Childhood_Development_LoRes_PDF_EN_02082012\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/lac/Inequities_in_Early_Childhood_Development_LoRes_PDF_EN_02082012(1).pdf)

² http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099079922573/ECD_LAC.pdf

stimulation through activities that encourage mental, physical and social exercises. Early exposure to stimulating games and activities strengthens a child's memory, learning ability, physical health, social skills and emotional coping skills.

(5.) Improve the quality of life for those living with disabilities

In Romania, access to specialised disability care is sparse. Those with disabilities are often marginalised and have severely restricted opportunities for securing paid employment and having a high quality of life. Once disabled children turn 18, they are moved to a centre for people with disabilities and neglected. Our volunteers can help improve the lives and the development of the abandoned children by identifying and working on the areas of care that they are lacking.

RESOURCES

- a. 30 - 50 (average) Care volunteers per year
- b. One x Projects Abroad Care Supervisor
- c. Myprojectsabroad resources (www.projects-abroad.co.uk/resources)
- d. Weekly workshops/ discussion sessions conducted by staff
- e. Volunteer-led workshops
- f. Books, stationery, games, PCs and Internet access in Projects Abroad office
- g. Financial capacity for community work, volunteer support, etc.

LOCATION OF PLACEMENTS



MONITORING & EVALUATION

- a. Regular feedback from partners including weekly volunteer/staff/placement meetings
- b. Onsite visits by Projects Abroad Care Coordinator
- c. Feedback from Projects Abroad Care Coordinator
- d. Weekly feedback session with all Care volunteers
- e. Volunteer workshops/ discussion sessions – attendance, feedback and significant outcomes to be tracked each week by staff
- f. Volunteer Debriefing forms and End of Placement Feedback forms
- g. Annual report by Care Coordinator
- h. Overall developmental status of children recorded after six months. Analysed by placement, area (motor, social, cognitive) and age. Results are compared with international standards. Based on this data, more resources are focused on problem areas
- i. Children's feedback in line with United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – Article 12 regarding a child's right to participation
- j. Biannual Placement Evaluation Feedback
- k. Test results

Projects Abroad			
Care Programme - Romania			
	INDICATORS	MONITORING (MEANS OF VERIFICATION)	ASSUMPTIONS
Company Mission: (the change we want to see in greater society)			
Our company mission is to make it the norm for young men and women from developed countries to live and work as volunteers in a developing country; they should work on projects which have a clearly favourable impact on host-communities. In this way, we will continue to create a multi-national community with a passion to serve and to inspire			
Care Programme Mission: (the change we want to see for the target group)			
Our Care programme mission is to provide sustainable educational support, care and protection to disadvantaged children and vulnerable groups to enhance their physical, social, emotional and cognitive development	2014 is the implementation and mind-set changing year. Head Office-led status reviews will take place every 3 months. We expect to have the foundations of the new Care programme in place by the end of 2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Onsite visits 2. Placement staff feedback 3. Projects Abroad staff feedback 4. Volunteer feedback (DQs & EOPF) 5. Children feedback 6. Test results 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of volunteers does not drop considerably 2. Number of volunteers with a good grasp of English does not drop considerably 3. Political and civil stability in the countries we work 4. No natural disasters that could affect our work
Goal 1: (what we want to achieve)			
INCREASE LITERACY			
	Actions: (the tasks that need to take place to achieve the goal)		
1.1	Introduce a record keeping system for each placement and maintain it for each child on a monthly basis		
1.2	Design and initiate 4 mini-campaigns per year		
1.3	Produce 2 new learning aids each month and keep them at the Projects Abroad office to be used as a resource for all volunteers		
1.4	Set small goals and targets for each child		

1.5	Record on a weekly basis activities and resources that are successful with the child			
1.6	Run one-on-one lessons for those identified as slower learners			
1.7	Work together with social workers and staff to improve methods of discipline in the foster homes			
1.8	Create visual learning aids on the placement walls and make sure these are updated every month			
1.9	Create a lead volunteer system where the experienced volunteer advises and mentors the new volunteers			

Goal 2:

IMPROVE ENGLISH

	Actions:			
2.1	Each volunteer to spend a minimum of 1 hour per week researching and documenting new learning and teaching aids			
2.2	Introduce a record keeping system for each placement and maintain it for each child on a monthly basis			
2.3	Do at least 1 English activity per day at the placement			
2.4	Create visual learning aids on the placement walls and make sure these are updated every month			

Goal 3:

PROMOTE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

	Actions:			
3.1	Introduce a record keeping system for each placement and maintain it for each child on a monthly basis, including profile of child, learning ability, test results, etc.			
3.2	Run bi-monthly workshops for volunteers on early childhood development, especially attachment theory			
3.3	Create weekly activity timetables to focus on 4 key areas of ECD: physical, social, emotional and learning			
3.4	Create team games where all the children are included			
3.5	Provide bi-monthly workshops on child safe practices			

Goal 4:

IMPROVE THE LEVEL OF STIMULATION TO EACH CHILD

	Actions:			
4.1	Engage children in regular games and activities to improve their attention span			
4.2	Create a behavioural chart and update daily for all children in order to identify and monitor the times when the children are most challenging			

4.3	Run creative activities each day to help develop motor skills			
4.4	Create a rota for one-on-one remedial classes			
Goal 5:				
IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THOSE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES				
	Actions:			
5.1	Create a behavioural chart for all children in order to identify and monitor the times when they are most challenging			
5.2	Assist staff in carrying out physiotherapy exercises with the more severely physically disabled children			
5.3	Introduce creative activities to help develop motor skills			
5.4	Introduce a record keeping system for each placement and maintain it for each child on a monthly basis, including profile of child, learning ability, preferences, dislikes, etc.			