

file Romanaia

NU. 840 P001

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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<http://www.house.gov/ackerman>

Gary L. Ackerman
Congress of the United States
5th District, New York

December 2, 1999

COMMITTEE ON
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THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND
THE PACIFIC
COMMITTEE ON BANKING AND
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SPONSORED ENTERPRISES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL
INSTITUTIONS AND CONSUMER CREDIT
CAUCUS ON INDIA AND
INDIAN-AMERICAN ISSUES
CHAIRMAN

Dear Mrs. Clinton

I am writing to request your assistance on behalf of ten American families, including Kate McEnroe, the president of American Movie Classics, who are working through the Gladney Center, a U.S. adoption agency, to adopt children from Romania. Ms. McEnroe's plight, and that of the other nine families seeking adoption, was brought to my attention by my friend Joan Hendricks, Community Affairs Director for Cablevision. I have worked closely with Joan and my close friend, Cablevision CEO Charlie Dolan, on many issues over the years. Knowing of your previous work in this area, I thought you would want to help.

It is my understanding that the problem for these ten families is that the Romanian Adoption Committee (RAC), which is in the process of reorganization, is refusing to sign documents needed to advance the adoption process.

I am told that the interim RAC president, Mr. Mocuta Gheorghe has asserted that he has no authority to approve documents needed by the families to schedule court dates prior to the Romanian court's holiday recess, which begins December 8. Unless the RAC signs the families' repatriation, confirmation and certificate of conformity documents at its final meeting on December 4, these ten adoptions, already nine months in process, will be delayed indefinitely.

If you could contact the Romanian government to express concern regarding this matter, it would be a great help to these families and the children they hope to adopt. As I'm sure you will agree, these ten children and ten families should not become victims of a bureaucratic battle over boxes on an organizational chart.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If I can provide any help, or additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Gary L. Ackerman
Member of Congress

The First Lady of the United States
Mrs. Hillary Clinton
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

file Romania

PREȘEDINTE

Mrs. Hillary Clinton
The White House

Bucharest
April 8, 1997

Dear Mrs. Clinton,

The visit you paid to Bucharest in July 1996 is vividly remembered in Romania. Your presence in our country triggered a real and lasting enthusiasm among politicians, members of non-governmental organizations and citizens alike.

I would like to express my regret at missing the opportunity to meet you on that occasion. Unfortunately I was out of Bucharest, accompanying my husband on his presidential campaign. This campaign was an extraordinary experience for both, myself and my children. Our daughter (26 years old) and our son (30) supported their father throughout the entire campaign, which ended November 17, 1996, when he was elected as President of Romania.

As my children's age may suggest, I am not a young mother anymore, so I fully understand what it means to have a family and to struggle for it. I also know that, while every child needs a family, needy families with many children need the support of others. For some, this support is available at their doorstep, whereas others need to look further afield ...

The improvement of the Romanian children's situation is a major priority for the President. This concern was addressed in the Presidential Program "Children of Romania" that he initiated in the first month of his mandate. The program designs projects for orphans, abandoned and disabled children as well as for gifted children, whose performance needs to be encouraged. As a lawyer and a human rights legal expert, I am also committed to support any activity focused on child protection, gender issues and civic education in Romania.

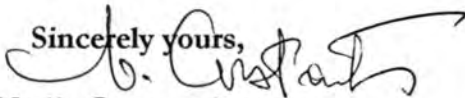
I would deeply appreciate learning more about your own experience in the field of supporting disadvantaged people. If the President of Romania should visit the United States of America in the future it would be a privilege for me to join him and meet you in Washington D.C., using this opportunity to present our projects, learn about your opinion and share your experience. I have been thinking about such a meeting since I visited the White House on the occasion of a United Nations experts session which I attended last February.

As my husband suggested, I would like to invite you to join the Honorary Board of the "Children of Romania" Foundation. This organization was founded recently under the patronage of the Presidency and aims to involve high profile personalities from all over the world, interested in the fate of children in our country.

Paraphrasing the title of one of your articles, I believe Romania will "deserve to shine for the world", a world of democracy and rule of law, as a part of the great NATO family, which the Romanian people wish to join with the support of the United States of America and of its President.

Please accept, dear Mrs. Clinton, our invitation to honor the children of Romania with your name and level of expertise, by agreeing to join the Honorary Board of the "Children of Romania" Foundation.

I look forward to meeting you and I very much hope that we will have the opportunity to pursue this matter further.

Sincerely yours,

Nadia Constantinescu

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 29, 1997

TO: Glyn Davies, National Security Council
FROM: Pam *Pam* Cicetti, Office of the First Lady
SUBJECT: letter to the First Lady from Nadia Constantinescu, First Lady of Romania

I am attaching a letter to the First Lady from April 8, 1997, from the First Lady of Romania, Nadia Constantinescu. Would you kindly provide a draft response.

Thank you.



The Ambassador of Romania

Washington, D.C.

Mrs. MARLENE VERVEER
Chief of Staff
Office of the First Lady
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20050

April 25, 1997

Dear Melane,

I am very pleased to forward to you a letter addressed to the First Lady of the United States by Mrs. Nadia Constantinescu, wife of the President of Romania.

I am confident that you will succeed in making possible a meeting of Mrs. Clinton and Mrs. Constantinescu. As you are aware, we still have high hopes that the President of Romania will have the opportunity to pay an official visit to the United States before the Madrid Summit.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Warmest regards,

Mircea Dan Geoana

Mircea Geoana

P.S. From a different perspective, I am particularly pleased to inform you that the Ukrainian-Romanian Political Treaty will be initiated in Kiev, by May 3rd. U.G.

file Romania

Mircea Dan Geoana
The Ambassador of Romania

1607 23rd Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008
Tel. (202) 387-6901 • (202) 332-4848/ext. 122

Dear Melanne,

I was asked to convey
to the First Lady the attached
letter of the President of the
Romanian Senate. It touches
upon an intricate subject,
but it reflects a situation I
know Mrs. Clinton and
you would be sensitive to.
I would appreciate your
reactions and (like always)
valuable guidance. Family yours,
Mircea



Parliament of Romania
Senate

PRESIDENT

Bucharest, March 2, 1999

Dear Mrs. Clinton,

My name is Petre Roman and I am currently President (Speaker) of Romania's Senate. Romania is a European country about the size of Maryland and a population of 22 million. Its chief geographical landmarks are the big river Danube, the Black Sea and the Carpathian Mountains. It is described, I think with good reason, as a beautiful country. Its long history has been quite eventful, with difficult periods entailing great suffering for the people. After 50 years of strong-hand regimes, 45 of them under communist rule, the people of Romania rose courageously against Ceausescu's personal dictatorship and the communist structures created by Soviet occupation. In December 1989, at the time of the Romanian Revolution, I was a professor and scientist with a life-long thirst for freedom. It was only natural that I should join the protesters in the streets during the popular uprising against Ceausescu and his communist stooger.

Mrs. CLINTON
The White House
Washington, D.C.

The square where your husband addressed a huge crowd of enthusiastic Bucharesters in July 1997 was the place where, on the night of December 21-22, 1989, we had erected and manned a barricade. Some of our friends died there. It could have lost our lives, too. Just a few days after of the downfall of Ceausescu's regime, I became Prime Minister of Romania's provisional revolutionary government.

One of the little known realities I had to face in the wake of the Revolution was the dramatic plight of abandoned children and children with AIDS. In no other area, had the communist regime shown its true face so much as it had in this one: it was all lies, cynicism and cruelty. The abandoned and unwanted children – many of whom had come into the world because of inhuman legislation and harsh enforcement of regulations prohibiting any sort of family planning – were isolated from society in prison-like orphanages designed to turn institutionalized children into blind instruments of the regime. Moreover, the resources allocated to such institutions, were patently insufficient.

Despite the efforts I made as a Prime Minister and subsequently, the situation of abandoned children remains critical.

The international community of free democracies stood by us and helped substantially to alleviate the plight of these children. I am still grateful for the opportunity Barbara Walters gave me back in 1990, on a 20-20 programme, to address the American public on that subject and to ask for their support.

Last fall, my wife Mioara returned from a meeting of the wives of dignitaries in South-Eastern Europe, held in Sofia, with a book you kindly offered to and inscribed for her.

To me, *It Takes a Village and Other Lessons Children Teach Us* was a reading both revealing and inspiring.

I am addressing the First Lady of the United States, of course, but also the author of that book.

Romania is still going through a difficult period of structural reforms in its economy and administration. These reforms are as painful as they are necessary. Recently, I was deeply impressed when reading the message your husband gave to the American people on June 13, 1995, in reply to a Republican plan for massive budget cuts: "But the pain we'd inflict on our elderly, our students, and our economy just isn't worth it."

Currently, the Government of Romania is negotiating the terms of a stand-by agreement with the IMF, the signing of which depends on further budget cuts. While assessing the effects of these additional sacrifices, I recalled the veto your husband opposed to a budget cuts bill in January 1996, because 1.5 million children would have been thrown into poverty by the bill. Present estimates show that the effect of the IMF's requirements for Romania will throw another 100,000 families, and therefore another 200,000 children, into dire poverty.

It is a positive sign that most citizens in my country admit the necessity of reforms and choose to accept the accompanying pain, but I can hardly see how we could impose such pain on those who are in no position to choose. It

is precisely the children who, according to expert studies, make up the most disadvantaged social category in present-day Romania.

In fact, I had the unpleasant surprise to learn that the bill I proposed during the election campaign for the presidency of Romania in the fall of 1996, under which the direct benefits for children eventually grew five-fold, had been criticized by the IMF and was accepted only as a result of a battle I had to put up for it.

I am certainly not writing to you in order to call into question the IMF's methods but in order to ask for your personal support with a view to correcting the above-mentioned situation by putting in place a comprehensive program geared to helping children in difficulty.

Should my undertaking capture your attention, I could submit to you some specific proposals based on accurate and realistic data. I am certain that your experience and commitment would substantially improve our suggested course of action.

Looking forward to an early indication of hope and encouragement from you,

Yours most sincerely, 
Petre Roman

NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON
WATER RESOURCE NEEDS OF NEW YORK STATE AND LONG ISLAND

ASSEMBLYMAN
THOMAS P. DINAPOLI
Co-Chair



RICHARD D. MORI
Executive Director

JOHN TURNER
Legislative Director

FAX COVER SHEET

TO: MRS. CLINTON

FROM: ASSEMBLYMAN THOMAS DINAPOLI

DATE: DECEMBER 8, 1999

OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER SHEET) 5 (original letter and letter to
Vice President Gore)

MESSAGE: As the attached letter indicates, there has been
action taken by the Romanian Government on a number of
adoptions. With the RAC meeting on Friday, it would
be most appreciative if all efforts could be made to
facilitate the finalization of the remaining adoptions
at that meeting. Thank you for your immediate attention
to this matter

Our Fax Number: 516-482-6975
Our Phone Number: 516-829-3368

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Great Neck, New York 11021
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CABLEVISION

JAMES L. DOLAN
President and Chief Executive Officer

December 7, 1999

Honorable Albert Gore, Jr.
Vice President of the United States
276 Old Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20501

Dear Vice President Gore

I am writing to seek your assistance with respect to an urgent situation involving American families seeking to adopt children from Romania. A number of families, including Katie McEnroe, President of Cablevision's American Movie Classics, and her husband, have been anxiously awaiting key approval from the Romanian Adoption Agency (RAC) of their adoptions from the My Children Foundation orphanage in Romania. These families, working through the Gladney Adoption Agency, have been involved in the Romanian adoption process for the past nine months and have submitted all required paperwork. In addition, the families have contacted with their specific children and secured parental consent.

Recently, the families were advised that all Romanian adoptions were frozen due to a vacancy in the position of the President of RAC. To facilitate the adoption process, we have made a concerted effort to highlight this situation and seek the assistance of appropriate authorities. We are working with our elected representatives, the State Department and the United States Embassy in Romania.

Due to this increased attention, it appears that the adoption process is moving forward. The Romanian Prime Minister Vasile Radu has appointed Alexandru Popescu, Interim President of the RAC, with power to finalize adoptions. Mr. Popescu has authorized the first five families to bring their children to the United States. On Friday, December 10th, the RAC will meet and it is our hope that it will take action on the adoption authorizations for the children of the remaining five families, including Katie's baby girl. It is imperative that the program continue to ensure that this second group of families will be authorized to bring their children to America.

CABLEVISION SYSTEMS CORPORATION
1111 Broadway Avenue, New York, NY 10014-USA
516 482-1000

Page Two
December 7, 1999
Albert Gore, Jr.

With the upcoming meeting of the RAC, we would be most appreciative of your assistance in bringing this situation directly to the attention of the Romanian government to request that the RAC sign the repatriations of the five families on December 10. This would further the RAC's goals of moving children out of the orphanages into the best possible care in homes in the United States. Please let us know if we can provide any further information or brief your staff more fully on the situation.

Thank you for your consideration and kind assistance. With best wishes,

Sincerely,





THOMAS P. DINAPOLI
Member of Assembly
16th District
Nassau County

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
Standing Committee on
Local Government

CHAIR
Task Force on Long Island Sound

CO-CHAIR
Legislative Commission on
Water Resource Needs of
New York and Long Island

COMMITTEES
Ways & Means
Education
Environmental Conservation
Veterans Affairs

November 30, 1999

Mrs. Hillary Clinton, First Lady
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mrs. Clinton:

I am writing to request your direct intervention on a humanitarian matter of urgency that has been brought to my attention by Ms. Sheila Mahony, Executive Vice President for Communications, Government, and Public Affairs at Cablevision. You may remember that you met Ms. Mahony at the dinner at Lee and Murray Seeman's home held earlier this year attended by a select group of Long Island's leaders.

Currently, there are ten American families, working through the Gladney Center, a United States adoption agency, that have reached the final stages in the adoption of children from Romania. These families include Kate McEnroe, President of American Movie Classics and her husband, Scott Cullather. However, within the past week, the new interim president of the Romanian Adoption Committee (RAC), Mocuta Gheorghe, has refused to sign the necessary documents that would allow the Romanian courts to approve adoptions for the ten children. It is my understanding that Mr. Gheorghe claims that he does not have the authority to approve the adoptions.

All of these families have been involved in the Romanian adoption process for the past nine months. All of them have been connected with specific children - and have passed through several Romanian legal adoption procedures, including securing parental consent and the country's possible identification of in-country foster parents.

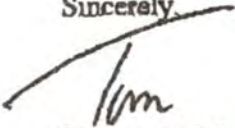
Final approvals from the RAC include the signing of several documents: a repatriation, a confirmation, and a certificate of conformity. Action by the RAC on these documents (which, appears to be delayed indefinitely) would allow local Romanian courts to provide the final approval of these adoptions uniting the ten families with their prospective children.

As background, I have been made to understand that the RAC has recently been placed under the auspices of the Romanian Ministry of Justice, and has a new interim president. I do not know whether the move to the Ministry of Justice is the cause of the new delay. Based on this information, I would expect that other adoption agencies are facing similar delays.

This situation is urgent, as several families, including Ms. McEnroe and Mr. Cullather, have only until December 8th to secure the required approval from the RAC and arrange the necessary court dates in Romania. Time is of the essence as it is my understanding that after December 8th, the Romanian courts will close for the holidays, potentially extending this process for several months.

As we prepare to celebrate the holidays and the dawn of the new millennium, it would be a wonderful humanitarian gesture if you would intervene on behalf of these children and their new families. Thank you for your timely consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Thomas P. DiNapoli
Member of Assembly

Cc: Honorable Senator Charles E. Schumer
Honorable Congressman Gary Ackerman
Ms. Sheila Mahony
1 Media Crossways
Woodbury, New York 11797-2013

TPD/md

file: Romania

Muir, Morgan C. (SEE)

To: Katy Button
Subject: Letter from Congressman Ackerman re Romanian Adoptions

Here is the information you requested.

The State Department's Romanian desk officer told me this morning that the obstacles mentioned in Congressman Ackerman's 2 December letter have been overcome in the past few days and that progress is being made regarding the Gladney Center adoption cases to which Congressman Ackerman refers. The delay arose due to a reorganization of the child protection apparatus in Romania and the late November resignation of the President of the Romanian Adoption Committee (RAC). As a result, no one was authorized to sign the necessary "Certificates of Conformity." There have been several new developments since the letter was sent, however.

- An interim RAC President was appointed and he has signed all the Certificates of Conformity.
- Another meeting of the RAC will take place this Friday and more adoptions should be expedited at that meeting.
- The Embassy has asked for a list to see which adoptive parents' certificates were signed and which will be considered this week (in response to a request by a Congressional staffer conveyed by State). Romanian officials are generally guarded about handing out this type of information, but are considering the request.
- The Embassy has spoken this week with Mr. Brant (who is currently in Romania and is acting as a spokesperson for the families). Mr. Brant has some EU connections, but the Embassy is advising him against using them for the time being.

MV -
Looks like
things are
moving on this
adoption case.
Should we call
Ackerman?
KT

I called
Ackerman's
office
12/14

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<http://www.house.gov/ackerman>

Gary L. Ackerman
Congress of the United States
5th District, New York

December 2, 1999

COMMITTEE ON
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CHAIRMAN

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I am told that the interim RAC president, Mr. Mocuta Gheorghe has asserted that he has no authority to approve documents needed by the families to schedule court dates prior to the Romanian court's holiday recess, which begins December 8. Unless the RAC signs the families' repatriation, confirmation and certificate of conformity documents at its final meeting on December 4, these ten adoptions, already nine months in process, will be delayed indefinitely.

If you could contact the Romanian government to express concern regarding this matter, it would be a great help to these families and the children they hope to adopt. As I'm sure you will agree, these ten children and ten families should not become victims of a bureaucratic battle over boxes on an organizational chart.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If I can provide any help, or additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Gary L. Ackerman
Member of Congress

The First Lady of the United States
Mrs. Hillary Clinton
The White House
Washington, DC 20500



file Romania
Embassy of the United States of America

Bucharest, Romania

March 26, 1997

Melanne Verveer
Deputy Assistant to the President, and
Deputy Chief of Staff to the First Lady
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Melanne:

Thank you for the picture with FLOTUS in the map room. We are making progress on the surgery in North Carolina for the little girl Hillary wanted to help.

The North Carolina Baptist Hospital has agreed to perform the operation totally free and plans to take toe bone and implant it in the hand using cartilage and tendons that are already in the hand without any bone. Nicoleta will be in the United States for three weeks to a month after the operation. The Baptist community in North Carolina is footing the entire bill including airfare. Liz Blair, RN, from Baylor University whom you met in Bucharest, is coordinating things at this end.

If all turns out as well as we hope, what do you think about a White House visit?

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Alfred H. Moses
Ambassador

AHM:ll

CC Melanese
file Romania

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Bucharest, Romania

December 19, 1996

Ms. Hillary Rodham Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Ms. ~~Clinton~~ ^{Hillary}

Your visit to Bucharest is remembered fondly by all of us at the Embassy. The "wheels up" party did not block out entirely the happy memory. We were especially appreciative of the cooperation from Maggie Williams, Melanne Verveer and Rick Jasculca who led the Advance Team.

You may recall that on leaving the NGO meeting at Elisabeta Palace, a gentleman gave you a letter seeking medical help for his daughter who was born with deformed hands. We have followed up on his request and may have good news for his daughter, Nicoleta. Elizabeth Blair who has been here as part of Baylor University's health team, and who spoke at the Odeon before your speech, located a Baptist hospital in North Carolina that will sponsor the young girl's travel and care while in the United States. Corrective surgery will be performed by Dr. Keith Van Zandt, a specialist in the field of restorative medicine.

As it turned out our greatest difficulty was in locating Nicoleta and her family. They live in a small village outside of Bucharest. Through the ingenuity and perseverance of one of our staff we located the family and x-rays of Nicoleta's hands have been sent to Dr. Van Zandt so that he can make a final determination as to whether he can help her. If he can, we shall make arrangements for her travel as soon as possible. We are hopeful there will be a happy ending to the story.

If all goes well maybe we can even arrange for Nicoleta to visit the White House to meet her benefactor, The First Lady.

Congratulations to the President and you on the outcome of

the elections. I am not looking for job security, but it is nice to know that I will not be dumped because of a change of Administration.

My very best wishes.

Sincerely,



Alfred H. Moses
Ambassador

Thank you for the autographed
pictures of your visit. It was most
thoughtful -

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better has no limits



Children are the future of a nation. And the nation's reflection. The long term developments of a country depend on the education children receive, on the care they experience and in the manner in which the "secrets" of the adult world are revealed to them.

For more than half a century children were highlighted foremost at official events where they were surrounded by false praises and fake applause. It was the only way to show that they mattered. The dark side - inappropriate conditions in schools and institutions for children, inappropriate and inadequate hospital facilities for children, lack of sweets and toys and, especially, a drastic lack of love and respect - was non-existent as far as the country's leaders were concerned. The situation was even worse for abandoned children, for handicapped children, and for mothers forced into motherhood.

Despite all this, many Romanian parents have given children the right dimension of love, dignity and education. They pursued their children's talents and creativity with vigor and enthusiasm. As a result, many children succeeded and won recognition at important international events. Mathematics, chemistry, physics, and sporting events are some of the fields in which Romanian children have proven their excellence.

As a father, university professor, and President of the country, I am determined to bring back to Romanian families and Romanian children a life, that by any standard, would be considered "the norm".

I have initiated a Presidential Program that specifically addresses the major related issues beginning with much needed improvements in the legal framework and ending with the assurance of better living conditions for all children.

The Foundation "Children of Romania" that I have established, is meant to coordinate and support the efforts of numerous specialists and organizations working in the field of child welfare and child protection.

The approach to the subject is totally new. Specific efforts are far more successful if they are coordinated and synergy is sought. The sharing of successful experiences/programs and their subsequent replication and implementation in similar situations but at different locations is vital. Unfortunately in many cases good intentions, valuable expertise, long working hours and bags full of money have, to date, been squandered due to bad management. "Children of Romania" aims to change all this.

I sincerely hope that all the people who care for the future of Romania, will join us and wholeheartedly support the efforts of "Children of Romania".

The mission is difficult, the work required, enormous. But it is worthwhile, for nothing can compare to a child's smile.




DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Few will believe that Romanians have a tradition of caring for, respecting, honoring and loving their children, yet for centuries, this has been and continues to be a reality.

During the last few years, the world's attention has been concentrated on the terrible images of abandoned children living in misery. This, unfortunately, was a true and crude part of the reality for many Romanians and, in particular, Romanian children.

After having experienced in their daily lives the so-called "benefits" of the *perfect* and *humanitarian* communist regime, Romanians soon discovered the nightmares of that which was "hidden" - hidden economy, hidden people, hidden problems - a blackhole swallowing endless energy, time and money. Where then to begin?

During the past 7 years, Romanians, together with many international organisations, have, through their efforts, attempted to solve some of the abysmal problems such as homeless children, shortages of medicines, proper health care and adequate equipment. Some improvements are visible, but the crisis is still in place. The need for a new approach and a concentrated effort is urgent. There is a lack of expertise in dealing with such overwhelming situations, a lack of coordination, a lack of expertise and a lack of money.

An attempt to create a sustainable system that works, while simultaneously increasing the public's awareness of these problems is what is needed. It is time that we forget for a moment our day to day problems and focus on the well being of our children. It is needed now, and that is what "Children of Romania" is for.

"Children of Romania" wants to create a normal life for every Romanian child. The Foundation brings together a group of recognised child welfare specialists. These people act as a catalyst in the process of restructuring the children welfare system based on the principle of providing each child with a family-like environment. The first step in this process is decentralization and the delegation of decision power to the local level.

The changing of the legal framework as it relates to the rights and protection of children, as well as improvements in social assistance, health care, child psychology, education and public attitude are the core goals of the Foundation.

"Children of Romania" is an assured link between public services charged with child protection and civil society. It supports, coordinates and helps with the implementation of projects designed to:

- prevent child abandonment and institutionalization
- support family reintegration
- decentralise activities and stimulate the development of specific solutions to each particular problem
- support the professional development of children with exceptional skills
- draft appropriate and suitable changes in the legal framework
- assist with the restructuring of the public services to make them more effective
- assist with the creation and implementation of a data base to monitor and record the situation regarding child protection and adherence to the rights of children
- improve the cooperation between the different official bodies and the organisations dedicated to resolving child welfare issues
- train social workers and further develop professional networks of these specialists
- develop social support services
- stimulate greater involvement by civil society
- promote a better understanding and knowledge of the subject within different communities
- facilitate programs aimed at improving infrastructures (building up new facilities, building repair, etc.)
- mediate sponsorship focused on modernization of health care facilities (donation of equipment, etc.)

STRUCTURE OF THE FOUNDATION

Division A (Analysis)

This division is responsible for the gathering of information and the design of a proper monitoring system for all projects related to children and child welfare issues. The analysis division identifies the major issues and monitors the implementation of the various strategies. It also records the results of these projects and assists with the implementation of successful models in other places where similar problems exist.

Division A provides an important background for all other activities of the Foundation.

Division TP (Training / Personnel)

This division identifies active people in all fields related to child care and provides them training sessions which aim to improve their level of expertise, managerial skills and knowledge. It organises training courses for the decision makers at the local level and works together with these people in designing the best cooperative approach for each region and each problem.

The division maintains permanent contact with the people involved in the projects and attempts to facilitate communication and cooperation.

Division P (Programs)

The program division works to integrate the technical project with a managerial approach. Every project is split into sections with precise deadlines and specific financial needs.

This approach is critical in ensuring better reporting and increasing effective communication with potential sponsors.

Division C (Communities)

This division is responsible for organising the promotion of specific activities. It creates awareness strategies for each region that are adapted to the local thinking and customs of the region. Each project, from beginning to the final results, is crucially dependent on the community's involvement and its capability to continue the developments into the future.

Division FR (Fund Raising)

As the name suggests, this division has the responsibility of raising funds. It promotes each project through contacts and relationships, appropriate language and pragmatic approaches, with governmental agencies, private institutions, corporations, and individuals.

Division FA (Financial Audit)

Division FA monitors and checks the bookkeeping, controls the allocation of funds, and ensures the proper use of financial resources.

O M
R O

There's no better time to start than now.



PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

1. Abandonment Prevention Program

Social retrieval of institutionalized or homeless children is absolutely necessary, but is not enough. Preventing children to arrive in these situations is crucial.

Background: In order to prevent future child abandonment it is important to identify such at risk groups as, poor families, disorganized families, and single mothers, and then to assist them in such a way to prevent child abandonment.

Unfortunately, for too long abortion or abandonment were often perceived as the only “contraceptive” solutions, especially in poor rural areas. The subject itself is extremely sensitive; people are often afraid to discuss the issues, ask for support, and sometimes lack education.

Our foundation identified the following main reasons for child abandonment:

- The pregnancy of unmarried daughters is seen as an embarrassment by their conservative parents. The young mother is sent away and she is allowed to return only without “the cause of the embarrassment”: the soon to be abandoned child.
- The young pregnant women is left by her partner, she does not have employment, and she depends on her relationship with an employed man. She believes that her only chance for another relationship is the abandonment of her child.

Short description: The project is developed through maintaining permanent relations with the local authorities whose task is to identify, in due time, any and all potential crisis situations. The project works together, in conjunction, with health care institutions and other NGO’s. The aim is to prevent child abandonment. The way to do it is to provide support and/or alternatives to persons or families in crisis. Families will receive the necessary interventions which will allow them to care for their child. By doing so we create conditions for the new-born child to be raised by his or her natural family and enjoy a normal upbringing.

The project requires the building/fitting of pre-natal care centers for mothers-to-be, where special training and support will be offered. After the children are born the young mothers will be helped to find employment and eventually appropriate housing (if they cannot or will not return to their previous place to live).

Those children whose abandonment cannot be prevented, for one reason or another, will be included in the Foundation’s alternative programs: “Short term foster family” or “Open window house” programs.

2. Institutionalization Prevention Program

Love and care for an abandoned new-born baby are immediate needs, but, till the baby gets over one year of age, the impact of not having a stable family is not disastrous, if he is surrounded by a family-like environment. Important is to reintegrate the baby in his natural family or to place him in an adoptive family before he is older than one year of age.

Background: The institutional system designed by the communist regime encouraged the admission of abandoned children in residential structures gathering large numbers of individuals ranging from 0 to 18 years of age, supervised by unprofessional personnel, and living in very poor conditions.

Once a child has been abandoned in a maternity hospital, traditionally the child is given into the care of a residential institution called “Leagan de copii”, where is raised until the age of three. After that, the child is transferred into another residential institution, “Casa de copii”, where he lives from 3 to 18 years of age. Theoretically, in these institutions, the child is cared for and educated, therefore at 18 he is prepared for an independent life and the society. Practically, the state spends approximately 1 million lei per month for 18 years for each child and the result is a young adult who never enjoyed the love and care of a family, has no social awareness (understanding of social classes, administering a monthly budget, taking responsibility, and so on). On top of that he finds himself unemployed and homeless, so there are lot of chances that he will arrive in few weeks in the streets or, even worse, in prison.

Short description: For the abandonment prevention program cases which fail, the Foundation “Children of Romania” develops two alternative projects: “*Short term foster families*” and “*Open window house*”. These projects aim to prevent child institutionalization. The project’s principles are the same, only the approach is different. In both cases the child enters a family-like environment directly from the maternity hospital, where he spends an average period of eight month. After that the child is either reintegrated back into his natural family or is adopted by a Romanian family.

“Short term foster family” Program is implemented together with “*Holt International Children’s Services*” Organization and presently works with 45 foster families, 15 in Bucuresti, 15 in Constanta, and 15 in Targu Mures. The typical foster care family has, at least one working family member, an average of two natural children, one of them being usually of university age. After the period of family recruitment and training the family takes in one or two abandoned children and cares for them like a normal family. The family receives all necessary support for creating an appropriate environment and a month salary at an average level. For a period up to eight month the child develops in this family. The foster families are monitored by trained social workers, who also work on the child’s permanent plan - reintegration or domestic adoption. The future to be adoptive family visits the child during his stay at the foster family and learns about his schedule, specific needs, and other related issues. In the mean time an emotional relationship is built and the decision to adopt this child has time to mature. After the placement in adoption, the child’s new family keeps contact with the foster parents and is monitored by a social worker for, at least, one year.

“Open window house” Program is implemented together with **“Save the Children” Organization** and works in the city of Timisoara in five modules placed in the available space within public creche. One module can welcome 8-10 children, coming directly from maternity hospitals, as a family-like group home. The module hosts two professional families, each formed by a “mother”, “father”, “aunt”, and “grandmother”. The members of each family work in rotation ensuring that, at any moment, the child has around him, at least, two members. The benefits of this program consist in using the available space in the creche (which otherwise would deteriorate), the available personnel at a much superior performance because the small number of children they are assigned with (these workers would otherwise have been laid off), and mixing children that are abandoned with children that have a natural family. Trained social workers develop permanency plans for each child, including family reintegration or domestic adoption. The natural mothers can stay within the module, while the chances for reintegration are evaluated. As the successful pilot project in Timisoara shows, after an average period of eight months, the child is reintegrated or welcomed in his adoptive family. The “Children of Romania” Foundation plans to develop this project all over the country.

3. Young Adults - A social integration program for children 16 years and over

Background: Child protection institutions are designed to care for children until they reach the age of 18 years. At the end of this period they are considered to be young adults and should be able to find employment and housing, and to possibly, continue their education. Unfortunately, this seldom happens as a result of the following:

- As most children were abandoned, they do not have any official documents.
- They are not able to find employment in the absence of housing and viceversa, they cannot secure housing if they are not employed and thus, not earning a living.
- The attitude of the public is often prejudiced against individuals raised in institutions. The situation is often amplified when the person in question has a handicap.

“Children of Romania” is now preparing an emergency plan to address this issue and ease the process of social integration.

Short Description: The program has several components. Firstly, to design a new legal framework relating to the issuance of identity documents and the initial governmental financial support of individuals. (Donation of land, low rates or long term loans for the building of houses, low rent housing, etc.)

Secondly, to organize a proper network of social workers specialised in this field and the assignment of these workers to individual cases.

Thirdly, to train teenagers to take care of themselves.

And finally, to prepare the communities to welcome these young adults and help them with the integration process.

In order to avoid the potential problems, such as giving up at the first sign of difficulty, the development of the program includes a five year monitoring period for each case. The program will assist these children in gaining employment as well as setting up a home and a family.

4. Social recovery of Street Children

Every homeless child is an individual who shares with other individuals living in the streets the same social status and frustration. This are the only things they have in common; they are not a group of friends or schoolmates who share close aspirations or have similar intellectual qualifications. The differences between them in terms of family connections, time spent in the streets, abuse history, education level, psychological problems are huge. Any attempt to deal with children in the streets as a large (or even smaller) group is condemned to failure.

Background: Many abandoned children are living on the streets; either because they enjoy the freedom that life on the “fringe” allows them or because the social system has not been able to recover them. The main problems identified point to the inability of the system to support these children and the difficulty to convince them to use “family-like” forms of assistance or at least the available day-shelters. There is also a lack of trained personnel and appropriate living conditions. All of these are factors relating to why more and more children have fled into the streets.

Short description: The program is concentrated on both the building up of the social support structure implementing much higher standards and the creation of a social circle, such as the one that normally surrounds each individual (family, friends, schools, sports, opinion leaders, etc.).

The main objectives of the program are to:

- rebuild the links with the individual's natural family, including distant relatives (family reintegration);
- train social workers for this particular project (every individual is a unique case and thus, requires specialized and specific treatment and attention);
- in the case that the natural family was identified, support financially and train this family to commit for taking care of their child;
- redesign the services provided by residential institutions for use as alternatives in the event of failed family reintegration;
- train the respective communities to be involved and supportive of the recovery process.

FINALISED PROJECTS

The White Paper of the Child

The White Paper of the Child presents an overview of Romanian children as of September 1997. The document contains complete information which is systematized by types of problems relating to children and families. The White Paper of the Child combines the traditional approach (juridical protection and social safety systems, health status, and the education system) with elements of the new view from the perspective of the coming millennium (the child's position in family and society, the child's right to belong to a family, the risk of abuses and social exclusion of children).

Due to the inevitable relation that exists between the people's general health and the maternal and child health, important space was granted to medical assistance problems and to specific needs for monitoring and assistance of pregnant women infants and children (the latter grouped on various age groups). At the same time, the impact of education on the level of understanding the needs for systematic illness prevention for children through vaccination and regular medical inspections, for preventing maternal mortality caused by primitive abortion methods or unassisted births, determined an ample presentation of the educational system, from preschool to adulthood.

The authors intention was to present an all encompassing image. When speaking of Romanian children it is necessary to have in perspective all of the country's children, including the great majority who are "normal" children, raised in "normal" families (with different types of problems that families usually face), as well as children who do not fall into this majority group, but who, at the same time, have well established rights which should be fully respected. There are studied, in equal shares, the needs of children who, for different reasons, require social protection offered by the state and the community, as well as the needs of gifted children who necessitate support and encouragement in developing their special aptitudes.

An important section of this book refers to the profound reforms that are on the way for improving the general juridical framework for the protection of children's rights and the specific child protection system for children with special needs. Without a change in mentality, in addition to changes in the structure of the child protection system, it is impossible to fight against poverty, sickness and illiteracy, against the indifference and aggressions children often face in families, in school or in communities. In addition, there will be no chances for significant reductions of infant mortality, child abandonment or illiteracy, of homelessness, juvenile delinquency, or of the risks to become victim to pedophiles and procurers. The sad "records" Romania set in Europe are, for sure, serious warnings for the entire society.

Reform of the Care System for Mentally Retarded Children

This project has been finalized from the Foundation's perspective and is the Romanian Government's mission to implement it.

Background: Ceausescu encouraged birth rate increases at all social costs. Abortions were illegal and contraceptive methods or family planning inexistent. The dictator needed only "perfect" people for the communist society construction. His social system encouraged families to send their mentally handicapped children to the residential institutions called "Camine Spital". These institutions were located in remote rural areas without adequate energy supply or running water. Here children were hidden because the dictator did not want to see the so called "nation's failures".

Short description: "Children of Romania" Foundation initiated within the European Council a program bearing the same name. This program is coordinated by the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council, Mrs. Leni Fisher. The program provides Romania with a credit of 10 million ECU in extremely advantageous terms. These funds will finance the building of completely new facilities in urban areas with access to special services and qualified professionals. After the European Council Social Found's approval of the program, the "Children of Romania" Foundation ended its involvement and the Romanian Government took it over.

Premature New-born Children Assistance

This project set a very ambitious target: to reduce the infant mortality rate to an average level for Europe.

Background: Romania inherited from the communist regime a disastrous situation in terms of maternity hospital facilities and presently has the highest infant mortality rate in Europe: 21 per 1000 born. One third of these children die in two weeks after delivery, because of neonatal reasons. The main reason for this is lack of appropriate equipment and trained staff.

Short description: "Children of Romania" Foundation has designed a project together with the Romanian Neonatology Association which proposes a financing plan for the Swiss Government of total value 10 mil. SFR. The project was handed over to the Swiss Authorities and, if it will be approved, will assure the deliverance by Swiss companies of adequate equipment for the five proposed regional centers for perinatology. From this moment on, the Romanian partner in this project has to be represented by the Government, because a intergovernmental cooperation is required.

Donations for Pediatric Clinics of some Bucuresti Hospitals

- donation of video equipment for infant brainsurgery performed by microscope, to "Dr. Bagdasar" Hospital;
- donation used to build a new roof and other equipment for finalizing the construction of the pediatric AIDS and HIV+ division of the Giurgiu Regional Hospital (all construction materials where donated to our organization by Italian "Bambini in Emergenza" Association);
- donation of one liter of milk per day for each child, for an unlimited time period, to Budimex Children Hospital;
- individual financial assistance for children with AIDS, Hypofizary deficiency syndrome, talazemic illness;

Financial Help for Exceptional Gifted Children

Before now, many talents were lost because artistic or scientific exceptionally gifted children did not have the financial means to take part in international competitions. Our foundation has provided trip expenses and participation fees for some of these talented children to participate in important international competitions.



better has no limit

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