Romania: The Children Without A Chance

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

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Abstract

We say that we are hungry, but most of us have never experienced real hunger. We sometimes feel deprived, but we don’t know what true deprivation is. Most of us are unaware that a population endures these circumstances on a daily basis. This thesis will enable you, the reader, to become familiar with the group of children that are living in a constant state of depravation. This thesis provides an in-depth account of the children living in orphanages and on the streets in Romania. It will address the evolution of this paramount disaster, and explore the possibilities for change. Also included are statements from volunteers and missionaries working to alleviate the plight of these poor and suffering children.
Introduction

There is a place that exists far from here. It is a land where children run barefoot, but are far from carefree - where names and birthdays do not matter, because they go unmentioned and unknown. These children merely endure life and grasp at survival. They have no one to call mother or father, and cannot even form the idea of a home because they have never been a part of one. Their shelter often consists of sewer walls, and their nourishment often comes from the glue that they sniff to dull hunger pangs. Who are these children and why are they living this way? These children are those abandoned within the country of Romania. Where does one start to tell of this journey? Start by looking in the face of a child then go backwards to the governmental institution responsible for the devastation that lurks around every building, in every orphanage, on the streets, and down inside the sewers.
Background

Government History

Romania has often been referred to as the “land of orphans”. This nickname can be attributed to the rule of the communist dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu. Ceausescu robbed the country economically and forced women to bear at least five children for the purpose of building a people’s army. Families could not afford to provide for these children and were forced to abandon them.

Ceausescu came to power after being elected in 1965. In the beginning of Ceausescu’s rule, he created an era of optimism as Romanians began to experience a rise in living standards. Car ownership and sales of television sets, refrigerators, and vacuum cleaners soared (Deletant 114). A middle class was created, and much of the success was contributed to the rule of Ceausescu. The Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia helped to sway the Romanians into the arms of Ceausescu.

Following the threat of invasion, Ceausescu formed a worker’s militia and gave secret orders for an intricate escape plan for he and his wife. This escape plan consisted of a set of buildings with secret exit points, residences as safe houses, and protection provided by the army (Securitate). Ceausescu’s foreign policies reflected resourcefulness. However, his domestic policy revealed him as tyrannical and cruel. A fellow communist who knew Ceausescu stated that even at an early age Ceausescu revealed, “an unlimited confidence in himself which was nurtured by his equally unlimited lack of confidence in everyone else and especially in those to whom he was professionally subordinated” (Deletant).
The honeymoon stage of Ceausescu’s leadership ended all too suddenly. The hope of economic prosperity was shattered in the 70’s. Romania’s exports were of poor quality and a large earthquake caused food production to dwindle. Romania had accumulated a foreign debt of $10.2 billion and Ceausescu began to ration the food products available to the population in an attempt to alleviate the debt. These rations consisted of 2.2lbs of sugar, 2.2lbs of flour, 2 cups of margarine, and 5 eggs for one person for one month. A person owning a car was only permitted 7.9 gallons of petrol per month, and homes and offices could not be heated above 57.2° Fahrenheit (Deletant 126). These rations did not help increase domestic support for Ceausescu.

Ceausescu’s rule was tyrannical and the population was quickly losing faith in their fearless leader. Ceausescu lived in a constant state of paranoia. He worried about opposition from within the country as well as from foreign sources. People who directly opposed his regime found themselves demoted or on house arrest. One result of his paranoia was his obsession with building a huge army.

In order to construct a massive army, Ceausescu needed to double the population in one generation. It became mandatory that women bear at least five children, and all methods of birth control and sterilization became illegal (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation [CBC] 2000). Women obtaining abortions who were under forty-five years of age could be imprisoned or heavily fined. Physicians caught performing abortions could be brought under criminal charges and sentenced to five years in prison. Women had to undergo mandatory physical examinations to ensure that they were not using birth control (Deletant 144). The only thing that was growing was suffering and poverty.
This suffering and poverty drove thousands of Hungarians and Romanians living on borders to flee to Hungary. In order to stop the flow of people leaving, Ceausescu ordered a fence to be built along the border. Oppression was heavily felt throughout the nation and particularly in the regions populated with Hungarians (Transylvania). This oppression, coupled with the Communist Party’s interference in the Hungarian Reformed Church drove two activists to revolt.

These two activists, Istvan Tokes and son Reverend Laszlo Tokes, called citizens to resist Ceausescu’s village-systemization project. This village-systemization project was Ceausescu’s attempt to rid the country of over half of its villages, and ultimately increase his authority. There was no logic behind this project other than his idea that people needed to be more centrally located, and this might serve to increase his control. He was driving the country further into debt by constructing new buildings and destroying existing buildings. One of these structures, built to house people removed from their homes, was called The House of the People and had over 1,000 rooms.

Activist Laszlo Tokes was ordered to stop preaching against Ceausescu and the Party, and an order was given to evict him from his home. Three hundred people supporting Reverend Tokes, formed a human chain around his house and shouted, “We are not leaving.” A single cry “Down with Ceausescu” caused the people to identify “that horrible thing locked in their throats and hearts” (Codrescu 28). Thousands of people were gathering and yelling “Good-bye to fear!,” “Ceausescu will fall!,” “Freedom!,” and “Dignity!” (Codrescu 28).

People were bringing children to the front. Crowds were singing and sharing food and supplies. This camaraderie created a celebratory attitude. Unfortunately, this turned
into bloodshed when an armored carrier caught fire and an order was given for the soldiers to open fire on the crowd. The demonstrators began to fall and people screamed out, "Brothers don't shoot our children." Some still stood their ground. "Others, wounded, screamed as they ran or fell, 'Murderers! Down with Ceausescu! Liberty!' The answer was bullets. The pavement was red with blood; people were slipping and falling on blood" (Codrescu 29). The ambulance collected the wounded, and they were later found executed. The number of people estimated dead was seventy-five hundred (Codrescu 29).

The next day people gathered, the soldiers reappeared and were given the order to fire. This time some of them joined the side of the people and others fired into the air. This was the beginning of the revolution that led to the public slaughtering of Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife, Elena. "Forty-five years of communism were undone in eight days" (Codrescu 27). Ceausescu and Elena were publicly executed on Christmas Eve of 1989. This was the dawn of a new era within the country of Romania.
Review of Problem

Why There are So Many Children at Risk

With the fall of communism, came extreme poverty. Ceausescu stripped many people of their resources, and the government was too bankrupt to offer any type of assistance. Today Romania still fights to maintain a democracy. The government continues to try to pick up the pieces, and the people who have suffered the most are the children. Because of Ceausescu’s pronatalist policies, there are multitudes of children who have been abandoned. Families bore so many children that they were unable to provide for even their most basic needs. Mothers were forced to prostitute themselves, and at times, prostitute their children in order to obtain money. Families were giving their children to state operated orphanages in hopes to piece together their own lives. Romania’s future was grim and even grimmer was the future for the children of Romania.

Today mothers continue to give birth to more children than they are capable of caring for. Many of these children are turned over to orphanages to receive care, and others end up fighting for survival on the streets. Birth control is no longer illegal, but often women are not aware of their options or it is not available. The children living in orphanages range from birth to eighteen. When a child reaches 18, the government no longer provides funding to the orphanage for that child. The children are sent from the orphanage with no money, no job skills, and no training. This creates a circular effect in which they live on the streets, make money to survive, have children, and then turn them over to orphanages.
Children at Risk in Orphanages

Sources estimate the number of children in orphanages as high as 150,000 (Heart) and there is a general consensus of 125,000 children (CBC). Child abandonment has also increased by 20% since 1989 (CBC). The Romanian government states that there are only about 2,000 children living on the streets, but several groups feel that this number is actually much higher (Murphy). Monetary incentives used to be granted to mothers who bore over four children in order to significantly increase the population. It has been rumored that these payments can still be utilized, but there was no documentation found to support this.

Romanian orphanages are still very similar to what was shown by media after the fall of communism. There are still not adequate resources to provide these children with adequate nourishment, clothing, shelter, or even human contact. Abandoned babies still lie in remote hospitals and receive only feedings and diaper changes. Children still live without even one pair of shoes or a toothbrush. Heart to Heart International Ministries recently sent hygiene kits to a girl’s orphanage. These kits included shampoo, soap, wash clothes, toothbrush, floss, comb, toothpaste, and some small toy. The children had no idea how to use the products and found more satisfaction playing with the inexpensive bags containing the products than trying out the care products (Francis). A team of missionaries put together a hygiene class in order to teach these children self-care.

Even though the government is striving to form a stable democracy, Romania’s economy is struggling. The children are often the last to receive services and the child welfare system is drowning trying to help meet the needs of its children. Often the workers at the orphanages are underpaid and overworked. This has led to significant
amounts of abuse and neglect. Many people have witnessed this first hand, and have reported that it seems to be acceptable to other adults. Rarely will another teacher or director intervene (Rediger). Many times children will actually try to escape the abuse and conditions at the orphanages in order to live independently suffering on the streets (Bates). The grass on the streets is not any greener.

The physical surroundings of the orphanages are also unsanitary. A missionary with Heart to Heart was working in an orphanage and was living there with the children. She told stories of waking up in the morning covered with bites from bugs in the bed. Even in the extreme heat of summer the missionaries slept fully clothed in hooded sweatshirts, pants, and socks to try and keep the bugs from biting them (Francis).

Despite the physical conditions of these institutions, volunteers and missionaries are still drawn to orphanages in Romania. Workers reach out to these children and try to not only help meet their physical needs, but also their emotional needs. They witness first hand the effects of abandonment and neglect on children. They see attachment and bonding disorders. One missionary stated that she felt that the orphan’s languages of love consisted of, “hitting, kicking, biting, pinching, and pushing” (Rediger). Meaning that they do not know how to respond to, or show love and affection. They are very hostile to each other. They pick on smaller and weaker children, and they even hurt the small animals that they find. They just don’t understand love and nurturing.

Children Living on the Streets

This group of children living on the streets is even more at risk than those living in the orphanages. The winters in Romania are fierce, and the summers are scorching. These children who have been abandoned are not fortunate enough to
live within the walls of an institution. These children not only have no bed but they are lacking food, shelter, and adequate clothing.

There are over two thousand children living on the streets. These children don’t face the problem of little food; they face the problem of no food. Many of these children beg for money or prostitute themselves. These children are left to fend for themselves in a seemingly cold, cruel, and heartless world. Because the children have little money, they cannot afford enough food to satisfy their hunger. In order to dull their hunger pangs, they sniff “glue”. This glue sniffing is only $.13 - much cheaper than the price of a meal. This “glue” is really a varnish called Aurolac.

At Gara de Nord in Bucharest, the train station’s second-class waiting area is overflowing. In an unlit side entrance, there are metal boxes once intended as storage lockers. The doors are dented and rusty. Children huddle in these boxes - small, haggard forms, their clothes ragged and dirty. They hold plastic bags in their hands. Again and again, they eagerly take whiffs from the bags. How old are they? Eight, maybe nine or ten. One creeps out calling, “hunger, hunger.” His face is covered with scratches, and he is crying. Then the others begin creeping out of their boxes, benumbed by the varnish that they have inhaled.

–Gruner

Aurolac, or varnish thinned with turpentine, is the drug of the very poorest. It causes severe damage to the liver, kidneys, and circulatory system. Long-term use will atrophy the brain. It is estimated that seventy percent of children living on the streets are addicted to glue (Children’s Relief). This glue is a sad substitute for the love, nutrition, shelter, and clothing in which these children are really seeking.
It is unlikely that these street children will live to adulthood. The winters are cold and the children live in steam tunnels, metro stations, boxes, and gutters. The springs may bring relief from the cold, but when the snow melts it reveals a sad reality. "There are actually street children that are found frozen when the inches of snow melt" (Francis). In the Dateline NBC Broadcast "The Lost Children of Bucharest", a boy is shown hospitalized after a "severe street fight." The truth was much more devastating. This boy, in an attempt to save himself from starvation and cold, set his legs on fire. He knew that the burns would keep him in the hospital long enough to get warm and be fed (Children’s Relief).

The plight of the street children is merely survival. Many of these children are involved in prostitution and drug selling in order to obtain money. Several young mothers bear children and then prostitute the children for money. The suffering seems endless. Sue and Ron Bates, missionaries to Romania, have started an orphanage to take in the children of the street children.

Sue was recently interviewed for a study on human rights. She told the story of a girl named Flori. Flori was a four-year-old gypsy girl whose mother lived on the streets. Flori’s mother Fana had been kicked out of her home at the age of eight. She had been living on the streets when she gave birth to Flori. Sue does not know Flori’s birth date or even a definite age. She has merely guessed that Flori would be about four. Fana has had two children since Flori and abandoned them in the hospital. Fana gave Flori to Ron and Sue so that they could care for her. Until then, she had kept Flori on the streets – living in subway tunnels to keep from freezing to death.
Sue and Ron met Flori and Fana while taking a group of street children to McDonalds. “Flori was so filthy, had lice, didn’t talk, and was withdrawn and lifeless” (Felty 15). Fana knew that the Bates’ had taken in a child named Leonard and she begged them to take Flori.

When we first got Flori, she was petrified of baths. She had gotten very few in her life... and in freezing places. She lived a life of misery...sleeping outdoors in the cold, with filthy clothes full of lice and bugs, inadequate food – mostly bread and Cokes, and forced to beg on the cruel streets. But she immediately began changing and is now a normal, full-of-life happy little girl. But, when her mother leaves, she cries like her heart is breaking. –Sue Bates

Fana was given regular visitation so her connection with Flori would not be severed. “No one can take a mother’s place...no matter how bad she is” (Sue Bates). Sometimes Fana comes and takes Flori for a day. The Bates beg her not to do this, and Flori comes back in a terrible condition. She recently returned to the Bates home with bug bites, dirty, hungry, exhausted, and with impetigo (Felty 15). They have pleaded with Fana not to take Flori and make her beg on the streets, but they cannot stop her.

Flori is constantly ridiculed by children and called a “crow” meaning “black”. Flori, the small gypsy girl whose name means, “little flower” cares none about the ridicule or the prejudices. She cares only for her mother. Regardless of how inadequate Fana is for Flori, Flori sees her mother as beautiful and perfect and loves her unashamedly and unconditional. This relationship is rare. Most street children and orphans do not have love or support.
Children Impacted by AIDS

It is difficult to determine who is worse off, the street children or the orphans. Both have disadvantages, and the advantages are few and far between. Another plague that faces the population of children in Romania, both in and outside the orphanages, is that of AIDS. There are around 9,000 children in the country of Romania infected with the virus, and 2,300 children have died since 1985 (Reuters). This can be contributed to poor sanitation, lack of disposable syringes, and unscreened blood.

Worse than the physical illness the disease brings, is the isolation it causes. The children with AIDS are sent to special orphanages outside the cities. These children are not allowed to go to school or play with other children. The famous physician, Patch Adams, took a trip to Romania in order to dispel myths surrounding AIDS. He stated, “The role of a clown and the role of the doctor are very similar—to give a vision for the possible and to relieve suffering” (Reuters). The Romanians were very entertained by Patch Adams, but reforming ideas of a deadly disease is a slow process. George Grejdan, a father of two and member of village council of Singureni, stated his feelings about children infected with AIDS. He said, “We feel sorry for them (the children with AIDS), we have nothing against them, but we don’t want them near our children” (Reuters).

But entertaining a crowd on a hot summer’s day in rural Romania, and dispelling peoples’ ingrained fears of the orphans who became infected with the AIDS virus under squalid conditions during the communist government of former dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, are two different things. -Patch Adams (Reuters)
Psychological Consequences

Psychologists have studied attachment disorders in the case of Romanian orphans. The Washington Post interviewed Dr. Ron Federici, and he spoke of the after effects of institutionalization. Dr. Federici stated that, “For all of the older children, beyond adoption age of 2 and 3, attachment problems are almost guaranteed as these children never lived with any type of positive parental figure, nor are they typically afforded proper care” (Federici). He states later in the interview that children with attachment disorders often have the inability to comprehend human emotion. Recently doctors have been working to find a therapy that may correct some of these cognitive and psychological consequences. In a recent interview with an adoption specialist it was stated that, “the older the child at the age of adoption, the greater the risk of reactive attachment disorder” (Gallup).

Several case studies of reactive attachment disorder show evidence of slowed cognitive, emotional and social development, poor articulation and comprehension, immature or inappropriate behavior, poor self-care, sleep disturbances, and self-injurious behaviors (Richters and Volkmar 328-333). A group of students from Simon Fraser University did a government sponsored study of the medical, developmental, and behavioral problems of children adopted from Romanian orphanages. The behavior study revealed that these children were withdrawn and anxious. They engaged in behaviors such as rocking back and forth and watching movements of their hands and fingers. Older children were more likely to exhibit temper tantrums (Fisher).

Lawrence Lennon, a psychologist, calls a child with this attachment disorder an unbonded child. His perspective states that infancy and childhood establish how people
will behave and react to people throughout their lives. He believes that if one's physical and emotional needs are not met in infancy then that infant develops rage instead of trust. This lack of trust causes them to continually act out trauma until trauma is resolved. A child who does not have its needs met will suffer a state of physical and emotional deprivation. These children have no trust in others and no desire to please anyone but themselves. Many of these children appear unreachable and hopeless. (Lennon)

Healthy attachments which allow children to feel safe and valued and to use the caregiver as a secure base from which to explore the world, are the outgrowth of a system of reciprocal interaction (e.g., the infant cries, the parent picks up the infant, the infant stops crying and arousal is abated). When a parent neglects the child's needs or meets them harshly or abusively, the child learns to respond to a negative system, and establishes angry, coercive patterns of interactions with others. Even when the abusive relationship is terminated, and the child is moved to a loving placement, these behavior patterns may not disappear, and new and complicated patterns can emerge from this insecure foundation. -Levy

Because of inconsistencies in their caregivers and meeting of their physical and emotional needs, several orphans in Romania are suffering from attachment disorder. These children do not show love because they have never seen or felt love. The psychological consequences related to abandonment and neglect, is just one issue that is motivating the west to become more involved with child welfare in Romania.

Cultural Factors Impacting Children

Some people working in Romania have observed a societal phenomenon of devaluing children. Perhaps a general feeling of helplessness is the reason that Romania's society seems to devalue its children. Overall, there is knowledge of suffering, but not an awareness of what can be done. A story told by a volunteer clearly illustrates the cultural devaluing of the children.
One day some of the girls and I were going out to find some of the street boys that we had been working with. When we finally found them they were engaged in the common practice of sniffing glue to dull their hunger pains. We told them that we would provide them with some food if they would give us their glue bags. A few of the boys willingly surrendered their glue. We then were left with the task of locating something for the boys to eat. We saw a lady down the street feeding a street dog – one of the million- some linked sausages. We approached the woman and asked her if we could have some of the sausages that she was feeding to the dog in order to feed the children. We pointed out the boys and she shook her head. She turned her back on us and continued to feed the sausages to the dog.

-Francis
Role of Social Services in Romania

Social support and services are fairly new to Romania. Under the rule of communism social services did not exist. As Romania develops programs to help its citizens, it is looking to outside sources for aid. The government is still largely in debt. The country does not have enough money to provide its children with the resources that they are lacking. Social work is a new profession in Romania. Several other European and Western countries have sent people to train professionals in Romania. However, there is still a significant need for resources. Not only are these practitioners trying to change policy and increase awareness of the need for public services, they are also trying to reform the attitudes that are ingrained in the citizens of Romania.

Several organizations, such as Project Care International (PCI), are working to rebuild a spirit of volunteerism within Romanian society. “In the U.S., volunteerism is built into the very heart of the American dream. Romania also has a rich history of volunteerism before experiencing fifty years of Communism. Our challenge now is to recreate the environment where individuals once again become actively involved in a civil society where individuals work to improve their communities, neighborhoods, well-being and environment” (PCI Romania). PCI created a partnership called “The PARTNER Program” where Romanian professionals work side-by-side their American counterparts to improve health and the quality of life in Romania.
Adoption

Adoption as a Solution

The children in orphanages usually have one advantage and that is papers—papers that identify them as a person, and papers that could also locate a parent or a sibling. Not all of these children have papers, but the ones with papers have a greater chance of being adopted out of the orphanage. Even greater than the difficulty of adopting out of an orphanage, is the difficulty of adopting a child who does not exist.

Several of the street children in Romania exist in a status of “person non grata” this means that these children do not have papers and therefore do not exist. It is possible to go through a long process and obtain papers—thus an identity. But this process is drawn out and difficult. Many times the corruption within the system keeps the children from obtaining status. “It is definitely easier to get a child’s papers if you have some bribe money as an incentive” (Francis).

The adoption system inside Romania appears to be inconsistent and political. The laws are often shady and indefinite. They seem to change from case to case. This causes frustration and burn out within the foster care and adoption system. However, it is not hopeless. Successful adoptions from Romania are being completed every day. In 1995, there were only 275 Romanian orphans brought into the U.S., and in 1997 this number jumped to 621 (Nelson-Erichsen 221).

Foster care could be part of a solution to the fate of Romania’s abandoned children. Foster care, in Romania, is a new and unrefined system. There are few foster families, and the government is having difficulty locating and maintaining them. Society as a whole does not value social services, and the money available to help foster families
is not great. The population is busy trying to get their own needs met, and does not seem to desire to help someone else along the way (Francis). The social workers in Romania are encouraging families to become involved, but the process is slow and seemingly unfruitful at times. Because of the lack of stable and available homes for the abandoned children within Romania, international adoption is a viable option.

While the main goal is to help Romania “undo the damage from decades of poverty and a history of institutionalizing large numbers of abandoned children,” (PCI Romania) something needs to be done immediately to remove the strain on Romania’s social services. International adoption is definitely a way to permanently change the lives of the children who are adopted. Adoption is not a permanent fix to the entire problem of the abandoned children; it is merely a step to alleviate some of the need while a greater change is occurring at deeper societal levels.

Support for International Adoption

How can these children be helped right now? As was previously discussed, the longer these children go without proper physical and emotional care, the more damaged this next generation is going to become. These children require immediate love and attention. In the writer’s opinion, these children need a supportive and loving home that will provide for their physical, spiritual, emotional, and social needs. If the biological family cannot provide such a home, then one must look elsewhere. If this home cannot be found within the country, then one must look outside the country. International adoption seems to be a feasible option.

International adoption is a process perceived by many to be impossible. However, international adoption is very possible, and it can be a methodical process.
Circumstances surrounding international adoption from the country of Romania require prospective adoptive parents to be very patient. Depending on the agency, the amount of time can vary from eight months to two years from beginning to placement. The amount of time is usually determined by the cost of the adoption. Agencies that charge more are more likely to obtain a child quickly. Time is not the only constraint. Adoption from Romania costs an average of fifteen thousand dollars (Merrill). Children are eligible for adoption at six months old. Because of the circumstances and ages of most children, emotional difficulties often arise post adoption, and families must be aware of that risk. “Romania is not for the faint hearted” (Gallup).
Adoption Process

This information is general international adoption information. Each country may have specific requirements that can be obtained from a local agency. To begin the adoption process the prospective parent(s) should consult a local state-licensed agency or an individual social worker, and begin the home study process. Also, contact the INS to begin the I-600A (for an example see Appendix A), which verifies the families or person’s eligibility to adopt. An I-171H (see Appendix B) is the confirming document of eligibility from the INS. The placing agency (usually within the country of child) will wait on the home study evaluation to begin searching for a child. A referral occurs when the home study is complete and the child has been found.

Romania requires a dossier (document portfolio) with twelve items. The prospective parents are required to put together the dossier. The dossier includes items such as notarized birth certificates, marriage license, health documents, police records, statement of desire, photographs, and other documents deemed relevant by Romania. This portfolio will be the documents necessary for the country to complete the process. This is the part that requires patience because there is no definite time line. The parents will receive notification of a time to travel and appear in court from Romania. After the papers are approved, the visa is granted, and the adoption is completed within the child’s home country (Romania in this case), the child’s adoption within the U.S. can be completed.
Proposal

The Rainbow Foundation

Previously established is the fact that adoption is necessary as part of the solution, adoption is costly, and adoption is time consuming. It is the writer’s opinion that many loving families are unable to afford to adopt a child from Romania. The writer feels that an organization needs to be established that would meet this need. The Rainbow Foundation is a hypothetical agency that will be used as an illustration for purposes of this thesis. The Rainbow Foundation would provide adoption services and processing at no cost to the prospective parents. Individuals, churches, grants, and other donors would ideally absorb costs.

The details of The Rainbow Foundation will be more clearly specified in the following pages. In order to present The Rainbow Foundation in a clearer fashion, the writer has developed a hypothetical proposal for a grant. This proposal takes place after the foundation has been established for seven years. This next section will give the supposed detail of the foundation allowing the reader to have a better insight. All of the supporting references, numbers, and facts have been added to increase the believability and are not factual.
Summary:

The Rainbow Foundation has been established to provide healthy American homes for children at risk in Romania. We have been in operation for 7 years and have adopted over 84 Romanian children into the United States. Eight of these children have been adopted into homes in Delaware County. The Rainbow Foundation provides complete funding of these adoptions in order to help alleviate the financial strain incurred by international adoption. The foundation also offers an assimilation program in order to orient Romanians to American language and culture. Our facility allows adoptive parents and children to stay for a period of two weeks to acquaint themselves with one another and to work through some of the emotional stress of adoption. Families attend seminars to help prepare them for potential cultural, physical, and emotional barriers due to the nature of the adoption. Families interact with each other forming support networks and friendships. The Romanian children are engaged in a multitude of activities ranging from play therapy and psychological evaluations to medical assessments and possible interventions.

This proposal would ensure continued funding of Romanian adoptions into loving homes. It would also allow the foundation to reach out to even more children at risk in Romania.
The total cost for the Foundation is $571,200.00. Of this amount, local churches, corporations, and professionals have already donated $501,010.00. This request is for the balance needed of $70,190.00.

Introduction:

The Rainbow Foundation was started in 1993 out of the dreams an education student and a social work student. After seeing the great need during a short-term mission trip with Heart to Heart International Ministries, they were passionate to find a way to offer these children a future. Out of this dream, came a name and a vision. After further research and experience obtained working with the Eastern European Adoption Coalition (EEAC), the two took on the task of adopting a single child from Romania. Lilliana was placed in a nurturing home in November of 1993. This was the commencement of the foundation now known as The Rainbow Foundation.

The Rainbow Foundation’s mission is to provide abandoned Romanian children with an opportunity to live, develop, learn and be loved in a healthy and stable home environment in the U.S. Our philosophy is as follows: The rainbow is a symbol of the promises God gives to all His children. The orphans in Romania are no exception, for God knows the hopes of the helpless. He listens to their cries and He comforts them. One of the things these unwanted children desire, is a family to love and care for them. Our vision is to place these beautiful gifts from God into loving families that will teach them of God’s promises for their lives.

The Rainbow Foundation has participated actively in child welfare policy evaluation within the U.S. and Romania. We have successfully altered legislation.
regarding restriction of international adoptions to promote more prospective families to pursue adoption outside of the U.S.

The clients that we serve consist of Romanian children who have been declared "orphaned" in the eyes of the Romanian government. These may be children living on the streets or in state institutions. The prospective families are also included in our clientele.

The Rainbow Foundation helps other organizations by orienting them to the process of international adoption. The foundation is often requested to arrange paperwork, do home studies, and evaluate proposals in order to promote more international adoptions. We often advocate on behalf of international child welfare to U.S. governmental agencies. Families who are unable to afford international adoptions are often referred to The Rainbow Foundation by other adoptive agencies throughout the nation.

We receive funding from a variety of sources including churches, funding committees, corporations, small businesses, individuals, and fundraising campaigns. The EEAC recognized the Rainbow Foundation stating that, "The Rainbow Foundation's contributions to children and families are innumerable. Their dedication to alleviating the suffering of orphans and street children is phenomenal. We, the EEAC are proud to stand behind and support all their efforts. We look forward to their continued success, and hope to remain a partner of the Rainbow Foundation."

Recently an article was published in the New York Times. This article recognized the Rainbow Foundation as "Highly recommended in the field of international adoption due to their efficiency, trustworthiness and commitment to providing Romanian
children with an opportunity to live, develop, learn and be loved in a healthy and stable U.S. home.” Dave Darent, former U.S. Senator, was quoted during the Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Law, Immigration, and Refugees saying that, “I’ve been happy to support them in their efforts and trust the American system will not let them down. It’s my hope that the fruit of this foundation will be the further uniting of many Romanian children and U.S. families.”

The Rainbow Foundation was invited to give testimony and knowledge during the Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Law, Immigration, and Refugees of the Committee on the Judiciary House of Representatives One hundred Second Congress. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has asked the Rainbow Foundation to review several international adoption and VISA forms on many occasions. The Rainbow Foundation is consistently asked to give professional opinion on issues of international child welfare.

Needs Assessment:

Thousands of abandoned tiny children are living today in the sewers, streets, and train stations in Romania. Also there are over 150,000 children living in state operated orphanages (Heart). Romania has often been referred to as the “land of the orphans”. They have earned this reputation due to the legacy of its former ruthless dictator, Ceausescu, and his pro-natalist policies. Nicolae Ceausescu made it mandatory for women to have five children and banned all forms of contraception (Children’s Relief). His motivation for doing this was to build a strong militant nation. Ceausescu robbed his nation economically, thereby making it very difficult for families to care for their own children. As a result of this, thousands of children were abandoned.
The Rainbow Foundation focuses on providing these abandoned children with healthy, loving, stable U.S. homes. Because the cost of international adoption is too exorbitant, the Foundation fully funds these adoptions. The Rainbow Foundation not only provides adoption funding to families that cannot afford it, but it also aids in completion of all processes necessary and accompanies the families to Romania to obtain the child. After the child is brought to the U.S., the foundation provides comprehensive services to assimilate the two cultures and make the transition run comfortably and smoothly.

This grant will aid in the continuation of services to these children and families. Every child brought into a stable home is one less inhabiting the streets and orphanages of Romania. There is no way measure the significance of one life drastically changed by even a single adoption.

Romania’s governmental structure has been in transition for over 10 years. It is a country attempting to pick up the pieces of a fallen communist regime and progress into a more democratic way of governing. However, due to the lack of efficiency many social programs and cultural institutions are suffering. Its people are poor and the government’s hands seem to be tied. While Romania works to find a governing system that will work, children are left behind with no supporting structure. The Rainbow Foundation is one of the agencies that have been granted admittance to the country of Romania to assist in alleviating the social plight in which they find themselves.

With financial assistance from your foundation, several abandoned children in Romania will be given hope through the uniting of a secure American family in which they will learn, develop and become indispensable members of U.S. society.
Foundation Objectives:

The Rainbow Foundation’s objectives are as follows:

1. To decrease the number of orphaned children in Romania by 12 per year.
2. To increase the number of children successfully adopted into nurturing American homes by 12 per year.
3. To obtain sufficient funds to execute 12 adoptions per year.
4. By the end of the foundation’s two-week assimilation program, the families will be proficient enough in language and culture to comfortably return to their respective homes.
5. To conduct post-adoptive services to ensure that proper bonding of the family is occurring.

Methods:

The Rainbow Foundation has two staff permanently residing in Romania. Their job is to locate prospective Romanian children and initialize paperwork and background information. This staff works alongside Romanian governmental officials to ensure their eligibility for adoption. Stateside staff includes two Bachelor’s level social workers whose duties are to coordinate the two-week assimilation program and also to arrange necessary adoption paperwork through the ICCC and the INS. They are also the individuals who accompany the parents overseas to finalize the adoption procedure and to bring the children back to the states.

The two Master’s level social workers work within the United States to inspect and evaluate the stability of prospective adoptive families. The MSW’s are the ones who perform post-adoptive counseling and follow-up evaluations to ensure the cohesion of the newly formed family unit. A language teacher works full time to instruct the families and
staff in the Romanian language and culture, while serving as a translating liaison in communication with Romanian officials. Additional staff includes contract psychologists and medical doctors who perform medical, developmental and psychiatric evaluations and give professional recommendations during the two-week program.

The focus of activity at the Rainbow Foundation is centralized within 6-8 weeks out of a year. This is the time the Foundation is most active with the families. All of the home studies and background work with the bureaucracies are completed prior to this. Every May and November, one BSW accompanies 6 parents to Romania where one week is spent finalizing the foreign adoption process. After all paperwork is complete, the parents and children return to our facility where they will spend two weeks in an intensive cultural and language assimilation program. All family members are welcome to be a part of the program at this point; the evaluations, classes and counseling sessions are performed during this time.

After the two-week program is completed, the families return to their respective homes with their newly adopted children to begin the transition back to their normal daily lives. The foundation's MSW's are in charge of the follow-up programs which will be performed on a needs basis, year round. Evaluations are performed in January and July.
### Time Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff in Romania locate eligible children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff in Romania finalize adoption papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSW’s prepare U.S. papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSW’s locate eligible families</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSW’s and families go to Romania</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. staff conduct program</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSW’s conduct follow-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluations performed and summary distributed.</td>
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### Evaluations

All sources of funding are invited to observe and explore the Rainbow Foundation and its facilities. Many times these sources contribute to the Foundation by providing feedback, suggestions, and new ideas. We conduct internal staff and family satisfaction surveys annually. These surveys allow us to grow and improve with the changing needs of the population. History illustrates the Rainbow Foundation’s accomplishments through the eighty-four successfully united families. The International Concern Committee for Children (ICCC) joins the Rainbow Foundation twice yearly to conduct detailed, meticulous evaluations of our staff, services, and programs. This is done to
determine whether the services offered are meeting the needs of such a vulnerable population of children.

In the product evaluation, the Rainbow Foundation has met its objectives of adopting twelve children every year for the past seven years. The Rainbow Foundation has also obtained sufficient funds to execute the twelve adoptions per year. The satisfaction survey has concluded that at the end of the two-week assimilation program, parents are comfortable returning to their homes.

The ICCC performs evaluations in the months of January and July to determine whether methods are producing desired outcomes. They begin by examining the facility. They also conduct evaluations of each staff member including those based in Romania. The ICCC also conducts a qualitative assessment of several families and their adopted children. The results of this survey are used to refine the services offered by the Rainbow Foundation ensuring that all needs are met. Summaries of evaluation results and the new strategies implemented are sent to each of the funding sources.
## Budget Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total This Grant</th>
<th>Total Donated</th>
<th>Total Requested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Personnel</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Salaries and Wages</td>
<td>$187,920.00</td>
<td>$147,920.00</td>
<td>$40,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Fringe Benefits</td>
<td>$46,500.00</td>
<td>$46,500.00</td>
<td>-0-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II. Housing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Victorian House</td>
<td>$120,000.00</td>
<td>$120,000.00</td>
<td>-0-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Utilities/Furnishings</td>
<td>$25,190.00</td>
<td>$23,000.00</td>
<td>$2,190.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>III. Travel</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Airfare to Romania</td>
<td>$28,000.00</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>$28,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Stateside Travel</td>
<td>$23,500.00</td>
<td>$23,500.00</td>
<td>-0-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IV. Office</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Furniture/Computers</td>
<td>$7,250.00</td>
<td>$7,250.00</td>
<td>-0-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Supplies/Materials</td>
<td>$5,200.00</td>
<td>$5,200.00</td>
<td>-0-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>V. Miscellaneous</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Food/Recreation</td>
<td>$6,300.00</td>
<td>$6,300.00</td>
<td>-0-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Clothing/Medical Supplies</td>
<td>$1,340.00</td>
<td>$1,340.00</td>
<td>-0-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VI. Adoption</strong></td>
<td>$120,000.00</td>
<td>$120,000.00</td>
<td>-0-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>$571,200.00</td>
<td>$501,010.00</td>
<td>$70,190.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Budget Detail

I. Personnel

Medical Doctor  
8-hour day X 6 days per year  
$960.00 (-)

Psychologist  
8-hour day X 6 days per year  
$960.00 (-)

Language Teacher/Translator  
Full time employee  
Benefits $7,500  
$37,500 (-)

MSW (2)  
2 full time employees at $30,000 per year  
Benefits $15,000  
$75,000 (-)

BSW (2)  
2 full time employees at $24,000 per year  
Benefits $12,000  
$60,000 (-)

Staff in Romania (2)  
2 full time employees at $24,000 per year  
Benefits $12,000  
$60,000(-20,000)

Total Need  
$234,420.00

Donated Time + Financial Contributions  
$194,420.00

Total Requested  
$40,000.00

II. Housing Expenses

Victorian House  
Utilities  
Gas 12 months X $75.00/month  
$2,190

Electric 12 months X $60.00/month

Water 12 months X $15.00/month

Phone 12 months X $30.00/month

Sewage 3 times yearly at $10.00

Home Furnishings  
4 bunk beds, 8 full size, 8 dressers,

6 couches, 2 dining sets, 8 telephones,

2 television/vcr combinations

$18,000 (-)

Maintenance  
Plumbing, electric, landscaping, and general upkeep

$5,000 (-)

Total Need  
$145,190.00

Donated  
$143,000.00

Total Requested  
$2,190.00
III. Travel Expenses

Roundtrip Airfare to Romania
6 parents + 1 BSW X 2 trips per year
at $14,000 per trip, $2,000 per ticket
$28,000

Stateside Travel
2 vans at $8,000 per van
maintenance and fuel $1,500 per year
home evaluation trips by MSW’s $6,000 travel/lodging
$23,500 (-)

Total Need $51,500.00
Donated $23,500.00
Total Requested $28,000.00

IV. Office Expenses

Office Furniture
5 desks at $200/desk
5 chairs at $50/desk
$1,250 (-)

Computers
5 computers + software at $1,200
$6,000 (-)

Office Supplies
Paper costs, copies, pens, pencils, paperclips, flip charts, etc.
$4,000 (-)

Educational Materials
Reading primers, crayons, books, videos, etc.
$1,200 (-)

Total Need $12,450.00
Donated $12,450.00
Total Requested $0

V. Miscellaneous

Food
Feeding families for 2 weeks twice per year
$4,800 (-)

Kid’s Clothing
Clothes for adopted children including playwear ($30 X 12 kids), shoes ($25 X 12 kids), and a dress outfit ($40 X 12 kids) for each child.
$1,140 (-)

Medical Supplies
Band-aids, medical tape, ointments, other minor injury and illness supplies.
$200 (-)

Recreational
Museums, zoos, theatre and dining
$1,500 (-)

Total Need $7,640.00
Donated $7,640.00
Total Requested $0
VI. International Adoption Costs

Adoptions

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single adoption at $10,000 X 12 per year</td>
<td>$120,000 (-)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Need | $120,000.00 |
| Donated   | $120,000.00 |
| Total Requested | $0 |

VII. Total Program Costs

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Need</td>
<td>$524,700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donated</td>
<td>$454,510.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Requested</td>
<td>$90,190.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Budget includes not only monies and donations for current year, but also permanent and one-time expenses and donations such as house and vehicles. Donations come from several sources such as the following: individuals, churches, businesses, corporations, fundraising campaigns, and other funding committees.

Thank you for your consideration. This foundation would not exist if it were not for the generous donations from sources like this one. Your contributions are greatly appreciated. Please do not hesitate to contact us with your inquiries.
Conclusion

Romania is making changes for the better, but these changes are slow in coming and are suppressed by centuries of poor leadership. There are thousands of children that are fighting for survival. Not only are their physical needs being neglected, but also their emotional and psychological needs. Social work has the opportunity to make amazing strides towards relieving these children of their yoke of depravement. The issue of children at risk in Romania digs at the very core of social work itself. Whereas the children of Romania exist in a state of oppression, social work strives for equality. Romania will change for the better, it is just a matter of touching one life at a time.
Personal Note

This thesis was produced out of a passion and a desire ignited by the love of Jesus Christ. In James 1:27, the Bible says, “...look after orphans and widows in their distress...”, and this instruction encompasses the orphans and street children in Romania. We as a society can embrace those who are less fortunate. The multitudes of children in Romania only represent one population seeking our embrace. Around the world exist people who are not given the opportunity even to exist or survive. It is up to each of us to do our part to reach out to those around us who are in need.
Works Consulted


Francis, Christina. “Update on hygiene kits.” Personal Email: 18 Feb. 2001.

Francis, Christina. Personal Interview. 11 November 1999.


Notice of Approval

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
Immigration and Naturalization Service
509 North Sam Houston Parkway East
Houston, Texas 77060

Name and Address of Prospective Petitioner

Name of perspective petitioner

Name of sponsor, if married

Date application filed

Date of completion of Advance processing

NOTICE OF FAVORABLE DETERMINATION CONCERNING APPLICATION FOR ADVANCE PROCESSING OF ORPHAN PETITION

It has been determined that you are able to furnish proper care to an orphan or orphans as defined by Section 101(a)(11)(F) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. A separate orphan petition, Form I-600, must be filed in behalf of each child with documentary evidence as described in instructions 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f, 2g, and 2h of that form. A form or forms for your use are enclosed. No fee will be required with Form I-600 if you file only one Form I-600 within one year from the date of completion of all advance processing. If you do not file Form I-600 within one year from the date of completion of your advance processing application, your application will be considered abandoned. Any further proceedings will require the filing of a new advance processing application or an orphan petition.

Form I-600 should be filed at the Service office or American consulate or embassy where your advance processing application is being retained or has been forwarded as indicated by an "X" mark below.

1. [ ] Your advance processing application is being retained at this office.
2. [ ] Your advance processing application has been forwarded to our service office at ____________________.
3. [ ] Your advance processing application has been forwarded to the American consulate or embassy at ____________________.

In addition, please note the following:

[ ] Any original documents submitted in support of your application are returned to you.
[ ] Your home study is returned to you.

This determination does not guarantee that the orphan petition(s) which you file will be approved. An orphan petition may be denied because the child does not qualify for classification as an orphan or for other proper cause. Denial of an orphan petition, however, may be appealed.

Form I-171H
(12/15/82)