

Orphanage Initiative in Romania

ORGANIZERS:

The project was established in 1996 in Iasi and is now taking place in six cities: Bucharest, Cluj, Craiova, Iasi, Oradea and Timisoara. Romanian and Norwegian medical students are involved in organizing and co-ordinating the project. The project is recognized as an official IFMSA project.

BACKGROUND:

The world became aware of the problems regarding the orphanages in Romania after the revolution in 1989. The first years after the revolution several organisations were working in the country and Romania received a lot of humanitarian aid.

In Romania today there are about 100,000 orphans or children abandoned by their parents. Some of them more fortunate are getting adopted by other families, being lucky to start a new life beside the adoptive parents, but the majority of them are living in special protective institutions, the so called "placement centers".

The children are in great need of attention from elders, as the staff cannot provide enough of this to the children due to the size of the groups. This is the main reason for a lot of the children being behind in both their mental and physical development.

GOALS

Through running the project for several years we hope to achieve:

1. The children will benefit from the stimulation that they get from the students. Foreign students will only go to Romania during the summer, but we hope to have Romanian students working in the project during the whole year.
2. The staff will be motivated to do an even better job, and the help that they receive from the students is very welcome. They have a very difficult job, and we should give them all the encouragement we can.
3. The students who join the project will learn about a world completely different from their own. Hopefully they can pass some of this knowledge on to other students at their home. Through raising awareness of health problems such as this will motivate some of them to keep working to improve the situation.

LOCATION:

The project takes place in Bucharest, Cluj, Craiova, Iasi, Oradea and Timisoara, in one or more placement centers in each of the mentioned towns. Detailed information about each city and orphanage or any special conditions in each can be received upon request, from the project coordinator(s).

WHO CAN JOIN THE PROJECT:

The project is open to all students, no matter the field of study. However, if there are many applications, students within health sciences or other relevant fields will have priority.

Students at any level in their study are welcome to participate.

There is a language barrier between the students and the children, but Romanian students will be help out.

ROTATION PERIODS:

There are two rotations, each of 3 weeks, in all six cities in July and August. 6 students are accepted for each rotation.

The closing date for receiving applications will be April 15th of each year.

Before and after the rotation the students involved in the project may communicate through the mail-list 'orphanage@yahogroups.com'.

THE JOB OF THE STUDENT:

This are some of the things you might do while working in the orphanage. The activities should be agreed on with the staff and the romanian co-ordinators.

1. play with the children, try to establish contacts across the language barrier and give the children the attention they do not otherwise receive.
 2. take the children for walking trips in the city.
 3. make expeditions (renting a bus and going with a larger group of children to the countryside)
 3. arrange exercise-activities with the children (this can be a lot of fun for all, believe me!)
 4. small maintenance work at the orphanage.
- 1.** try to learn as much as possible of the language (playing with the children can teach you much).
 - 2.** help the physiotherapist with rehabilitation of the physically disabled children.

During the week the approximate program can include

- 09.00 - arrival to the orphanage
- 09.00 - 13.00 "classes" (activities mentioned above)
- 13.00 - 15.00 lunch break
- 16.00 - 18.00 afternoon program (trips, visits in the city, rehabilitation programme, workgroups for psychology, games, movies, TV, special programme for education, art-therapy)
- 18.00 - 18.30 debates about the problems appeared during the day.

Any new ideas and changes to the program could be done together with the local coordinator.

During the spare time Romanian students will organize a social programme (e.g. discos, pubs, sports). During the weekends students will be given the possibility to visit parts of Romania.

PARTICIPANTS FEE:

The students will be asked to pay a sum of 100 Euro to the project. This will cover lodging, organisational costs and a small donation to the orphanage. This sum can be paid upon arrival in Romania. Food is generally cheap in Romania. Expect to spend 100-150 Euro on food.

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The accomodation will be in a students campus, where two or three participants share a room.

THINGS TO BE BROUGHT:

For the work with children is not necessary a white coat. If you want to bring something for children (clothes, toys) you are welcome. It's advisable to keep in touch with the local coordinator from the town in which you are accepted to find out the needs of the placement center in that period.

For yourself, be sure not to forget: alarm clock, umbrella, dictionary (very usefull if you want to talk with children or buy something).

HOW TO APPLY:

Send an application form to the international coordinator by mail or fax. If you do not have an application form, please download it from our webpage or contact the international coordinator.

ROMANIAN VISA:

For information how to obtain a romanian visa please visit the site:

<http://embassy.romania.org>.

You'll find here information about the visa and the addresses of the romanian embassies and consulates.

MORE INFORMATION:

If the information on this webpage is not sufficient please contact us. For questions regarding application procedures, selection of participants and other formal matters contact the international co-ordinator. For questions regarding local matters, eg. conditions in the or how to travel in Romania - contact the national co-ordinator.

Contact persons:

- International coordinator: Kristin Turcuta
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- National Coordinator: Ilinca Tranulis
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So, if you love children and you can give them a part of your affection and they can give you back a part of their happiness and also gain a life experience then join this romanian project.

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