

Project Romania

Charity Number 1042512

From the
heady fragrance of
acacia in the Spring

A YEAR of
STARK
CONTRAST

To the
desperate poverty
& pain of Autumn

Rural Transylvania - enslaved in poverty & tradition

We met Lucia, a lovely gipsy girl, when she was 13 and needed an operation to straighten her deformed leg. What a joyful child she became as she helped at Holiday Club. We met her again this autumn. Now, with 4 children whom she loves dearly she's *old*, expecting No 5 at 25, coming to us in tears.

This time she needs money for a termination - it's her culture. She clings to us. 'Please help me, I can't cope', **but we can't help!** We visit her mum - and find the roof leaks in her small one-roomed house & her fire

has disappeared -it was broken ..

IN WINTER TEMPERATURES

WILL DROP TO MINUS 25

For **£200**, her small fire can be rebuilt and a plastic sheet provided for her roof. Lucia can have a **£20 food parcel** monthly, we're urgently seeking appropriate help too... then we hear, her 23 year old cousin's husband ... has cancer ... **Please help these poor folk this CHRISTMAS - they need YOU.**

Lord, help us to look out for those who feel they are marginalized,
who cannot find hope, who believe they have little to offer,
who are overcome by the challenges of poverty

Help us to make space for the stranger, give time to the outsider.
Give us the courage and determination to see grace in every human
face and the faith to embrace every opportunity

In Your name ... Amen

Romania - or Bust by Peter Lansdown

The excuse for going was 'helping Project Romania', by taking donated goods. Without this incentive we wouldn't have gone. A '4000 mile' round trip is not something you undertake lightly.



We arrived on 25th September. The border crossing was interesting, a useful introduction to how 'things are done'. We sailed through other borders but were stopped going IN to Romania, not for a van search but for a bit of pure bureaucracy. I had to submit my driving license, have my passport photocopied, 2 forms photocopied in duplicate - and pay. (I was never asked for those papers again.) But, we were in, which was more than the 100 or so lorries lined up by the road, (on the other side were an equal number waiting to get out. Unbelievable).

Romania is big. It took 24 hours to get to Seica Mare where Florin Benghea is the Romania end of the charity. Arrival is always a pleasure and welcomes over we enjoyed a most accomplished mini violin recital by Cati, his 13 year-old daughter. Then we were off to the Rainbow Centre at Buia.

Project Romania has responded to the needs of the community and adapted to change over the years. In 1991 they provided help for an orphanage in the days following Ceausescu's regime, but now the community has different needs. The Project sponsors youngsters through school and we were privileged to meet some families. It became very clear, and was confirmed by our later travels, this is one of the poorest areas in Romania. Some families live in the most primitive of homes, desperately in need of maintenance, with little or no sanitation, and just the ubiquitous wood-burning stove for cooking - ok if you have access to wood.



The School, & the spectacle of Dawn in front of the class reminding them of "heads, shoulders, knees and toes" (complete with actions) was possibly a highlight - until we realised that the gipsies were segregated. They tend to drop out of school at 14. A lovely girl, who the charity helped in 2002, is on her 5th pregnancy, aged 25. This is a Europe-wide issue needing urgent attention. The Buia gipsies seemed particularly poor, even compared to this poor society. Almost a community apart.

The Rainbow Centre provides "Village Hall" facilities. Two doctors hold a weekly surgery and are eager to see the pharmacy opening. 3 cabins have been built on the hill behind the Centre to provide modern facilities & give holiday/ respite visits to deprived & disabled children. We had one, and used the communal facilities for washing and cooking. The wood burning stove certainly worked well & we were very comfortable and warm,



The idea of using cabins for visitors is appealing. Such an enterprise would bring visitors, money to finance the charity work & provide employment for this very poor community. Accommodation is not 'your average' & visitors couldn't be "yer ordniry" trippers either, but this part of Romania is exquisite. The countryside is heavily wooded and unspoilt, & much ancient architecture to be seen. Working horses are everywhere; field mushrooms proliferate; insects flatten themselves on your windscreen, (pesticides are not in common use here yet). And one has centuries of culture to explore, similar to ours although at the opposite end of Europe. Saxons, Celts & Vikings came here too, just like England. The Centre has great potential but really needs someone living locally to develop it. The lease is due for renewal and the charity has some serious thinking to do

The Rainbow Centre of **HOPE** - a new lease will incur an annual rent, (it was free for the past 10 years). Two doctors now have their weekly surgery there, & really want the new Pharmacy to open, but all that hangs on the lease - whether we can pay rent for a couple of years till the Centre is self-sufficient & the Romanian NGO in Seica takes over.

The Centre IS a place of **HOPE**, full of opportunities - where the gypsy girls could learn a Craft and gain self-respect; a place where so many disabled youngsters will benefit from residential facilities, lads like



Marius



& Nicu

We're praying for guidance through the Romanian legalities and financial commitment - please pray with us.

Sponsored Family news - We were delighted to be given a guitar for **CSILLA** & so was she ! She sang so beautifully for us.



Bread4 Buia - The children had happy smiles as they received their loaves of bread. Life is hard in these villages and all help is appreciated. With the

Centre open there would be opportunity for paid work rather than reliance on Aid programmes.

DENISA is waiting for disability aids to help her cope with life.

MARIUS VLAD sends Christmas Greetings to all his friends in the UK.

He is so happy with his new 'mouse' ...



9.790 Tonne RECYCLED MILK BOTTLE TOPS

The last load totalled **825 kgs** ! In 6 years we've raised **£519.00**

but have retired from sorting now due to ill health. Any tops will now go to a cancer charity Cords4Life. We will still facilitate initially.

BAG2THEFUTURE Clothes Collection, September - 340kgs of clothing and bedding raised **£170.00** (We will do this again next autumn)

Thank you to all who have helped with these Fundraising Projects

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