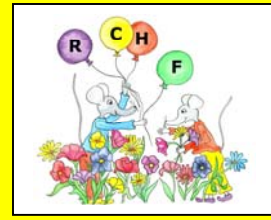


STICHTING RCHF 2011

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER NEWS UPDATE



Poverty affects over 4 million Romanians today

Poverty we class as when a family simply has not the funds for essential supplies of food, funds to pay mains service bills with and funds to allow children to go to school. In Romania today both urban and rural families numbering over 4 million people out of a 20 million population suffer from poverty at varying rates. The worst affected are families without the possibility of work who live in rural areas and who gain no or very little social benefit and certainly not sufficient to keep hunger from their door on.

Many families live on unhealthy food, as is all they can afford to purchase and many others simply do not know where the next meal for their children is coming from. It hurts to be poor and is embarrassing also as well as humiliating when a parent simply has not the means to feed its children and for the child also it hurts and is humiliating to be known as a poor child.



The simple fact though is that this reality is in a Country that is a member of the European Union and a Country that once had one of the highest industrial and agricultural productions in all of Europe. Sadly those days are past as after the downfall of communism the new so called elite leaders have failed to tackle the problem of poverty and with the closure of agricultural farms and state industrial complexes the poverty rate has now spiraled out of control in recent years.

We find families who are willing to work and eager to work, but with no jobs on offer live in many cases in poverty doing their best to raise their families and finding occasional work in the rural or urban area to help with funds and its these very families that we help. The ones who are able to find odd days seasonal work, but prefer to sit idle or spend the small family allowance in the local bars on alcohol we simply are unable to help as they do not help themselves.

A family we support lives on just 25 euro per week and in Romania today one simply can't manage on such an amount to feed children, pay household bills and school supplies. For these children in these families a weeks holiday away from home is simply a dream and its not a lie when we state that there is many a child who has never even been out of their village to the nearest town in their lifetime to date even for a day out.

Poverty affects health and again children and old aged people suffer the worst as simply can't afford medical bills in a Country with no compensated treatment cost. Almost every day one can see patients outside of hospital gates asking for help with prescription funds as they have no relatives to run and pay the cost that will bring them back

to full health again. These are not beggars, but desperate people who are ill and humiliated by the lack of support from a European Union member state they were born onto which offers them no support.

The poorest of children simply don't go to school, as their parents simply have not the funds for clothing or school materials and additional payments required for a child to gain an education. Here we help yearly to provide supplies to children in these families so they can get the education they rightly deserve, but we are only touching the surface, as school supplies are expensive to kit a child out with, with so many children in need.

Within our monthly budget of aid funds we help the poorest families we know with food supplies and household products to help with basic hygiene in the family home as all too easily in poverty standards can fall if there are for instance no soap or shampoo funds in a family budget. Poverty is not a crime though sadly those in poverty feel the pain and injustice when they simply go to bed cold each night and see their children in the same plight.

MDR-TB caused by poverty taking its toll in Romania.

Romania for many years has suffered the highest rate of Tuberculosis infected people in all of Europe and though showing a recent dip in TB figures which is encouraging. The simple fact remains that in a Country with a very low health service expenditure budget, which leaves hospitals without the latest medical diagnosis equipment and no state supported TB prevention project we realize that in real terms it will be many years before TB is brought to a reasonable level in Romania overall.

Poverty amongst the poorest of TB sufferers is now giving cause for extreme concern in northeast Romania as RCHF discovered whilst attending a summer pulmonary health



conference in Piatra Neamt town. Above Brian Douglas of RCHF can be seen speaking in an interview on Neamt County TV. TB is fully curable in Romania with free treatment offered, but to be cured a infected person must stay in the TB Hospital for several months and afterwards once allowed home must continue to take a course of drug therapy plus have a balanced diet. For the poorest we add that the balanced diet ends the day they leave hospital as their financial situation at home prevents this being a reality.

More concerning is the number of TB patients who because of poverty at home are renouncing their treatment whilst in Hospital and are returning home still infected with TB. This they do to try help their families and again an odd days work to help pay for some food for the family they love. The negative and deadly side is that a patient whop renounces TB treatment in a few weeks finds themselves very ill again, but this time when they are returned to hospital they find they are what is called multi drug resistant to TB as the original drug therapy is no longer effective because the second strain of TB is now far stronger. Sadly though medics do all they can the loss of life to multi drug resistant TB for which there is no cure is high. This now leaves a family without a parent and places them into even deeper poverty overall quite apart from the trauma suffered at the loss of a loved parent.

RCHF knowing this situation, which was explained at Piatra Neamt, has agreed to start a full TB prevention campaign and education campaign with group sessions of TB patients at the Hospital Bisericani in Neamt

starting in November to help prevent patients from renouncing their TB treatment and we will find ways of helping overcome family poverty within our scope also as this is a major part of why patients renounce on their treatment. We will of course also continue our long collaboration with the Pulmonary disease Hospital in Iasi alongside the new Neamt County project. Prevention is better than cure always and in the TB domain saves lives.

RCHF as members of the World Health Organization housed STOP TB department was honored to be asked to provide information about TB in Romanian in the European TB awareness report 2011 which was produced recently.

RCHF awareness education on the dangers of consuming drugs and public health education continues monthly.

We continue our ongoing projects of public health education amongst school children of all ages each month. This project, which has built into a major public health awareness campaign by RCHF in Romania, gives young people a chance to learn about serious illnesses and disease and how to avoid contacting the same. Its vital if we are to have a healthier generation ahead in a Country with such a high poverty level.

We have specific learning tools like the basic first class “Mr Mouse” Hygiene book beautifully illustrated with animated characters by Miriam Charmant and the TB interactive board game lesson for young people along with a range of Power -

Point lectures for all ages on subjects ranging from basic hygiene to hepatitis, Tuberculosis, HIV, healthy food, exercise and adolescent education for teens.



Because of the huge rise in drug abuse in Romania and massive rise in unregulated hallucinating products that are aimed at young people in recent years that have caused deaths amongst young people as well as untold trauma and illness with serious side effects now showing over 50.000 consumers in just the last 3 short years in Romania of hallucinating products deemed easy drugs RCHF earlier this year started a full campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of all drug consumption to young people in a series of conferences and workshops as well as in school lessons with very interesting results in feedback from young people about drugs in their area including being offered at the school gate by dealers. Romania has constantly lacked initiative to really address the narcotic problem which is now a well plied underground dealer trade that is still causing innocent deaths to the population and within RCHF we do our best as an independent non political NGO to raise awareness to this important and deadly practice in an effort to keep young people away from the real dangers to their health posed by the drug dealers.

RCHF is at this moment working on a new interactive learning tool for children and young people of all ages to help them become aware of the dangers of all types of drugs. We will be updating you about this exciting learning tool in future updates and the official launch. The new interactive learning tool will first be in the Romanian language followed by other international languages including English, French and Dutch.

The pain of Romanian flood refugees continues

RCHF weekly is still providing important support to families who are still homeless over 1 year and 3 months after the terrible floods in Dorohoi that washed away their homes and all possessions in June 2010. In the photo one can see a refugee family shack in which live a family of 4 people including a 2-year-old child. It's below 10 c at night now and with strong winds extremely cold living in these improvised conditions. Replacement dwelling construction has been so slow and supplies also slow in arriving onsite over the last year which now means that these refugees are out in the cold again as the cold weather at night is already upon the north eastern areas of Romania. The shack has openings in the roof and we are helping to cover this for the winter before the rain and heavy snow arrives for this family plus are helping other refugee families as well.



Unfinished replacement dwellings can be seen in the photo on the right and with every day that passes now we see it less likely that these dwellings will all be finished before the snow and hard winter appears that brings with it sub zero temperatures that stop building work for months on end.



RCHF will continue to support families who are the poorest with essential weekly needs and will support them on an ongoing basis where we can to help alleviate their plight.



In this photograph taken from the window of our RCHF secretary apartment one sees the Unirea Square in Iasi City center and one can see the old communist built apartment blocks that families live their lives in still today. Since communism though life has changed, as residents now have to pay huge service charges for gas, electricity and water cost, plus heating which are beyond the reach of many families. The result is that the poorest have no heat in the winter as cant afford such and also only have cold water daily to wash in. Pensioners in these apartments are often the worst affected as have small pensions and medicals bills for ailments associated with old age to pay as well.

Likewise here in Piatra Neamt town which attracts foreign tourists each year for winter Ski holidays few realize that in the old communist built apartment blocks are people suffering from the cold and living in poverty as they enjoy their holiday in the hotels and on the ski lifts to the ski slopes.

Poverty sadly is hidden away, not to be seen and not to be openly spoken about it seems, hence the pain and suffering of those in need continues. We help the needy in an open and caring manner showing empathy whilst at the same time without humiliation to anyone raising the subject into the limelight so that others can appreciate the plight of the needy and offer support if they wish via RCHF.



We thank our sponsors and supporters whose kindness allows us to continue to help the most needy in our well designed and established projects.

Within RCHF together we are a team making vital changes to the lives and health of the Romanian population attending to basics first in poverty reduction, health and education. By helping the families we also help the children as well within these families to a better standard of life.

Our contact e-mail is **stichting_rchf@yahoo.com** and new supporters are more than welcome to contact and join us.

Our next news update will appear in November.

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