

OPEN HANDS

ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

OPEN HANDS

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

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OPEN HANDS

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Charity number

1136482

Trustees

Rebekka Single (Chairperson)
Trevor Meadows (Treasurer)
Ian Taplin
Andrea Van Hoven

Address

Rosevine
Wellgreen Lane
Kingston
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 3NS

Independent Examiner

J R Caladine FCCA
Caladine Limited
Chantry House
22 Upperton Road
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN21 1BF

Bankers

Co-operative Bank
78/80 Cornhill
London
EC3V 3NJ

Registered Charity Number: 1136482

Registered Office:

Rosevine
Wellgreen Lane
Kingston
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 3NS

Open Hands Trustees:

Rebekka Single – Chairperson and Trustee
Trevor Meadows – Treasurer and Trustee
Ian Taplin – Trustee
Andrea van Hoven – Trustee

Trustees Report

For the Year Ended 31st March 2021

The trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

Status, Governance and Management

Open Hands is a charity registered in England and governed by its Trust Deed dated 21 May 2010.

The trustees who served during the year were:

Rebekka Single
Trevor Meadows
Ian Taplin
Andrea van Hoven

Trustees are appointed by existing trustees. They meet regularly to manage the activities of Open Hands.

Objects and Structure

Open Hands remains committed to providing valuable and on-going support for vulnerable children and their families living in disadvantaged areas of Romania. The objects of Open Hands, as documented in our declaration of Trust in May 2010 are:

- (a) The prevention or relief of poverty in Romania and the surrounding countries by providing: grants, items and services to individuals in need and/or charities; or other local organisations working to prevent or relieve poverty for orphan and neglected children, and among the Roma community.
- (b) To relieve poverty (or financial hardship) among the Roma community and their dependents living in Romania and the surrounding countries by providing health/housing/advice and education

This report demonstrates how we have achieved these objects within the financial year 2020-21, and we hope it will be an encouragement to all our supporters and friends.

Open Hands operates in Romania through its locally registered sister foundation, Fundatia Open Hands (FOH). All monies raised in the UK and Germany not needed to meet local governance and similar costs are transferred to FOH.

In February 2021 we established our branch in Germany as a separate registered charity in the form of an association (known as a Verein) under the name of Open Hands e.V.)

Risk Statement

The trustees have assessed the risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the charity, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate our exposure to the risks.

Trustees' Responsibilities

We are required as trustees to prepare financial statements each year which include the payments and receipts of Open Hands Charity for the year. The trustees are responsible for keeping accurate accounting records; this ensures that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011

Open Hands Mission

Open Hands was set up, and is run, by Christians who want to express their faith in Christ by showing his love in practical action. Our work is based on Christian values but welcomes persons of all beliefs and none. We work among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people in Romania and our programs aim to transform their lives.

Rebekka Single first travelled to Romania in 2008 and was moved by the needs of children in the country who were still suffering from a lack of love, care, nurture, clothing and shelter. These children were of no importance to the wider communities in which they live and had no one to be an advocate on their behalf. In 2010 Rebekka formed Open Hands; she and her team have since become a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Open Hands Vision and Values

Our vision is a world free of poverty and injustice. A world where every child in every community is valued and loved. A world where every child, regardless of their ability or background can access the resources to thrive and reach their full potential.

The work of Open Hands is underpinned by our core values:

Integrity

- We are committed to work transparently with all resources entrusted to us and strongly believe in being accountable to our supporters. We strive to keep our administration costs to an absolute minimum and our expenses in Romania are carefully budgeted and reviewed to ensure good stewardship.

Respect

- We respect the human worth and dignity of every person we serve. We believe that every person, regardless of ethnicity, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or beliefs is of immense value and uniquely gifted. We promote inclusiveness for all people we work with and challenge discrimination in all its forms.

Compassion

- We act with compassion and kindness and strive to bring unconditional love to those we are helping. We believe that every child needs to experience a loving and stable environment, where their emotional, material and social needs are met.

Empowerment

- We promote and support people's right to make their own choices, provided this does not threaten the rights, safety and legitimate interests of others.

Collaboration

- We empower the families to be active participants, and become involved, in decisions and actions affecting their lives. We build relationships and partnerships to ensure that children and families can access the services that they need. We work together with local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and families.

Holistic Approach

- We provide support that looks at the whole person, not just their immediate circumstances. We seek to covers all aspects of a child's life, including their physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing, as well as their family life, community and societal environments.

Where Open Hands Operates and What it Does

Open Hands main office in Romania is in Suceava, a city situated in north-eastern of the country. However, our work is carried out in two locations: In villages around Suceava and in the small town of Gheorgheni, in eastern Transylvania.

We work with children and families in rural communities who suffer from isolation and poverty, typically caused by a complete lack of education and poor opportunities for work.

Because of this, many families struggle to manage their meagre financial resources efficiently. Many parents had a traumatic up-bringing themselves. They have lost hope, knowing it is almost impossible for them to meet their children's basic needs without help from outside. Governmental authorities often lack empathy when it comes to supporting poor families. Children have no positive role models in their families and so, left to their own devices, the poverty cycle continues for another generation when they reach adolescence and then adulthood. Open Hands is often the first and only support these families receive.

Our children's centre, the Rainbow House, is based in Gheorgheni - a town affected by high unemployment, depression and alcoholism. Many families here lead lives of complete desolation.

Most children and families we work with here are of Roma ethnicity and face severe hardship and destitution. Discrimination, lack of education, unemployment, homelessness, extreme poverty and hunger are part of their daily lives.

Achievements and Performance - 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

Open Hands becomes a registered charity in Germany

In February 2021 Open Hands became a registered charity in Germany also. The registration process had taken several years and we are pleased to have finally achieved this major milestone. Both Open Hands charities, in Germany and England, will work closely together to achieve one aim- a better future for the poorest children in Romania. Although both charities serve the same aim, they are separate entities and therefore accountable to their respective national authorities.

Lighthouse Project

Lighthouse is a preventative program designed to offer a solid educational foundation to the poorest and most disadvantaged primary and secondary aged children. The program is about using education to break the cycle of poverty. Lighthouse is an initiative designed to supplement Romanian state education. We currently run one Lighthouse project in an isolated community called Timpoceni and plan to open another Lighthouse in the autumn 2021 in the community of Ciprian Porumbescu, Suceava county.

As with all Open Hands program, Lighthouse programs are set in socio-economically deprived areas. Given their highly marginalised position in society and the discrimination they suffer, it is no surprise that the majority of children accessing Lighthouse programs are Roma. Indeed, a UNICEF study (2019) shows that Roma children are six times more likely than other Romanian children not to complete secondary education.

Lighthouse aims to prevent school absenteeism and drop-out among those who take part. Lighthouse staff work tirelessly to bring about a significant improvement in each child's school attendance and their attainment – so that they will complete their education and have a better future.

Lighthouse Timpoceni

Governmental Covid regulations meant that the local school and kindergarten in Timpoceni remained closed between March and December 2020. As Lighthouse mainly takes place within the school, we had to put the project on hold just a few months after it had begun. However, in these months we witnessed exceptional first responses with the number of children coming to school doubling. We therefore continued, while the project was on hold, to build relationships within this community and provided educational materials, clothing and food to families in need. Keeping connected to families,

teachers, doctors and the local authority enabled us swiftly to continue with the Lighthouse project once the government re-opened schools in January 2021.

As there is a disproportionate number of children being absent from school in this community, we continued our efforts by focusing on the school attendance of children. Regular meetings were held with parents, teachers and the local authority to encourage children to come to school.

Before our involvement in the community children's school attendance was extremely low. By March 2021 we had managed to increase the number of children regularly attending school by around 60%. Attendance was encouraged by Open Hands giving out food, drink and clothing to those who participated in the school program.

Working in such a disadvantaged community drew our attention to children with special educational needs and disabilities. Our staff identified and made records of children with moderate and severe disabilities. Open Hands began working together with their parents and the health services to offer these children vital treatment and access their entitlements of social security benefits.

Well over a year ago, the mayor of the commune promised us that he will have a new school build. The current building of the primary school is unsuitable for the 60-70 children who now attend as there is a lack of space, the school only being 40square meters in size. Also, it has no drinking water or toilets. Whenever our staff have the opportunity, a meeting is held with the mayor to determine progress on construction. The existing building was demolished in May 2021. Meanwhile our staff is organising transport, so that children can be brought by bus to learn at a nearby school while construction work lasts.



Rainbow House (RH)

The Rainbow House is a small day centre which has the capacity to receive up to 25 children a day. We decided to open this centre in 2016 after witnessing the extreme deprivation Roma children are exposed to at the slum where they live on the edge of Gheorgheni.

The RH is a safe haven for these children, a place where they can recover from experiences of neglect, abuse and trauma. Here their needs are met and children are encouraged to discover their potential. The RH is loved by all children – it has become their life-line and place of respite.

Olga Kalusi, our Rainbow House manager, explains its function like this:

‘The Rainbow House is like my second home. It is not a kindergarten or school. For the children and myself the Rainbow House means family’.



We continue to see steady improvements in children’s educational outcomes. All RH children are enrolled in some form of education; the younger ones are at kindergarten, those with additional needs learn at a special school and others are integrated into the mainstream school in town. The RH manager, Ms Kalusi, is in touch with schools to ensure that children attend regularly and any issues are seen to and addressed. Children continue to learn and do their homework after school at the RH.



The RH remained closed, in line with government Covid 19 regulations, from March 2020 until February 2021. This was a trying period for the children who missed the program very much. We continued to work with the children and their families throughout the closure period by providing

learning materials, food and clothing to their homes, as well as liaising with their schools to keep children connected to the education system.



Family Outreach Program

Our work means that we often become aware of children and families who receive no help at all. Sometimes the Romanian Child Protection Service introduces families to us who, without Open Hands intervention, would have their children taken away into state care.

After assessing each family, we formulated a plan to meet the needs of both children and their parents. Over the past months Open Hands has committed to support a further 18 children and their families. Although the plight of each family is unique, the common problem is poverty and this we can solve together.

By coming alongside parents and listening to their story we can begin to understand their circumstances and make plans with them to improve their situation. By enrolling children in education and making sure that their basic needs such as food and clothing are met, we find a way out of poverty. However, working with families takes much commitment. To ensure commitment to each child we have developed a Child Sponsorship Program.



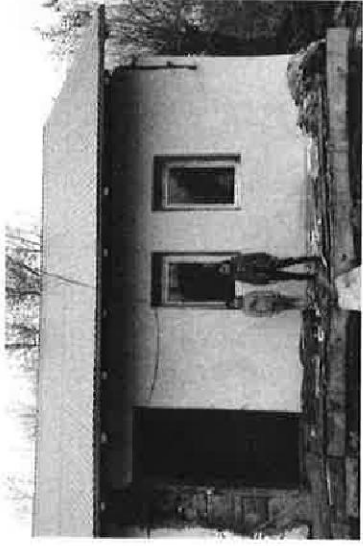
Case study of a new family in the OH Program:

Last year the Romanian Child Protection Service informed us of the severe neglect that 5 children were enduring. They communicated to Open Hands that if we do not intervene these children would be taken into care. We were moved by the plight of these children and the helplessness of their parents and began our work. The parents were relieved and grabbed hold of the hope that we gave. A partnership was created on the grounds that the children must attend kindergarten and school on a regular basis. The parents kept this agreement and started to send their children to school daily.

As mentioned in the report from last year, we covered immediate needs the children had and brought food, clothing and nappies for the little ones. The blackened mattresses were exchanged for clean, new ones; bedding was given and furniture and the inside of the small room that they all shared was cleaned and renovated. We also found sponsors for each child and thus secured long-term support for them.

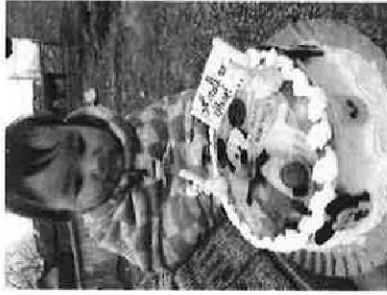
We found that the house, especially the roof, was in a very dangerous condition and we decided to renovate it. Open Hands managed to receive support from two local Romanian companies, the church, Child Protection and other NGOs from Romania and Germany. We are pleased of all that this family has achieved so far, as our work with them continues.





Celebrating Birthdays

At Open Hands we want every child in our program to feel loved and know their worth. We therefore continue to celebrate the birthday of each child in our program by visiting with a cake and a gift on their special day. These moments are very precious for the children, especially as it may be the first time in their life that someone remembers their birthday.



Christmas 2020

On 6th December 2020 we celebrated St Nicholas Day with all Open Hands children. Around 120 children received gifts and were visited in their community.

In Germany, trustee Andrea van Hoven collected and prepared 421 Christmas Shoe Boxes which were driven to Romania with Faithline. These gifts continue to bring much joy to the most disadvantaged children each Christmas. Children often tell us that receiving a Christmas gift from Open Hands is one of their happiest memories.

We were able to hold two big Christmas parties for 120 children from the Open Hands programs and provided all children and parents in the program with a special Christmas dinner.

The team did art and craft activities and sang songs with the children. Father Christmas came and brought gifts.



Other Aid Trips

In September 2020, a 40-ton- lorry from Germany made its way to our RH in Romania to deliver warm clothing and shoes, toys, blankets, children's bikes, school materials, furniture and other many items. These are stored in a container at our RH property and distributed throughout the year to families and children in need.

The aid delivery was realised with the support of the German humanitarian charity HFN, a charity specialising in aid trips for over 20 years. Their donations have been an enormous support to our work as we are able to provide all our children with school supplies, clothing and much more.

In December 2020, our friends and partners from the charity Faithline also drove with their lorry from Germany to Romania and delivered the 421 Christmas Shoe Boxes, along with items of furniture and other donations.

Covid 19 response

This became a concern to us towards the end of February 2020 and is ongoing at the time of writing this report. The year March 2020 – April 2021 was a challenging year for Open Hands, as for so many other charities. The Covid Pandemic impacted the way our work was carried out in Romania. Whilst Open Hands followed government guidelines and protected its own staff, we put a response in place which enabled us to maintain a vital level of care for the vulnerable children and families we work with. Lack of contact with school and isolation at home both make disadvantaged children much more vulnerable to abuse and neglect. To prevent this, the team has been working tirelessly to maintain close contact with all children and their families.

Our response so far has been as follows:

- We closed the RH from 12th March 2020 until February 2021; we also stopped working directly in schools which particularly affected the After School Program and Lighthouse Project as they take place in schools).
- We found creative ways to continue to communicating with and supporting our families and children during this challenging time
- Our staff are making more frequent home visits.
- We have provided families during lock-downs with additional food, washing powder, hygiene articles.
- We have provided clothing and shoes for the children
- We have maintained constant contact with children's teachers, delivering printed learning materials to children at home when there are lock downs and taking that back to teachers when completed. In this way we can minimise the disruption to children's education.
- We require our staff to take necessary precautions by keeping a distance, wearing protective masks and gloves and keeping in line with government guidelines.



Financial Review

The Covid Pandemic has forced Open Hands, as much as it has charities around the globe, to re-think and re-invent the services that we offer, in order to continue to reach and protect the most vulnerable children and families. We are thankful, that in this time of turmoil, our donors are faithfully continuing their support and that new people have begun to support our work – so that our finances continue to hold up and we are able to meet the needs of children and families in Romania.

The accounts show a surplus of £56,967 for the year, compared to £55 in the previous year. Closing unrestricted funds were £58,580(2020: £1,613).

Thank You

Open Hands is led by a board of Trustees who bring a range of professionalism, skills and experience to the charity. Due to Covid 19 the Trustees have not been able to visit Romania as much as they would have liked during the April 2019- March 2021 period; however, we are hopeful that this will soon change. I would like to give my sincere gratitude to all the Trustees for their reliability, devotion, contribution and hard work for Open Hands.

On behalf of Open Hands, I would like to extend my gratitude to all of Open Hands dedicated staff in Romania and to the volunteers in the UK and Germany for all their hard work and dedication and for sharing the loving spirit of Open Hands by caring for Romania's most vulnerable children.

I would like to thank our wonderful sponsors who have enabled us to continue this vital work. I would like to thank each one of them for standing with us. Their giving has enabled us to continue our valuable work and I am very much moved by such commitment. Most of our donors are individuals but we also received support from a number of organisations. In the UK these include Trinity Church in Lewes, Humanity@Heart Charity Shop, Blakell Europlacer Group, the Mary Jackson Trust and Just Trust. From my heart I would like to thank you for being so faithful in your support, especially during this challenging time.

Yours sincerely,
Rebekka Single



INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF OPEN HANDS**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Open Hands ('the Charity') for the year ended 31 March 2021, which are set out on pages 15 to 17.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- (1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- (2) the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



J R Caladine FCCA
Caladine Limited
Chartered Certified Accountants
Chantry House, 22 Upperton Road
Eastbourne, BN21 1BF

12 January 2022

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RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2021 £	2020 £
Receipts				
Donations (from Germany: £64,746)	129,415	-	129,415	115,775
Grants	600	-	600	1,200
Gift aid	10,620	-	10,620	-
Total receipts	140,635	-	140,635	116,975
Payments				
Projects / aid - Romania NGO	81,074	-	81,074	115,461
Aid trips to Romania	232	-	232	436
Insurance	431	-	431	291
Professional fees	129	-	129	-
Office costs	548	-	548	-
Accountancy and Independent Examination	720	-	720	600
Bank charges	89	-	89	-
Other expenses	445	-	445	132
Total payments	83,668	-	83,668	116,920
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	56,967	-	56,967	55
Cash funds at 31 March 2020	1,613	-	1,613	1,558
Cash funds at 31 March 2021	58,580	-	58,580	1,613

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STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

	<u>2021</u> £	<u>2020</u> £
Cash funds		
Co-operative bank account	<u>58,580</u>	<u>1,559</u>
Other debtors		
Gift aid receivable	<u>3,323</u>	<u>4,110</u>
Liabilities		
Accountancy and Independent Examination	<u>780</u>	<u>720</u>

Approved by the trustees

Rebekka Single S.M.

Rebekka Single
Chairperson

NOTES ON FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

1 Accounting policies**1.1 Basis of accounting**

The Financial Statements have been prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis, as allowed under section 133 of the Charities Act 2011 for small charities that are not companies.

1.2 Income and expenditure

All income and expenditure has been included when received and paid.

1.3 Funds

General unrestricted fund

The Charity operates an unrestricted General Fund that can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how the may be used.

2 Trustees

Trustees received no remuneration in the year.

In the year, Trustee Trevor Meadows was reimbursed expenses of £431 (2020: £nil) for insurance payments. Trustee Ian Taplin received reimbursed expenses of £720 (2020: £nil) for accountancy fees.