

OPEN HANDS

ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022



OPEN HANDS

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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 2022

The trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022.

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, primarily in 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 2021-22, 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 not needed to meet local governance and similar costs or to comply with our reserves policy are transferred to FOH.

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 were living and had no one to be an advocate on their behalf. In 2010 Rebekka formed Open Hands Charity; 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 families to be active participants, and to 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 cover 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-east 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 2021 to 31st March 2022

Rainbow House (RH)



Care

We first opened the RH as a day centre in 2016, after witnessing the extreme deprivation that Roma children are exposed to living in the local slum. Since then, we have had the same children attending the RH program on a regular basis. The children are eager to come to the RH because our team lovingly cares for each child. The children are fed, washed, changed into clean clothes, helped with homework and do many fun activities, including trips to the cinema

or zoo. Over the years the children have formed strong friendships and see the RH as their second home.



Emerging from Covid

The RH re-opened after a one-year pause, due to the Covid 19 pandemic, in March 2021. The long closure had been challenging for the entire team, but most of all for the children who see the RH as a place of respite, and a safe haven to recover from experiences of neglect, abuse and trauma. After the long pause it was moving to see how well the children remembered each detail of the RH program. They remembered every routine and all that they had learned and settled quickly back into the program. The RH was able to remain open throughout 2021-22, apart from the annual staff holiday period.

Space

Places at the RH have always been sought after, all the more so after Covid. Many families would like to send their children to get support here but our spaces are very limited as the RH is small in size and most children stay throughout their childhood. In order to have more space, we are converting the portable cabin in the RH garden. This will give us additional space for the older RH children. A large, wooden constructed pavilion has also been built, to use as an additional outdoor space in the RH garden.



Breaking the cycle

A strong emphasis is placed in supporting children on their educational journey. Each child develops at their own pace but we continue to see steady, overall improvements. Open Hands is making sure that 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 those that are able are integrated into the mainstream school in town. A large percentage of the children we work with do not meet the developmental milestones of a healthily developed child of similar age. Due to a very disadvantaged start in life, many RH children are developmentally delayed or/and have a disability of some sort. For these children it is a big achievement when they learn how to read and write. Our RH manager is regularly in touch with schools to make sure that the children attend. She frequently advocates on their behalf and addresses any problems that arise. The Children usually come to the RH after school to eat and do their homework.

Summer

Children in Romania tend to have a long summer holiday of up to 3 months. During this time the RH remained open, apart from a two weeks staff holiday, and offered its usual services to the children and families.

Family Support (FS)

Aim

It is our aim to see every child, regardless of their ability or background thrive and reach their full potential. FS provides a way out of poverty. It enables children and their families to escape its devastating effects. However, change takes time – particularly in view of generational poverty.

Holistic Approach

To help children reach their full potential we must look at them holistically. This means ensuring their physical and emotional well-being, as well as looking at their family life and their life in the context of their community.

By working with children in our programs, both at school and within their home, we get a clearer picture of what they need to thrive. Regular home visits allow us to see children in the context of their family and community life. Understanding the context in which a child lives helps us to tailor our support to meet their needs and improve the conditions in which they live. It enables us to connect and work with their parents who are vulnerable individuals and also in need of support.

Support

The Romanian Child Protection Service or family doctors frequently refer children and families who are in urgent need of support to us. Although we continue to add new cases and aim to help as many in need as we possibly can, a waiting list remains. We currently support 180 children in our program. Although provision is unique and tailored depending on the child's need, we typically enrol every child in either kindergarten or school and we provide clothing, food and hygiene articles. We support families in relation to welfare issues and health care needs.

Children with Disabilities

Part of our FS work is offering support to children with disabilities and/or special educational needs. Over the past year this work has developed and we have broadened our caseload to include many more such children within their homes, in schools or through specialist therapy.

Housing

Most families we first come in contact with live in overcrowded, dilapidated and unsanitary places. Alternative housing is often not available, and we therefore spend much time, money and effort to make existing homes properly habitable. Sometimes a new roof is needed, sometimes a home needs to be re-built in whole or part. Often windows and doors need replacing. Usually, homes need a thorough clean and fresh lick of paint. All this work and much more is done in collaboration with parents. We are supported by some local authorities on these projects and sometimes local businesses help out as well, all with one aim - to create safer and humane living conditions for children and families.



Birthdays

Many children we work with do not even know when their birthday is, let alone having ever experienced the enjoyment and fun of celebrating one before. We want them to know how precious they are – this is why we celebrate each birthday with a cake and gift and most importantly their friends from the program.

Education – Our Lighthouse Programs

Aim

Lighthouse is about using education to break the cycle of poverty that traps so many because their access to learning is limited or impaired through the disadvantages that they have been born into. Lighthouse is a program designed to counter these problems by offering a solid educational foundation to the poorest and most disadvantaged primary and secondary aged children through a series of initiatives in different locations designed to supplement Romanian state education.

Both our Lighthouse programs operate in collaboration with the relevant local authority.

Children who attend classes receive a meal from Open Hands, as well as clothes, shoes and school supplies. Birthdays are also celebrated with cakes and balloons at school.

Advocacy for poor families with local doctors, teachers and authorities is provided as part of the program.

Summer

During the long summer break, our staff organised a number of outdoor activities with the children, eg visiting museums, salt mines, playgrounds, zoos, restaurants, castles and monasteries.

Lighthouse – Ciprian Porumbescu

Our second Lighthouse opened in October 2021 in Ciprian Prumbescu. We are fortunate that the local authority provided a large space free of charge for Open Hands to use.

Support

The program runs each week day from 12pm until 4pm and supports 24 children with a hot meal a day, educational support, creative learning, outdoor play and workshops.



Lighthouse – Timpoceni

Our original Lighthouse program in Timpoceni was run within the village school and so within the home environment of children and families who attend school or kindergarten. However, the school building was unsuitable for the 60-70 children attending as there was a lack of space, the school only being 40 square meters in size. There was no drinking water and no toilets. It was therefore torn down around 2 years ago with the promise by the local mayor that a new, bigger one would be built. The mayor has yet to fulfil his promise. Meanwhile, Open Hands organised a mini-bus to take children to learn at a nearby school. We quickly established a presence at that school and work in collaboration with the teachers there.

School attendance was at times hampered due to COVID-19 with brief closures of the school. Our support was then provided in the form of regular home visits and by providing educational materials, food, clothing and other items.



Ukrainian Refugees in Romania

As the Open Hands headquarters are only a short drive from the Romanian-Ukrainian border we have been involved helping children and their parents affected by the war right from the start. Open Hands set up a stand directly at the border, welcoming the distraught mothers and children crossing into Romania by offering food and other items. The team gave emotional support, advice and transport to meet immediate needs of refugees.

While providing support the team also visited refugee shelters, helped to re-orientate families and brought aid and advice to those helplessly trying to navigate their way during a time of unimaginable loss and upheaval.



Open Hands Charity and Open Hands e.V. in Germany

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. The process had taken several years and we are pleased to have finally achieved this major milestone.

Since then, both Open Hands charities, in Germany and England, 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.

Christmas 2021

In December 2021 we celebrated St Nicholas Day with all Open Hands children. All children received gifts and were visited in their community.

In Germany, trustee Andrea van Hoven collected and prepared 361 Christmas Shoe Boxes which were driven to Romania. 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.

Due to the growing number of children in our programs, we held a number of separate Christmas parties for all children. All children and parents were also provided with a special Christmas dinner at home. Many different art and craft activities were held, Christmas carols were sung and Father Christmas came and brought gifts.

Other Aid Trips

In August 2021, a 40-ton- lorry from Germany made its way to our Rainbow House in Romania to deliver warm clothing and shoes, toys, blankets, children's bikes, school materials, furniture and many other items. These are stored in a container there and distributed throughout the year to families and children in need.

The aid delivery was achieved with the support of HFN, a German humanitarian 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.

Covid 19 response

The year to March 2022 continued to be a challenging year for Open Hands, as for so many other charities. The Covid pandemic continued to impact 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 found creative ways to continue to communicating with and supporting our families and children during this challenging time
- Our staff made more frequent home visits.
- We provided families with additional food, washing powder, hygiene articles.
- We provided clothing and shoes for the children
- We maintained constant contact with children's teachers, delivering printed learning materials to children at home, taking them back to teachers when completed. In this way we minimised the disruption to children's education.
- We required our staff to take necessary precautions e.g. wearing protective masks and gloves and keeping in line with government guidelines.

Financial Review

The cost-of-living crisis that has emerged from Covid and the Ukraine war have the potential to affect what Open Hands is able to do. For example, our costs in Romania have increased significantly whilst some of our donors are experiencing their own financial pressures. Whilst some donors have been lost, many others are faithfully continuing their support and new people have begun to support our work – so at the time of writing our finances continue to hold up and we are able to meet the needs of children and families in Romania.

During 2021-22 most German based donors migrated to Open Hands e.V. with the result that the income of Open Hands Charity inevitably dropped significantly as compared with previous years. The combined amount of money raised by both organisations in 2021-22 before costs was around £127,000.

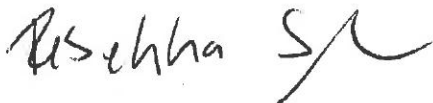
Thank You

Open Hands is led by a board of Trustees who bring a range of professionalism, skills and experience to the charity. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the Trustees for their reliability, devotion, contribution and hard work for Open Hands Charity.

On behalf of Open Hands Charity, 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 and who have stood with us through difficult times. 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, The Mary Weston Will Trust and Blakell Europlacer Group. 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebekka S', with a stylized flourish at the end.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF OPEN HANDS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Open Hands ('the Charity') for the year ended 31 March 2022, 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

16 November 2022

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RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Receipts				
Donations	76,738	7,036	83,774	129,415
Grants	-	-	-	600
Gift aid	-	-	-	10,620
Total receipts	76,738	7,036	83,774	140,635
Payments				
Projects and aid to Romania NGO	66,399	-	66,399	81,074
Travel costs	1,431	-	1,431	232
Insurance	431	-	431	431
Professional fees	-	-	-	129
Office costs	716	-	716	548
Accountancy and Independent Examination	780	-	780	720
Bank charges	58	-	58	89
Other expenses	-	-	-	445
Total payments	69,815	-	69,815	83,668
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	6,923	7,036	13,959	56,967
Cash funds at 31 March 2021	58,580	-	58,580	1,613
Cash funds at 31 March 2022	65,503	7,036	72,539	58,580

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STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

	<u>2022</u> £	<u>2021</u> £
Cash funds		
Cash at bank	<u>72,539</u>	<u>58,580</u>
Other debtors		
Gift aid receivable	<u>10,026</u>	<u>3,323</u>
Liabilities		
Accountancy and Independent Examination	<u>780</u>	<u>780</u>

Approved by the trustees

Rebekka Single
Chairperson

Rebekka Single *SP*

NOTES ON FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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

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

2 Trustees

Trustees received no remuneration in the year.

In the year, Trustee Trevor Meadows was reimbursed expenses of £431 (2021: £431) for insurance payments. Trustee Ian Taplin received reimbursed expenses of £780 (2021: £720) for accountancy fees.