

Report on the Orphanages of the Republic of Moldova

Over the past three years The Fishermen has been engaged in shipping medical aid packages to orphanages in the Republic of Moldova. As a result we have had the opportunity to communicate with numerous government agencies and NGOs operating within said country. The following is a compilation of data we have collected from these points of contact. Each report we obtain is substantially different from the other, so we have included only verified data in our brief. To the best of our knowledge this information was correct as of March 2012.

Orphanages Overview

1) **Total number of orphanages:** 61 (there were 68 on record in 2009)

- 2 orphanages for small children
- 5 orphanages for children 7 to 16
- 29 auxiliary boarding schools
- 9 institutions for physically disabled children
- 3 institutions for children with poor eyesight
- 3 institutions for children with medical issues
- 2 institutions for children with severe disabilities
- 6 institutions for hearing impaired children
- 2 specialty schools for children with disciplinary disorders

**Contact information available if requested.*

2) **Total number of orphans:** roughly 8000. Other information sources have cited between 5,932 (according to an in-country NGO resource), and 11,500 (MoE report c. 2011). A large percentage of institutionalized children are not technically orphaned but are “warehoused” by parents who are either imprisoned or seeking employment outside of Moldova.

3) **General condition of orphanages:** Buildings are 30 to 50 years old and in varying states of disrepair. Shower and bathroom conditions are generally bad (since 2008, however, several orphanages have benefited from grants that helped fix their bathrooms, showers and windows, and split larger rooms holding 10 to 12 beds into smaller, more comfortable rooms for 4 to 6 children). Most orphanages are without heat during the winter.

- 4) **General health conditions within orphanages:** The most prevalent problems are nutrition and hygiene (lack of adequate supplies and knowledge leading to poor physical hygiene). The issue of nutrition has slightly improved since 2009 as the Moldovan government increased the food budget for institutions.
- 5) **Specific health problems endemic to orphanages:** Tuberculosis, epilepsy, enuresis, vitamin deficiency, lice, skin infections, tooth decay and other dental complications, and general developmental issues.

Recommendations

- 1) Continued support from NGOs is absolutely necessary for the proper development of Moldova's institutionalized children, especially from organizations active in medical, physical, psychological, nutritional, dental, and educational aid. Though current operations are very effective, we recommend increased collaboration between smaller NGOs with similar missions in order to engage vetted nonprofits who may not be able to participate on their own.
- 2) Though financial initiatives are possible, we recommend in-country missions and direct shipments of aid material. There are a wide variety of NGO operations in Moldova which offer logistical support to other charitable enterprises if needed (list of organizations available).
- 3) Considering the severity of Moldova's problem with human trafficking, NGOs focusing on anti-trafficking initiatives should consider in-house education programs for high-risk children.
- 4) Pressure on the Moldovan government to strengthen food services and improve institutional facilities is appropriate, but given the current financial condition of the country it is far more effective to concentrate on appeals to outside resources such as the UN system, U.S. government, and NC state government (Partnership for Peace program) to continue its already substantial presence within the Republic.
- 5) If possible, construction initiatives to renovate Moldovan orphanages, boarding schools, and other institutions should be considered. HVAC, electrical, and plumbing services are also encouraged to donate time and/or material.