

Buckner Romania to be self-sustaining organization

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TARGU MURES, Romania —Twelve years after it established a nongovernmental organization in Romania to help that country's overburdened orphanage system, [Buckner International](#) announced it is withdrawing financial support from Fundatia Buckner Romania and setting it on a course of self-sustainability.



Phyllis Carrier, a long-term volunteer with Buckner, holds a baby in Tarneveni, Romania. The Carriers were among the volunteers who helped establish the Buckner Child Development Center in Tarneveni, Romania to help gypsy children.
(PHOTO/Courtesy of Phyllis Carrier)

Buckner International President Albert L. Reyes said the transition is part of Buckner's long-term plan for establishing self-sustainability among its international nongovernmental organizations as time, resources and support allow.

Buckner began work in Romania in 1996 after Romanian officials sought

Buckner's child care and social services expertise to help overcome mounting problems in the country's orphanages. Buckner established Fundatia Buckner—Buckner Foundation Romania—in 1998 and began offering mission teams to conduct evangelistic camps in orphanages in the Targu Mures region.

Phil Brinkmeyer, Buckner regional director for Guatemala, Honduras and Russia, said Buckner has provided a variety of ministries over its 12-year tenure in Romania. "We began initially by providing humanitarian aid directly to the remnants of a communist orphanage system—one that was, in essence, providing first aid to those in need but was putting a band-aid on a broken system."



About 90 to 95 percent of children in Romania's child welfare system are gypsy children, according to Buckner vice president Randy Daniels. The work of Buckner Romania has included education programs, foster care, humanitarian aid, and mission trips since 1996. (PHOTO/Russ Dilday/Buckner International)

Since 1998, Buckner has offered large-scale humanitarian aid, orphanage renovations and emergency relief to Romanian orphanages, developed a relationship with Child Protective Services in Targu Mures for emergency relief and aid coordination, a transitional living home for children who have aged out of care, sent hundreds of volunteers to minister to children and, along with CPS, initiated a domestic program to encourage Romanians to report child abuse.

Also, Buckner instituted an evangelistic follow-up program using Romanian staff to provide weekly visits to orphans, a “grandmother” program to provide infants with basic nurturing and a foster care program along with Pathway to Joy Ministry in Oradea.

Since 2000, Buckner’s Shoes for Orphan Souls drive has shipped almost 84,000 pairs of shoes to children in Romania

But Buckner’s contributions went beyond programs and aid, said Randy Daniels, Buckner vice president for global initiatives, and eventually led to changes in the country’s orphanage and social services systems, long regarded as among the poorest-performing in the world.



Phil Brinkmeyer, regional director for Buckner in Russia, Guatemala and Honduras, poses with children on the opening day of the new Buckner Child Development Center in Tarneveni in 2007. (PHOTO/Buckner)

Through its NGO, Buckner “modeled foster care at Pathway to Joy in Oradea and we helped Romania in its transition from an orphanage-based child care system to a foster care-based system by helping Romanian officials acknowledge the value of foster care,” Daniels said.

While Buckner has set its Romanian NGO on a course of self-sustainability, it won’t be alone, Brinkmeyer said.

Buckner will continue to share its expertise in social services, and the NGO will receive support from another U.S.-based nonprofit partner—Another Child Foundation, created by Tim Oloffson, a former Buckner missions volunteer, he explained.

For more information about Another Child Foundation, go to www.anotherchild.org.