

## Ukraine

### I. Overview

- A. Lack of economic stability
- B. Common Reasons for children being orphaned
  - 1. Abuse and/or neglect
  - 2. Parental alcoholism
  - 3. Parental imprisonment
  - 4. Poverty

### II. Medical Conditions (observed in Eastern European children)

- A. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disorders were identified in 52% of assessed children
- B. Alcohol-related birth defects found in 11% of children
- C. Mental retardation or significant cognitive impairment was found for 23% of children
- D. Autism found in 9%
- E. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder for 51%
- F. Developmental coordination disorder for 34%

### III. Secondary Conditions (observed in Ukrainian children)

- A. Mental health problems (90%)
- B. Disrupted school experience (60%)
- C. Trouble with the law (60%)
- D. Inpatient treatment for health problems, alcohol/drug problems, or incarceration (50%)
- E. Inappropriate sexual behavior (50%)
- F. Alcohol/drug problems (30%)

### IV. Contributing Factors to Child's Well-Being

- A. Institutionalization
- B. Poverty

# Bulgaria

## I. Overview

### A. Orphans are typically of Romani descent

1. Romani people are widely known as “gypsies” and are subject to discrimination
  - a) Gypsy is an extremely derogatory term due to its stereotypical and negative associations
2. Romani are often viewed as uneducated, thieves, and even social parasites
3. Romani children in need of families are subject to these perspectives and thus typically not adopted by Bulgarian families

### B. Children in greatest need of adoption are older children and children with known additional needs

### C. Common Reasons for Orphans

1. Poverty: Causes 90% of child abandonment
2. Domestic violence
3. Stigma of single parenthood
4. Mental/physical disabilities of parents

## II. Medical Conditions

### A. Down's Syndrome

### B. Hydrocephalus

### C. Genetic Disorders: Mitochondrial DNA Mutation

### D. Cerebral Palsy: brain injury or abnormal brain development in utero, during, or shortly after birth causing motor delay and movement disorder

## III. Contributing Factors to Child's Well-Being

### A. Institutionalization

1. Bulgaria has the most mentally and physically disabled children due to institutionalization compared all other European nations

### B. Air pollution

1. Air pollution affects the respiratory system, cardiovascular system, neurodevelopment, and reproductive capacities
2. Bulgaria has the highest rate of premature deaths due to air pollution in Europe
3. Low birth weight and preterm births are also caused by air pollution

### C. Lack of prenatal care/ pregnancies are not carried full-term

### D. Lack of folic acid during pregnancy

# **Poland**

## **I. Overview**

- A. Overall health of the country is increasing
- B. Common Reasons for Orphans
  1. Poverty/unemployment
  2. Neglect/abuse
  3. Loss of parental rights
  4. Parental death
- C. Many orphans have special needs or medical conditions
- D. Sibling groups are common
- E. Parents of orphans are commonly deal with substance abuse

## **II. Medical Conditions**

- A. Poland Syndrome: affected individuals are born with missing or abnormal muscles on one side of the chest wall
  1. Abnormalities of the hand, shortened fingers, partial fusion of the fingers
  2. Occurs in 1 to 3 per 100,000 newborns
  3. More common in males

## **III. Secondary Conditions**

- A. Adoptees are four times more likely to have clinical behavioral problems than non-adopted children
- B. Adoptees had higher rates of behavioral problems compared to children adopted from other countries

## **IV. Contributing Factors to Child's Well-Being**

- A. Institutionalization
- B. Malnutrition/Poor Diet
- C. Parent's substance abuse: smoking and alcohol
- D. Genetics
- E. Abuse
- F. Deprivation
- G. Inaccessibility to health care
- H. Limited physical activity of the children

# **Dominican Republic**

## I. Overview

- A. Lack of economic stability
- B. Children are biracial: they come from Dominican and Haitian parents
  - 1. Social structure looks down upon biracial children
- C. Commonly orphaned as a result of the parents' deaths

## II. Medical Conditions

- A. Chronic health and nutrition deficiencies
- B. HIV/AIDS

## III. Contributing Factors

- A. Lack of education
- B. Extreme poverty

## **References**

- About Special Kids
- Adopt America Network
- American Psychiatric Association
- Center for Youth and Adults with Conditions of Childhood
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Council for Exceptional Children
- Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
- Down Syndrome Indiana
- Folaron, G. (2015). Your Amazing Brain (PowerPoint presentation)
- Family Voices Indiana
- Hydrocephalus Association
- Indiana Association of Behavioral Consultants
- Indiana Institute on Disability and Community
- Mom2Mom
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities
- National Down Syndrome Society
- National Organization of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- Perry, B.D. (2004). Neglect: How Poverty of Experience Disrupts Development.
- The Catalyst Center
- United Cerebral Palsy Association