

time constraints.

Agency-Specific Recommendations. One of the biggest concerns that presented itself during the interview was the need to anticipate and control expansion-related fluctuations in financial stability. Although the outcome of the merger between Christian Children's Fund and Everychild UK has been favorable, allowing for program growth and expansion of services, rapid maturation of the agency could stretch management capacity and create inherent structural flaws in terms of monitoring, expenditure controls, and outcome assessment. As such, FRCCF should engage in a thorough outlining of its current and future programming, utilizing a Logic Model (Groza, 2003; Renger & Titcomb, 2002).

Corresponding to an evaluation of programs, implementation, and controls is the necessity of examining the impact of the merger on organizational culture and systems. Are there requirements to alter previously stable management practices? Is there cooperative collaboration between Christian Children's Fund, Everychild UK, and FRCCF administrators? Is there consistency of vision regarding expansion of services to clients? FRCCF may benefit from stepping back and taking internal stock of the agency's post-merger status before engaging in large-scale program expansion.

### **HIV/AIDS**

#### ***Close to You***

Close to You (CTY) is a community-based agency that provides services for children diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. Located in the large, industrial city of Iasi, its mission is to find foster homes for children with HIV/AIDS, promote public awareness about the disease and prevention, and to alleviate the social stigma faced by children who have the illness.

The program evaluation was conducted through discussions with agency administrators, social workers, office staff members, and student volunteers. We gathered information about the external social, political, and economic conditions facing the organization, as well as factors which impact their direct practice with families. Additionally, the team conducted logic model training designed to help agency administrators operationalize future agency goals and concretize a business plan for presentation to potential donors.

Close to You is funded predominantly by Holt International Children's services, which began in 1955 when it pioneered international adoptions in response to the many children orphaned by the Korean War. Currently, Holt is one of the largest international adoption providers as well as a supporter of children and their families through a variety of programs around the world. Additionally, they served as a consultant to the United Nations and routinely partner with a variety of foundations, including the United States Agency for International Development (Introduction to Holt, 2003).

Central to Holt's mission is the belief that every child deserves to have a loving home. As a result, the donor works toward family preservation, in-country adoption, and facilitates international adoption for children who cannot be placed in their countries of origin. Respecting cultural diversity and initiation of self-sustaining social services, Holt collaborates with independent partners comprised of local personnel in the countries it serves. Additionally, Holt serves as a resource for local governments as they work to develop social policies that serve child welfare interests (Stiles, Dhamaraksa, dela Rosa, Goldner & Kalyanvala, 2001).

Holt's projects in Romania include developing foster care programs, family preservation, and caring for children with HIV/AIDS. In addition to providing training for families, the donor

provides economic support for families who care for children infected with HIV/AIDS (Project Update, 2003).

CTY faces a number of challenges to its long-term viability and its direct delivery of services. Foremost among these challenges is the agency's dependence on a single donor to sustain its operations. Organizations such as Holt have a history of infusing agencies with substantial funds and providing business and practical expertise for a limited period of time. After this period, the organization typically reallocates its funds to assist other agencies and causes in other geographic areas. Currently, Holt receives a significant portion of funds from USAID, which is in the process of streamlining many of its programs. Given Holt's mission of providing assistance to pressing health and social issues worldwide, it is unlikely that it will remain CTY's sole supporter permanently. Consequently, a vital need of CTY is to develop strategic fundraising skills to cultivate a larger base of contributors.

An additional financial limitation is the lack of sufficient government funds to provide stipends for foster families who care for children with HIV/AIDS. Despite global attention to the growing problem of childhood HIV/AIDS, a systematic policy framework for dealing with the epidemic is needed. Although governmental laws exist to protect the rights of children affected by HIV/AIDS, the disease garners less political attention than other issues that impact children. As a direct result of insufficient national AIDS policy, the government does not allocate enough funds for provision of services to children affected by the illness. This is particularly concerning given the fact that many children contracted HIV as a result of mass inoculations during communism.

In the face of government inability to provide sufficient funds, CTY devotes some of its operating budget to underwriting stipends for foster families. Since only a portion of its budget

can be allocated for this purpose, the agency either turns down or wait lists willing foster families. In a recent recruitment effort, 160 willing families submitted applications to take children. The agency was only able to accept and train five of them due to limitations in financial resources and staff selectivity in choosing appropriate families for ill children.

Despite legal protection for children with HIV/AIDS, fear of the disease still presents a substantial barrier to children's ability to access mainstream educational services. Agency staff discussed the difficulties faced in negotiating school attendance for many children who are still healthy enough to go to school. Significant resistance is encountered on the part of teachers and school administrators, who seem to fear transmission of the illness by daily contact with affected children. Many families resort to keeping children at home rather than send them to face prejudice in the school system. Additionally, eighty percent of children withdraw from formal schooling because families cannot afford the expensive medications needed to maintain their health.

A barrier to accurate characterization of the scope of the AIDS epidemic in Romania is the lack of healthcare policies that provide for HIV testing and blood donor screening. The lack of health policies to address the issue harkens back to national minimization of the existence of HIV/AIDS in the general population. Unfortunately, this may lead to substantial increases in transmission of the virus until policy makers endorse public discussion of AIDS and implement efforts to prevent further transmission. At this point in time, it is unclear how many people in the general population are HIV positive and what proportion of this population includes childhood cases. These are only estimates of the incidence.

CTY's mission is to transition children with HIV/AIDS from institutional settings to foster family care, identifying affected children as early in their development as possible.

Additionally, agency staff discussed the need to alleviate social stigma associated with AIDS and expressed a desire to reach out to both urban and rural communities with education services. In the minds of agency staff, one of the keys to halting the AIDS epidemic is to provide transmission awareness and prevention information to Romanian communities. As part of this awareness effort, staff recognized that one of their more immediate targets for education is the adolescent HIV/AIDS population; these children oftentimes have not been told that they have the disease. According to CTY social workers, teens who are unaware that they have HIV are likely to become sexually active and transmit the illness to their partners. Training in safer sexual practices for these children is a primary goal of agency staff.

Furthermore, agency staff endorsed the need to provide therapy for diagnosed children and their parents, teaching them helpful coping skills as they battle the emotional and physical turmoil and stigma associated with the illness. To this end, staff has organized parent and child support groups and opportunities for individual therapeutic support. CTY is also creating a manual for parents that encourages open communication and honesty with their children about AIDS.

Lastly, health care services represent a major advocacy area for agency staff. On one hand, Romania's national healthcare system provides some coverage for client health problems. On the other, Romanian medicine lacks the financial backing and technical expertise seen in Western medical practice. It appeared that standard treatment for HIV/AIDS was palliative care, rather than the advanced medication regimens that have been shown to boost the immune systems of HIV/AIDS patients in Western countries.

Holt International currently provides oversight for the agency. During initial start-up, Holt placed several of its own staff members in the organization; their function was to guide

development of routine practice and management procedures, as well as the development of documentation. As the agency became increasingly self-sufficient, Holt replaced its staff members with Romanian employees who took over the administrative and direct practice functions of the agency. Currently, the majority of staff members are Romanian, and Holt provides oversight via email and scheduled business meetings with the agency director and staff. Holt's aim in the organizational start-up was to establish agency infrastructure using the expertise of its own staff, then turn the program over to local professionals. The Romanian agency director remains in close contact with Holt's leaders, seeking advice and expertise when necessary. The director in this agency serves mainly an administrative function, supervising a staff of social workers, a psychologist, and student volunteers. Throughout the interview, there seemed to be open communication between the director and staff members, and a bi-directional method of evaluating successes and obstacles in relation to service delivery.

Administrative support was provided by two people whose functions were to receive and triage intake calls, keep a master schedule for the agency, and to organize documentation of client cases and reports for Holt. The director and the staff acknowledged that the agency functions as a team more than as a hierarchy, with collaborative-decision making rather than decisions handed down from above. Staff members expressed commitment to programming goals, as they had a continual voice in their implementation and revision.

A readily apparent strength of the organizational culture was the mutual support offered by the director and staff members to each other. Interviewees acknowledged the emotional difficulty involved in caring for families in which the children were likely to die. It appeared that the devastating consequences faced by the children motivated staff members to prioritize an official, organized support system that practitioners could use to cope with client deaths. Social

workers stated that the death rate is very high for their clients and that their personal coping skills are refined continually.

A positive consequence of this culture of mutual support was that the agency had experienced very little turnover since its inception. In contrast to the United States, in which staff turnover is often a major problem in organizational functioning, CTY still has most of the same counselors, therapists, and directors with which it started during initial recruitment by Holt. This makes a statement not only about the supportive culture valued by the agency, but also the dedication and motivation of individual workers as well.

Additionally, a measure of prestige is given to people who work for non-governmental organizations, which makes jobs like these attractive to workers. A potential drawback of this prestigious experience, however, is that it makes employees more marketable to foreign agencies. This creates the potential for workers to gain valuable work experience before leaving the agency for higher-paying jobs in other locations.

Open communication was endorsed as highly valued by all agency staff. Constructive criticism, feedback, and acknowledgement of successes were all seen as avenues for improving agency functioning, and more importantly, the care provided for children and their families. A main concern of each worker seemed to be the impact of decisions on his or her clients rather than personal recognition for expertise or territoriality.

CTY is organized on a semi-hierarchical, yet team-based basis. Large-scale oversight is provided by Holt as the funding organization. However, Holt has transferred the majority of decision-making and leadership issues over to the executive director and her staff. In this agency, the director acts as the main liaison with Holt, submitting reports, soliciting advice, and trouble-shooting problems with Holt representatives. As she obtains direction from Holt, she

passes this down to the team members, typically in the form of discussions during weekly team meetings. Staff members discuss their perspective on policies and procedures, presenting both successes and difficulties in accomplishing goals during these meetings.

There appeared to be significant transparency between Holt representatives, the executive director, and all staff members. It was not apparent that any staff members were excluded from information exchange based on their level of education or years of service with CTY. All members seemed to be included in discussions and the staff viewed themselves as part of a functioning system rather than individuals attempting to compete with one another. If one individual reported difficulty with a client issue, it was likely that another individual would be impacted by and could influence that situation, as they interacted with the same clients in a different capacity.

Overt rules existed regarding reporting and documentation in that individual case records were kept and stored in a locked file cabinet. Agency members appeared to recognize that confidentiality is vital to their clients' well-being and ability to function in society. More subtle norms were seen in the atmosphere of mutual support, a philosophy of dedication to the HIV/AIDS cause, and sympathy for clients who had difficulty using services as a result of emotional or physical decompensation.

Although the executive director serves as liaison between agency staff and Holt, staff members are also free to communicate via letter, telephone or email with the donor, preventing a communication bottleneck. In many US agencies, communication with donors and higher level executives is limited to the agency director or personnel occupying similar positions. A unique quality of CTY is that all staff, regardless of position, are able to seek guidance from the primary funding organization.

Staff members report to the executive director, who provides feedback regarding division of labor, assignment of new responsibilities, and problem-solving for particular client cases. The director herself was educated in the social service sector, and thus has the same specialized expertise as the counselors and social workers who are providing services. Her background is a strength of the organization, since she can give feedback about the clinical delivery of services, understands the realistic amount of time tasks may take, and can speak the same professional language as those whom she supervises. Her expertise provides a strong foundation for carrying out employee performance reviews, hiring new staff members, and in building worker motivation.

The flow of information appeared to be optimal, given the collaborative, team-based approach endorsed by all agency members. Any difficulties in information flow appear to exist between the agency's desire to institute prevention efforts and lack of access to both urban and rural communities. Currently, education is limited to some radio and television ads, as well as workshops conducted in schools and at fairs. Ideally, the agency would like to collaborate with the Orthodox church, since the majority of Romanian communities, both urban and rural, are organized around a local church. An impediment to this effort, however, is the church's stance on sex education, discussion of HIV/AIDS, and inability to acknowledge increases in sexual activity on the part of young people.

Close to You employs four social workers, one to address the service needs at each site. These social workers work from offices at local hospitals, identifying children who are HIV+ or who have AIDS. The presence of these staff members has decreased abandonment levels dramatically, from a previous level of approximately fifty percent. Abandonment prevention is a significant component of social workers' time within the hospital system.

The agency is currently focusing on parent education and training to enable parent groups to take over some of the political lobbying and fundraising functions of the staff. This liberates more time for counselors to provide other services such as counseling and support groups.

The organizational climate was a positive one overall, with staff members seeming to collaborate effectively and to gain personally and professionally from their interaction. A spirit of motivation was apparent when interviewing the staff, along with a sincere dedication to their cause. It appeared that the obstacles they faced in accomplishing the agency's mission created an even stronger drive to persevere in achieving their aims.

One negative aspect of the climate, however, was the legitimate concern about what will happen to the agency when Holt removes its funding. Although significant time on the part of the director and staff is being devoted to attracting more donors, this concern seemed to overwhelm agency members at times. Although this feeling generates a valid cause for concern, none of the agency staff indicated that they were looking for other employment, or that they placed a high concern on their own immediate well-being. On the contrary, staff members seemed highly motivated to learn about attracting other donors so that they could continue to serve children affected by HIV/AIDS. Staff eagerly listened to the team discussion of program planning and courting donors and enthusiastically discussed ways in which these lessons could be implemented.

For the most part, staff in this agency were recruited based on their education in an area of social sciences, including psychology, sociology, and social work. This was a workplace requirement instituted by Holt when it transferred control of CTY over to Romanian staff members. As such, all staff members have training in various aspects of human development, family interaction, and social service practice.

However, several issues impacted staff ability to conduct their work effectively. Romanian education is still in a state of maturation itself, gathering significant information from Western knowledge and practice to supplement students' learning. The same held true for the organization itself, which actively invites outside experts to teach staff about new advancements in medicine and new approaches to dealing with the family system in the face of devastating illness. Additionally, workers expressed the need for additional training in family dynamics, especially surrounding life-threatening illnesses, and further development of their ability to train families in effective communication with their children about the serious issues they face.

Individuals surveyed during the interviews unanimously expressed a love for their work and a sense of enrichment resulting from being part of a social service organization. None of the staff expressed the need to change careers or to take a break from the sometimes heartbreaking work they conducted on a daily basis.

Although they stressed the need for and benefit of their team support network, they talked about finding professional and personal strength in helping children battle HIV/AIDS, and in watching how valiantly the children fought to achieve normalcy in their lives. The employees valued serving families with a sense of respect, and exhibited substantial patience with families who had trouble following through with recommendations or attending appointments.

The level of employee motivation was one of the most impressive aspects of the interviews. All were intensely motivated to ease the lives of families and children with HIV/AIDS and disturbed by the social stigma that follows them as they interact with society. During the information exchanges, all employees listened attentively and asked extremely relevant questions about adapting Western models to their Romanian practice. They demonstrated a spirit of openness and willingness to learn, and expressed no defensiveness.

Agency-Specific Recommendations. One of the most pressing needs for the agency was the ability to hire more social workers to serve the number of clients referred for services. Currently, CTY only has one social worker per site, making a total of four people who are able to liaison with hospitals. This has the potential to increase pressures on social workers if referrals escalate with increased diagnosis and detection methods.

A second vital need of the organization is to implement the Logic Model in its application to their mission and programs as soon as possible. In our discussions, agency staff exhibited a relative lack of distinction between their direct service counseling efforts, their social education programs, and their prevention projects. At times it seemed that administrators felt that each of these goals would be accomplished in part by all of the activities, rather than associating particular outcomes with particular forms of programming. In the eyes of potential donors, an amalgamation of goals and projects may not reflect the agency's capacity for organization and achievement of its goals. A more thorough plot of desired outcomes and methods for achieving them would make competition for funds a more effective agency endeavor.

Relating to foster family recruitment, it became apparent that CTY should evaluate its foster family screening mechanisms to enable recruitment of more families; currently, there are not enough families to serve the number of children referred from hospitals for placement. Additionally, agency staff could emphasize pre-placement training so that more families meet acceptance criteria. Following placement, post-training evaluation and troubleshooting sessions may supplement foster families' knowledge, and follow-up assessments could be implemented to measure family compliance with agency foster care requirements.

## Mental Health

### *Estuar*

Estuar is a community-based agency that provides mental health services and acts as an alternative to long-term hospitalization for adults with chronic mental illness. Its mission is to offer opportunities for the social-reintegration of adults facing disorders such as schizophrenia, depression, and anxiety. The agency provides a place to go during the day, counseling and support groups, art and occupational therapy, parent education, client advocacy, and legal support. Under the umbrella of its advocacy efforts, the agency extends help to clients in filling out legal paperwork, negotiating with family members regarding clients' rights to physical space and monetary income, and court representation. Additionally, Estuar focuses on creating community awareness about mental illness in an attempt to reduce the stigma currently associated with psychological disorders.

Estuar fields referrals directly from inpatient units at the local hospital, from word of mouth within the community, and through radio advertising and street fairs. Many clients seek out agency services voluntarily rather than being forced to come by their families. The agency organizes excursions into the community so that clients become acclimated to life outside the hospital environment, and so that members of society can become more familiar with mental illness. The agency offers its services from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm during the day, during which it typically serves thirty-five people.

Agency staff must re-negotiate funding every year; some projects are re-funded, others are not. Typically, staff expects a program to last for only a year, and attempt to plan new projects that align with established modes of care and progress already achieved by clients. This difficulty with gaining renewed funding for valuable projects reduces stability of programming

for clients.

One agency goal is to buy a house in which the agency can exist. Currently, they rent their facilities and costs are subject to frequent change. Owning a house would give the agency more independence and more flexibility to adapt it to program needs, as well as predictability in financial planning.

Estuar has a good community presence, and is regarded as an asset by clients and social service providers. It was well-known within the university faculty network in Cluj.

Estuar views itself as an alternative to continual re-admission of clients to the hospital, a solution to the “revolving door” problem faced by many people with chronic mental illness. Their typical clients cannot function independently in society, but utilize agency services to improve their job skills, outlook, and social functioning rather than decompensating and entering the hospital. This agency appears to be the sole community alternative to successive client hospitalizations.

Future goals include starting a project for handicapped individuals financed by the State Department. One of the difficulties faced by the organization is the lack of overall funding for Estuar that forces the agency to survive by the creation of separate but linked projects. Funds are restricted as well, and are not allowed to transfer between programs in support of overall agency functions. All expenditures must show a direct relation to the program for which the money was designated.

Currently, the agency functions as a model community mental health center in Eastern Europe. They participate in training other agencies in Eastern European countries who would like to build on their model of treatment. Last year, the agency trained social service professionals from Hungary and Bulgaria. Part of this training involves developing networks

with other mental health centers throughout Europe with the aim of sharing expertise and facilitating referrals. The staff views their agency as a platform for a community center, likening their office space and facilities to those of a club “where clients can do what they want in a safe, supportive environment”.

Under the leadership of a new director, the organization has undergone fundamental change in the past three months. The new director was chosen by agency donors with the approval of individual staff members. However, employees are the ones who must familiarize the director with the internal workings of the organization. Although the transition is reported to be smooth, this balance of knowledge and training of the new leader must represent a somewhat awkward juxtaposition of roles within the agency. One of the foremost questions was why an existing staff member was not promoted to the role of director. In many agencies, this is the norm, as existing staff members are often more familiar with the organization than a newcomer from the outside.

Of particular importance for the agency is how the new leader manages her entrance into the agency, especially in circumstances when she deems change to be appropriate. She appears to be accepted by agency staff; however, substantial conflict oftentimes results when new leaders wish to implement changes that are unfamiliar to workers.

The agency culture appears to represent mutual acceptance and cooperation. As this is expected from the clients as they interact with one another and participate in group therapy, it is vital that staff members model healthy interactions as well.

The agency consists of three staff members and one coordinator. All staff members are social workers, while the coordinator is a sociologist. The agency offers psychiatric consultation for clients on a weekly basis – during this time, the psychiatrist hold discussions groups about

medications without giving individual medical advice. Clients are encouraged to direct dose change and side effect concerns to their personal psychiatrists. The agency also receives consultation assistance from a local lawyer. Staff members share common responsibilities, such as running groups, in addition to individual tasks which are specific to staff members' professional expertise.

Clients organize their own social activities at Estuar, including community excursions, board games, and conversations within the facility. Often, clients work together to solve problems with their own personal expertise, such as one client helping another to complete an application for an apartment. The agency staff foster a spirit of client teamwork and mutual support.

During our interview, a client offered his impression of working with Estuar, stating that he appreciated users' involvement in the agency's design of programming, and that their input is continuously solicited at weekly meetings. He validated the importance of identifying client needs, including making programming changes where needed, stating that this increases the likelihood that clients will use and benefit from the program's services. He concluded by saying that he feels appreciated by his involvement and his interactions with the staff.

Not only is a spirit of teamwork encouraged on the part of clients, but it is evidenced by staff members as well. Staff members discussed a team willingness to take on multiple responsibilities, covering for each other during illness or emergency and sharing the workload to reduce the stress level of the staff. Importantly, staff members create a safe environment for sharing concerns and difficult clinical cases. The team is currently undergoing some transition with the hiring of a new coordinator three months ago. Team culture also was evident in the manner in which they positioned themselves in a semi-circle during the interview and responded

collectively to our questions, helping each other to converse in English.

Agency personnel are required to deal with chronically mentally ill adults, who oftentimes do not recover fully enough to become self-sustaining, independent members of society. As such, workers must incorporate realistic expectations of client improvement into their workplace goals, and be able to deal effectively and nonjudgmentally with relapses and setbacks. Significant patience and diplomacy is also required as staff members advocate with patients' employers and family members on behalf of their clients.

Staff members unanimously expressed the need for additional training in counseling, stating that they have learned primarily through hands-on job experience. Continued education is a substantial need of the organization.

Agency staff clearly valued the fact that they fulfill a vital need of the mentally ill population, and that without their services, clients would continue to revolve into and out of the hospital. Knowing that they embody a scarce and valued resource motivates many staff members to weather disappointments and the unpredictability of funding.

Estuar currently conducts weekly meetings to evaluate their techniques with clients and the progress of service users. Most staff members felt that paperwork is intensive, and that reporting to donors about various programs takes up a significant part of their time. Additionally, they create progress notes for all activities and review them on a quarterly basis. Given that Estuar is a satellite of a larger foundation with four centers, reporting is also required by the administrative bureau in Bucharest.

Reintegration is a main goal of the agency, and as such acts as a standard against which program success is measured. Reintegration is defined by agency staff as client ability to maintain a job with income and an independent, self-sustainable lifestyle. Most clients,

however, have not been able to achieve this due to social stigma against the mentally ill. The majority of clients only obtain black market or part-time employment because businesses are reluctant to hire people with mental illness. Additionally, public policy creates an incentive for clients to remain unemployed, as they are guaranteed a state stipend as long as they are considered to be disabled. Once they begin to get a regular salary, the state rescinds the stipend, which is not renewable if the person should decompensate and become disabled again. Clients choose to take the guaranteed stipend rather than risk a variable, unguaranteed income. As a result, current public policy paves the way for continued dependence on the part of clients.

Staff remained uncertain regarding the percentage of clients who are able to stay out of the hospital as they attend programming at the center. Some voiced the concern that their programs and nurturing, long-term atmosphere create client dependency on the center and its staff. Some clients have come to the center for many years, engaging in positive long-term relationships with the agency and other clients.

Agency staff estimated that the ethnicity of their client population consisted of fifty percent Romanian and fifty percent Hungarian. They reported serving a small number of Roma in the past, but attributed low Roma attendance to a “self-selection” mechanism that causes them to choose other alternatives for service or no services at all. Staff members stated that they felt Roma clients were not excluded solely due to their ethnicity, but due to cultural factors that made them incompatible with other clients. In describing the client experience of the Roma, staff noted that they were not integrated into activities or the community culture of the other clients at the center.

Agency-Specific Recommendations. One agency recommendation is to advocate for the establishment of a national mental health advocacy association, such as the National Association

for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) in the United States. The US-based organization provides backing for mental health agencies by advocating for policy changes, bringing vital issues to the forefront of public knowledge, and lobbying for legal reforms. Gathering together interested professionals, clients, and family members in a Romanian organization will help garner public and political support for mentally ill clients.

Additionally, Estuar may benefit from establishing a social work liaison at the hospital itself to facilitate referrals and evaluate the post-discharge needs of potential clients. This would also publicize agency services to clients and family members who may be unaware of the existence of this important resource. As referrals grow, donors may become significantly more interested in providing financial support for the agency.

### **Domestic Violence**

#### ***Artemis***

Artemis is a domestic violence shelter located in Cluj. Its mission is to empower women to escape from abusive relationships, to take charge of their lives, and to be able to communicate their abuse experiences to others. Services include counseling and shelter for sexually abused girls and women, services for at-risk women, an intake and information hotline, legal consultation, support groups, and advocacy for the rights of the abused. The agency shelter accepts women and children, offering services to girls at any age and to boys up to fourteen years. Recently established programming includes violence education seminars in local schools.

The shelter facility has a capacity of five families. Clients are housed at an undisclosed location that employs separate staff members from the administrative office in order to preserve the safety of shelter clients. During the four years in which the center has operated, free assistance was offered in approximately ninety cases of sexual abuse and violence. Specialists

working with police, prosecution, educators, and medical institutions created a collaborative approach to handling sexual abuse cases. As a result, psychologists and social workers from the Artemis Center and from other organizations are highly involved in multi-disciplinary interventions in sexual abuse, including child prostitution.

Referrals typically come from hospitals, although there is no law mandating reporting of abuse unless injuries are life-threatening. Hospitals, physicians, and teachers are not obligated to report child abuse, a gap in the child protection system that the agency is trying to close through public awareness, political lobby, and advocacy. Community awareness efforts are aimed at local schools, family physicians, lawyers and information campaigns using posters, fliers, and other educational materials. Presentations are often made through mass media.

Agency clients are mainly Romanians and Hungarians. Significant numbers of Roma abuse victims have been identified, however, the agency director discussed that there are “separate” service facilities for the Roma community. A Roma domestic violence center exists in Cluj, initiated by Roma women; this center collaborates with Artemis.

EU countries supply most of the funding for the organization. Through the Access Program, the EU co-financed most of Artemis’ activities during the year 2002. Small grants are also received from foreign embassies in Holland and Canada. In addition, the organization collaborates with Swiss donors who are sympathetic to the cause of domestic violence. Similar to Estuar, funding is often provided for specific projects, which must be renewed yearly. There is no overall funding for agency operations at this time.

The agency continues to create public and professional awareness about the dangers of domestic violence, holding psychologist training programs and international seminars throughout Eastern Europe. In 1999, Artemis was involved in changing old legislation that allowed no

protection for female and child victims of abuse. New domestic violence legislation will facilitate the organization of services to assist abuse victims, and will illustrate to governmental officials that the public sees family violence as a national issue. Slowly, domestic violence legislation is changing to allow more protection for victims; however, lobbying for harsher penalties for abusers has met with government resistance.

The agency has recruited local police cooperation, so that officers may request evaluations for identified victims and provide referral information for them. There is currently no implementation of “rape kits” or videotapes to document physical signs of abuse – Artemis is lobbying for this to be established as routine protocol in sex crime investigations so that courtroom evidence may be gathered to bring perpetrators to justice.

The organization’s mission is to stop abuse and empower women to take charge of their lives. Correspondingly, Artemis wishes to break the wall of silence that normally surrounds victims of abuse, encouraging women to speak out collectively and individually about their experiences. In current Romanian culture, physical and sexual abuse are taboo subjects, and victims are stigmatized for speaking out. Future plans include conducting counseling with men who are abusers – staff are in the process of writing a grant to secure funding for a batterer’s group.

Educational efforts include a book with contributions from leading practitioners and academicians, printed in Romanian and in English. Community organization efforts include the inception of a national coalition of organizations that provide services for women. Organization staff cites their main strength as the ability to work well with their clients and to be part of a cohesive team. This allows them the flexibility to organize progressive services that can be adapted to fit their client population.

Agency leadership appears to fall onto the shoulders of one administrator with the support of an American Peace Corps worker. The director appeared to be competent in facilitating organizational operations, yet depended on the social worker to act as liaison with English-speaking evaluators. The agency would benefit from cultivation of her English-speaking skills so that she can confidently represent the organization in funding circles. Internally, decisions appear to be made via consensus rather than through hierarchy.

A culture of “utmost confidentiality” is vital to the success of the agency’s services, as it provides shelter to vulnerable women and children who are sought by abusers. Clearly, lives are at stake if confidentiality is not maintained. It remained unclear what types of support are available to agency staff who undoubtedly deal with potentially explosive situations and traumatized people. It is also unclear how shelter workers are protected if abusers should track their mates to the safe house.

Artemis currently has thirteen employees. Recently, some of the agency’s larger projects did not get re-funded and staff lay-offs became necessary. In an interesting statement about the organizational culture, these staff members continued to volunteer for the agency without being paid. Additionally, Artemis relies on student interns for some tasks.

There is a technical hierarchy of command, however, decisions are typically made on a consensus basis with the involvement of all staff members. Job descriptions were defined two years ago, based on the tasks in which employees were engaged at the time. Task requirements are often fluid, as projects come and go with changes in funding; however, some common elements apply to all agency work. Staff members consist of psychologists and social workers, with some assistance from Peace Corp staff.

The agency creates individual project reports, but has not had the time or staff to create

an annual report. One of the director's main concerns is that the struggle to maintain funding occupies the time and thoughts of staff that could be devoted to programming.

The nature of Artemis' services engenders a complexity of management that is atypical of social service organizations. Specifically, confidential communication must take place between shelter staff and the home office without jeopardizing the lives of safe house residents. This adds additional burden to the functions of outcome evaluation and client documentation, given that complete secrecy must be maintained.

Staff members must be adept at handling and diffusing emotionally charged situations, and respecting the tenuous nature of the circumstances faced by traumatized women and children. They must adhere to the utmost confidentiality and thoroughly understand the unique dynamic that operates within abusive families. An essential task requirement is that workers adopt a non-judgmental stance toward women involved in abusive relationships, acknowledging the likelihood that some women may be unable to leave their abusers permanently.

The staff consistently attributed their continued existence in an unstable funding environment to their determination to "keep going no matter what". All staff members took pride in the fact that the organization has managed to survive several financial disasters in relation to funding availability and remains able to provide services to victims of abuse. This was unanimously cited as one of the greatest achievements of the organization to date. The willingness of staff to persevere without pay and the absence of frequent turnover make substantial statements about the motivation of workers to address the needs of women's and children's safety in the community.

One measure of the organization's effectiveness at bringing about desired social outcomes is seen in the legislative changes which have taken place since it began public

advocacy efforts. Overall, Artemis has been quite effective in influencing public policy surrounding domestic violence and child abuse. In May 2000, the organization mobilized a petition in favor of legislative modifications for “crimes against sexual life” and forwarded the signatures to parliamentarians and the Ministry of Justice. As a result, a campaign for Penal Code modification was begun. The results were favorable, and in November 2000 the articles in the Penal Code were modified.

Agency-Specific Recommendations. Given Artemis’ often tenuous financial standing, it may behoove the agency to engage volunteers and interns by developing partnerships with local universities. Interns can volunteer valuable service time in exchange for field experience and practical knowledge. This would enable the agency to save money while not relinquishing their existing staff to client ratio.

Additional cooperation with the Peace Corps would be ideal, allowing the organization to capitalize on existing positive relationships with Peace Corps workers. Peace Corps staff are typically paid by the Peace Corps itself, freeing agency funds for direct service costs and administrative overhead.

## **Discussion and Recommendations**

### **Direct Practice**

Many of the agencies interviewed expressed the need for enhancing staff training in a variety of areas. The following recommendations are based on these expressed needs in addition to our own observations of agency practice and strategies taken from best-practice models in the United States. Consideration is given to understanding and impacting the complex relationships between children in foster care or the adoption process, their foster parents, and birth parents. Future work requires adaptation of these methods to account for the role ethnicity plays in adoption and foster care in addition to special considerations for the Roma population.

### Clinical Work with Children

Agencies should continue their focus on training in areas of child development, including education for children with disabilities, object relations, attachment, self-image formation, family systems, and biological, adoptive, and foster parent counseling. As providers become more comfortable with these concepts, they can expand their knowledge into providing services for children throughout their adoptive or foster care experience and into adulthood.

One of the key aspects of child development involves the creation of the self within the context of a primary caregiving relationship. Children who grow up under the care of someone who provides a nurturing atmosphere while setting appropriate rules and boundaries internalize the ability to regulate their emotions and to test their behaviors against the reactions of others (Micanzi-Ravagli, 1999). Additionally, children who develop in a healthy caregiving context are more likely to develop an image of themselves as valued and accepted by others.

Conversely, children who suffer early abandonment or lack an identifiable caregiver often have significant difficulty incorporating a sense of security and worth into their self-