

## **Using Vocational Education to Prepare Russian and Romanian Orphans for Life**

Jon A. Hogg  
Matt Baker  
Steve Frazee  
Texas Tech University

The Smith-Hughes National Vocational Education Act established vocational education courses in the United States in 1917. The basic purpose of vocational education is to prepare people for the world of work (Hillison, 1979). Vocational education can be defined as the

“systematic instruction in agriculture and industry at the elementary, secondary, post-secondary, or adult level for the purpose of preparing persons for initial entry or reentry into occupations in agriculture. Furthermore, vocational education in agriculture carries the addition of instruction leading to job creation, development, and entrepreneurship. It also may be designed for occupational awareness, exploration, orientation or job preparation and creation, depending on the age of the students enrolled in the program.” (Phipps & Osborne, 1988, p.3)

The United States is not the only country that can benefit from Vocational Education. With the number of orphans increasing each year in Romania and Russia there is an opportunity to use Vocational Education as a tool to prepare the orphans for a life outside the orphanage.

Since the fall of communism, poverty has stricken many countries such as Romania and Russia. Due to poverty, numerous children have been left as orphans. Hundreds of thousands of children are living in orphanages. These children are the innocent victims of social upheaval being felt throughout the world. As cultures change, as boundaries disappear, and as political systems search for stability, countless children fall through the cracks and suffer in poverty, hunger, and despair.

Buckner Orphan Care International started in 1995 at the invitation of Russian and Romanian government officials who sought Buckner's expertise to help overcome mounting problems in the country's orphanages. With combined efforts from Texas Tech University Department of Agricultural Education and Communications, Buckner Orphan Care International, and numerous volunteers, these orphans may be given the opportunity to work on farms, orchards, or vineyards and develop skills that will provide them with opportunities for future employment

## **Purpose of the Poster**

The primary purpose of this poster is to share a model for vocational education for Romanian and Russian orphans for other institutions to consider. In an effort to accomplish this purpose, a detailed report of collaborative activities to date will be provided. Such activities include orphan needs assessment, visits to Romania and Russia, and an overview of the training projects.

## **Presentation Planned**

The authors will provide a graphic overview of the vocational education project and Romanian and Russian orphanages on a standard display board. Hard copies of the needs assessment summary will be distributed. Video presentations on computer and video will also be on display.

## **Educational Importance**

It is the authors' intention that this model be used by others to improve job placement, job creation, occupational awareness, and career development with orphans in other countries.

## **References**

Hillison, J. (1979). The role of high school vocational agriculture/agribusiness in the occupational success of graduates in Texas. Unpublished manuscript, Texas A& M University, Department of Education, College Station.

Phipps, L. J. & Osborne, E. W. (1988). Handbook on agricultural education in public schools, Danville, IL: The Interstate Printers & Publishers, Inc.