



With your support, we've helped over 18,000 children and 15,000 adults fleeing the war in Ukraine. Thank you



All photos are by Hope and Homes for Children, unless otherwise stated. To ensure the safety and privacy of the people we support, all the names of the children, relatives and carers featured in this publication have been changed.

Cover image: In 2018, our Rwandan team began working with local authority partners to close the orphanage where Carrol and other disabled children lived. Two of our skilled local colleagues supported Carrol and his family - giving his parents the confidence to believe that they could care for their son themselves and practical help to make this possible. Now, with parents to love him and siblings to play with, Carrol's growing stronger and more mobile every day.

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Registered Charity (1089490)

HOPE



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54 On Our Side:
Commonwealth
commits to
eliminating
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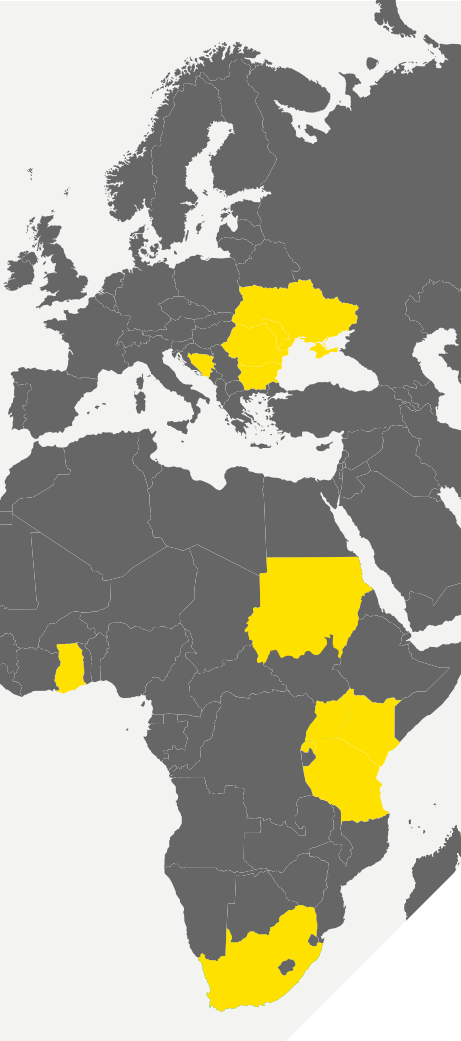
07.

54 On Our Side
In June 2022, heads of government and ministers from across the Commonwealth committed to eliminating orphanages in each and every one of their nations.



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ABOUT US

Every child deserves the love and belonging of a safe family home—never the violence, abuse and neglect suffered in orphanages. We’re Hope and Homes for Children. Since 1994, we’ve inspired the UN, EU and local and national governments worldwide, from Romania to Rwanda, to close the doors of orphanages forever. In their place, we fight to keep families together, to reunite them, and to create new ones – always working with children, for children.

You can find more details about our work at hopeandhomes.org



Covid stole Sonia's father. Then it nearly stole her childhood too. But thanks to our local partner, she's no longer at risk of entering an orphanage.

WELCOME

Innocent Habimfura,
Director, Hope and Homes for Children Rwanda



Imagine, two grown men dancing around like children! But that’s how much it meant to us – me and our Chief Executive, Mark Waddington, who was alongside me in Kigali for the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in June – when we discovered all 54 nations of the commonwealth had accepted the declaration, committing them to eliminating orphanages. For my team in Rwanda, the ‘Kigali declaration’ for child care and protection reform’ has been a labour of love for the past four years. We’ve worked with many government officials, and their support has been instrumental toward its adoption. We weren’t always sure they were listening.

But they have, and you can read more about the whole story on page 7. Getting these 54 nations on board is crucial to

our strategy and a hugely significant milestone in our fight for every child to feel the love and belonging of a safe family home, as Mark described in our last newsletter.

Nearer to your home in the UK, the opportunity to rebuild Ukraine without the devastating mistakes of the past could be on the horizon, now it is granted candidacy for EU membership. On the ground, I know your support has kept our colleagues in Ukraine hopeful during this tragic time – you can hear an update from my friends Halyna and Nadia in Kyiv on page 17, and read about the fortitude our colleagues continue to show in their commitment to our work under the toughest of circumstances on page 13.

Along with the Kenyan care reform strategy launched in June, and several

♥ **Our impact - out now**

Our impact report for the year 2021 is out now.

Describing the incredible results our teams have achieved across the world.

Turn to page 11 for a preview, or go online at hopeandhomes.org/impact to read it in full.



54 ON OUR SIDE

Major step forward as the countries of the Commonwealth commit to eliminating orphanages



Nolan Quigley,
Director of Global Advocacy,
Hope and Homes for Children

In June 2022, heads of government and ministers from across the Commonwealth met in the Rwandan capital Kigali for their first summit in 4 years. Hosting this prestigious Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) was a proud moment for Rwanda, one of the newest members in the Commonwealth of Nations.

To achieve our aim of a world without orphanages, governments and world leaders must first speak up and commit to reform.

Rwanda is a country we’ve worked in for many years. With our support, it’s making significant progress towards becoming Africa’s first orphanage-free nation. We’d long earmarked this summit as a unique opportunity to put a spotlight on the needs and rights of some of the world’s most vulnerable children: those living in orphanages. So, as Rwanda prepared to host this event (twice postponed due to the pandemic), we worked diligently and ceaselessly to raise the case for care reform for children and the elimination of orphanages up the agenda of topics for discussion.

What the Kigali CHOGM achieved went beyond our hopes and aspirations. On Saturday 25th June, the final day of the summit, the Commonwealth made a vital announcement. The Kigali Declaration on Child Care and Protection Reform, a new

and far-reaching commitment had been unanimously agreed by the 54 member countries of the Commonwealth.

Our team in Kigali immediately pored through to see what it contained. We were delighted to read that the Declaration contained clear recognition of the harm caused to children by institutionalisation and a clear commitment to progressively eliminate orphanages around the world. The Kigali Declaration also advocates expanding social protection coverage to reduce poverty, strengthen health systems to respond to future pandemics, and tackle underlying causes that lead to children becoming separated from their families in the first place. This speaks directly to the factors we know are necessary to end the incarceration of children – and is a stark reminder of why deinstitutionalisation is such an important component of progress on these global goals.



Carrol reunited with his family in Nyagatare District, Rwanda in June 2022. Carrol was separated from his twin sister at just three, and had to fend for himself in an orphanage.



IT’S ESTIMATED THAT THERE ARE BETWEEN

2 AND 4
MILLION CHILDREN
IN THE COMMONWEALTH LIVING
IN INSTITUTIONS

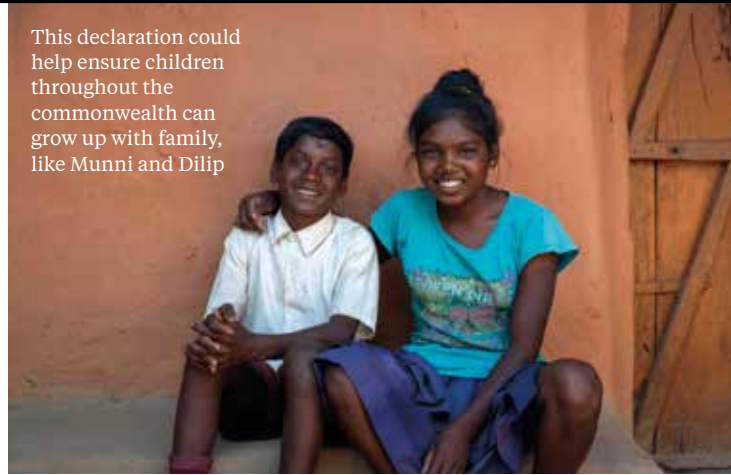
In recent years, we’ve seen increasing international recognition around the harm of orphanages. The UN, UK, EU and Australia have all made commitments to tackle the scourge of institutionalisation. The Kigali Declaration is another milestone moment in our fight against orphanages. There, in black and white, was a clear recognition of the need to take action.

At Hope and Homes for Children, our thoughts immediately turned to making sure these words don’t just remain nice ideas on paper. We need to see action. We need to see progress. We need to hold countries to account for the promises they’ve made. And that’s where the rest of our hard work is paying off: Rwanda is marshalling African countries to make that difference. It’s leading the way, by investing directly in families and communities to protect and care for children. It’s only a few years away from closing its last orphanage. As Chair of the Commonwealth, Rwanda’s in a position to convene and lead those nations that are already making commitments to eliminate orphanages, by showcasing progress and sharing learning.

Assumpta Ingabire,
Rwandan Minister of State
in charge of Social Affairs



This declaration could help ensure children throughout the commonwealth can grow up with family, like Munni and Dilip



A proud moment for Mark, Innocent and Assumpta following the signing of the Kigali Declaration

And we - together with you our supporters - will draw on everything we've learned over the past 30 years to support this.

And, change is already happening. Around the Commonwealth, governments are taking steps to change the way their most vulnerable children are cared for. Earlier this year Kenya launched a far-reaching Care Reform strategy that lays down a plan for the country to move away from orphanages and to better support vulnerable children and their families. Similar progress can be seen in countries on every continent with promising signs in Uganda, India, South Africa and beyond. The Kigali Declaration is a reflection of this growing momentum. We hope that it will sow the seeds for greater co-operation between countries. After all, what better way to accelerate progress than by us all walking forward together to the beat of the same drum?

It's a truly significant moment. And one we could only have achieved with the unflinching support of backers like Kate Hobhouse, St. James's Place Charitable Foundation, UBS Optimus Foundation and Players of People's Postcode Lottery, who stayed the course with us through delays, never ceasing to believe that our shared plan, to build a better world, would come good.

The modern Commonwealth prides itself on encouraging its member states to innovate, by sharing their approaches to common challenges. This fits neatly with our approach at Hope and Homes for Children. Over 30 years, we've learned that by working alongside governments we can help them overcome any challenges or difficulties they have in transforming their care systems. This is one of the reasons we regularly organise learning visits for government officials from one country to learn about the approach of other countries. We now need to take the Kigali Declaration out of the summit conference room and into the ministries of governments around the world. They have to come up with innovative plans to deliver on these commitments - and we will be making sure that they report back on this progress.

As partner after partner, country after country, joins our movement towards the tipping point where orphanages are unacceptable, so our role ensuring commitment turns to action, becomes ever more important. These first green shoots of our strategy appearing indicates that we must redouble our efforts to nurture them; for this, we'll need every ounce of your support in the year to come.



♥ From a major success like the Kigali Declaration, to keeping a desperate family together and their children safe and loved, every achievement takes careful planning and time. That's why monthly donations through a direct debit are so important - they allow us to plan ahead and fully commit. You can be part of real change. Visit hopeandhomes.org/donate to commit to this movement today.

THIS YEAR

Over 47,000 children are growing up safe and loved in families, thanks to you.



Together with our dedicated teams on the ground, you've kept families together and children out of orphanages with brilliant fundraising ideas from designing mugs, to sponsored walks to tea parties with enough cake to fill Wembley Stadium. You've done it all, and here are just two of our favourites.

12-year-old Riana Guenzel and her mum, Karen, set themselves the challenge of running 1 mile every day for 30 days and raised over £2,500! Karen first heard of us through work when we were Deutsche Bank's charity partner. Ever since then she's stayed in touch, and when they took on this challenge, they chose to support us straight away.

Riana and her brother, who is disabled, know what it means to have a loving and supportive family around them. Riana says of her brother 'he is happiest when we are all together'.

'We found it heart-breaking that children are kept in orphanages even though many have family. We wanted to do something to get more children home to their families.'

Long term supporters Phil and Carole Buksh opened their gorgeous garden to the public this June. Enlisting help from neighbours and friends, who lent car parking spaces and baked more than 80 scones, they raised over £2,000! Being keen to spread awareness,

they approached local business owner and friend, Jim Hewlett from lawncare company Lawntech. Jim generously offered to ask customers to donate their referral fee. They did that and more, raising over £4,000 in total.

'We decided to raise funds for Hope and Homes for Children, which is doing such good work in Ukraine and many other countries. As we have been customers of Lawntech for many years, we asked Jim if he could support our venture. Jim had the brainwave of asking his 1,000+ customers for donations and we have been astounded by people's generosity.' Phil Buksh.

'The charity was brought to our attention by two of our longstanding customers who have supported you for a number of years. The whole team were inspired by the work being done and were happy to have the opportunity to support a local charity providing such vital aid to children suffering the devastating effects of the Ukraine war.' Lawntech



♥ If you're fundraising or would like a bit of help to get started, please get in touch with Catherine Butt, Supporter Fundraising Manager on 01722 790 111 or email fundraising@hopeandhomes.org You can also visit the Get Involved section on our website: hopeandhomes.org/get-involved to get inspired or download resources to kickstart your fundraising.

OUR 2021 IMPACT – AT A GLANCE

MOLDOVA

3 ORPHANAGE CLOSURE PROGRAMMES PROGRESSED

98 

507 

BULGARIA

2 ORPHANAGE CLOSURE PROGRAMMES COMPLETED

99 

438 

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

2 TOTAL NUMBER OF ORPHANAGES WORKED WITH

44 

47 

INDIA

5 ORPHANAGES WHERE WE REDUCED THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN CONFINED OR PROVIDED EXPERTISE

23 

448 

Countries of influence
Short-term strategic interventions in countries relevant to either established regional hubs or for the development of new regional hubs.

- Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania
- Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru

NEPAL

5 ORPHANAGES WHERE WE REDUCED THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN CONFINED OR PROVIDED EXPERTISE

40 

1,230 



Children transitioned from orphanages into family or community care



Children supported to remain safely in families

ROMANIA

3 ORPHANAGE CLOSURE PROGRAMMES COMPLETED

98 

698 

RWANDA

1 ORPHANAGE CLOSURE PROGRAMMES PROGRESSED

6 

57,803 

UKRAINE

2 ORPHANAGES WHERE WE REDUCED THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN CONFINED OR PROVIDED EXPERTISE

95 

1,468 

SOUTH AFRICA

19 ORPHANAGES WHERE WE REDUCED THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN CONFINED OR PROVIDED EXPERTISE

75 

202 

♥ This is just the tip of the iceberg. See the full story including our progress towards orphanage elimination at hopeandhomes.org/ourimpact

9 DAYS IN UKRAINE

Our teams face seemingly insurmountable trials on a daily basis, fighting for children's rights across the globe. But recently, the story of one of our colleagues' bravery stood out to us, and with her permission, we wanted to share it with you to showcase the courage and resilience that marks out every single member of our team.



Russian forces entered the town of Makariv in Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine, on the 27 February 2022 with shelling continuing until 31 March. The town was fully liberated the next day, on 1 April. Following the liberation of the area, it was discovered that over 200 civilians had been murdered by the Russian occupying forces in the territory of the Makariv. This often included cases of torture, the killing of the elderly and people shot in the head with their hands tied behind their back.

Olya, Hope and Homes for Children's Head of Training in Ukraine, shares the story of her escape from Makariv alongside her 15 year old son, inset, right.

When do you give up on your home?

We heard the shelling around 5pm.

Together, we decided that we would stay, that we would remain in our home with our beloved dog, Dominika.

But what do you need to protect yourself when your home town is being invaded?

We decided to hide in our basement. We gathered food, water, a torch, candles, bedding, a few easy to hand clothes, a heater, my mobile phone and a small bag that contained our documents. And we took a spade and tools in case our home was bombed and we'd need to dig ourselves out. It's only after that I think how unlikely it is that we would have been able to dig upwards if our house had collapsed on top of us!

We didn't see the light of day for 3 days.

We rationed everything, but water was our most precious commodity – we had about 30 litres.

We cooked food that didn't require water. We used any other liquids to flush the toilet.

First the electricity went off after 2 days. Then, even though we only used 2 candles each 24 hours, they ran out after 3. That's when we started leaving the basement for light and for air. We tracked the sound of the gun fire and the shelling,

and if there was a gap for 10 minutes, we decided it was safe. But the sound of war rarely stopped for that long.

By day five no glass remained in our windows. Our water was desperately low (we'd even left pans and containers outside to collect the rainwater) and the battery on my phone couldn't be preserved for much longer – once that was gone, we'd have no way to organise our escape.

On day 6 I called a neighbour. We decided we needed find a way to leave. That's when a resolve came over me.

Bogdan and I made a pact that we wouldn't be scared. We'd stop hiding. We became almost indifferent. No more ducking as we passed the holes left in the walls where the windows had once been.

We couldn't leave by car as we had no fuel and the gas stations were empty. We had to wait for news of public transportations. We waited 3 days.

On our 9th day living under attack, we had 5 minutes notice that a bus was preparing to leave. It was almost like fate had intervened. We were down to our last 5 litres of water.

I grabbed the backpack we'd prepared, with our documents, a flash light, my medicines and basic clothes.

The hardest part? Leaving our precious dog Dominika with a neighbour who was remaining. It broke our hearts. But it strengthened our resolve to return.

"It's really scary leaving and not knowing what you are leaving for."



“
It will take time
to repair. As will
our lives.
”

When we boarded the bus, the curtains were drawn.

The driver had asked military forces about the safe passages, and was told no route was entirely without danger – up 300 tanks marked every exit bar one – but the one exit still controlled by our own forces was a damaged bridge that might not take the weight of the vehicle and the 18 people it contained.

We took the risk.

We didn't know where we were headed, we were only told to travel west.
It's really scary leaving and not knowing what you are leaving for.

The journey took 3 long days.

The first place we found to rest was a Ukrainian Catholic University. Here we slept, in a room with 30 other people.

Bogdan and I remained there for 3 more days until Hope and Homes for Children was able to find me somewhere to stay, with a partner organisation working in Lviv.

This is where we've remained, supporting other internally displaced families, using what I know from my work, to support those families to stay safe and strong, just like Bogdan and I are. It's only now that I think about what I should have told Bogdan, when the war started, about what to do in the event that something happened to me. All I told him at the time was to climb the fence to our neighbours.

But what do you tell a 15 year old about how to live alone should something happen to their parent? Even a child protection specialist like me doesn't know the answer to this.

With the liberation of Makariv, I've since visited our home, to collect our dog?, and to check on our neighbours. They survived.

But our home has not. Everything that was wood has been shattered. Doors are crumpled. Electrical wires hang dangerously all around.

It will take time to repair. As will our lives.

But what is important right now is that we are together. We are safe. And we are adjusting.



♥ Olya's family is just one suffering the effects of this calamitous war. We know it's putting countless children and families at risk of separation. Six months on from the outbreak, what we've been able to do thanks to the remarkable generosity of our supporters is incredible. We now have a long-term plan to play a vital role in the rebuild of a Ukraine without orphanages. Please read on to hear more about what's next in our long term response to the crisis.

Start your Christmas with an inspiring and joyful evening of performance and music

THE HOPE AND HOMES FOR CHILDREN CHRISTMAS CONCERT 2022

Featuring BRIT Award nominee soprano **Katie Marshall**, and a host of special guests

**St Mary Abbots Church,
Kensington, London
Wednesday 7th December**

Back after a 3-year gap, join us for an evening of music and performance in the beautiful setting of St Mary Abbots church to celebrate and reflect on the past year.

**Tickets: £25 for adults
and £10 for children**

To purchase tickets please go to **hopeandhomes.org/Christmas Concert**, use the form enclosed or call **01722 790111**

UKRAINE UPDATE: OUR PLANS

Your generous support has enabled us to provide crucial help to families and children affected by the brutal war in Ukraine. As we continue to work on immediate relief, it's imperative we also plan for the future.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, countless families have been torn apart by brutal bombing and bloodshed. As well as losing family members in the fighting, over six million people have fled across the border, leaving loved ones, livelihoods and almost everything they owned behind. Families are getting separated in the chaos, and children are travelling, unaccompanied, into foreign countries.

This war is not merely a humanitarian crisis for the people of Ukraine, but for the world. It has created a child protection emergency across the region. And it has exposed Ukraine's vast system of orphanages, housing 100,000 children – many of whom have been left to face the dangers of war alone.

“The loss of financial opportunities and logistical connections has led to job cuts, wages cuts and rising unemployment. Fewer families with children can provide for themselves. The situation of families who had survived based on state social payments, remains critical, as the regularity of social payments has not been fully restored yet and prices are rising rapidly. [...] There is virtually no place to remove children. There is a catastrophic shortage of [emergency foster carers] in the region. Institutions do not work. The situation is really getting worse.”

Halyna Postoliuk, Director of Hope and Homes for Children Ukraine

Hope and Homes for Children is working together with our local partners across Ukraine, Romania and Moldova to support the most vulnerable children and families on the brink of survival.

With 24 years' experience working in Ukraine, our teams were able to act fast. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, since February 2022 we've already supported **more than 13,000 children in Ukraine**, and over 6,000 refugees across Romania and Moldova.

What you have helped us achieve so far

Our achievements in Ukraine since 1998 mean we're uniquely positioned to respond to this crisis. Since 24th February, we've directly helped more than 13,000 children within Ukraine; 4,000 refugees in Romania and 5,000 refugees in Moldova.

- **We've successfully advocated for the protection of Ukraine's 100,000 children** in orphanages, ensuring these children are monitored, tracked and recognised by the humanitarian system.
- **In Ukraine, we've provided practical, life-saving support**, including psychosocial support, food, water and protection. We've helped relocate vulnerable families and evacuate three baby homes. And we've equipped specialists with protective clothing and first aid kits.
- **In Moldova, we've supported over 3,000 refugees** with essential needs, emotional support and referral services. We've supported many unaccompanied children into foster families. And we've supported a further 2,580 people within 20 Refugee Accommodation Centres.
- **In Romania, we've been supporting children and families arriving from Ukraine**, including unaccompanied children, with vital essentials. And we've helped the authorities prepare centres for children and carers evacuated from Ukrainian orphanages.

“Many families in need of help live in remote villages, where public transport runs at best twice a day (and sometimes once or twice a week). No one will leave children alone at home, and it is not possible to take everyone to go all together, because the ticket price sometimes reaches more than 100UAH [around \$2.90]. The possibilities of our organisation in this sense are unique, because we can quickly respond even to a phone call from a family, and within a few hours – to deliver the package, or even send it by Nova Poshta [a widespread postal and cargo company in Ukraine], if the need is urgent and the family lives far away.”

–Yana Polishko, social work specialist, Dnipropetrovsk region, Hope and Homes for Children Ukraine

Top left: Bombed houses near Bucha. Families' need for secure shelter will worsen this winter. Top right: Many of the spaces where children play have been destroyed. Left: The remains of a maternity clinic near Kyiv. Essential services like these will need rebuilding.

Our five-year response

Our work to ensure children and families are protected and supported will not end when the media attention dies down. Drawing on 24 years' experience working in Ukraine, our five-year regional response plan aims to **lay the foundations for a scalable family-based care system**. A system that will lead to the elimination of orphanages in Ukraine.

Ukraine joining the European Union gives us an opportunity to collaborate with the Ukrainian authorities to 'build back better'. Together, we can work to create a strong, effective child protection system with families at its core. With a focus on Kyiv and Dnipropetrovsk regions, we will:

- **Strengthen families** – by providing humanitarian and psychosocial support, and developing community-based service models to prevent family breakdown and avoid the need for institutional care;
- **Close baby homes** – and demonstrate alternative, family-based care services for children without parental care;
- **Advocate at national and EU levels** – to shut down Ukraine's orphanage system and ensure sufficient support to achieve this, always in the best interests of children.

Meanwhile, in Moldova and Romania, we continue to support refugee families, unaccompanied children and children evacuated from orphanages in Ukraine. We're providing their basic needs and offering essential psychosocial support until they can return safely to Ukraine.

To do this, we're working in close partnership with others including the Ukrainian authorities, the European Union, the UK Government, UNICEF and Save the Children.

♥ Winter and rising prices are posing a dire threat not only to vulnerable families, but now to everyone across the region; even to these plans. We'll be writing to you next month with an update, and asking for your support to ensure families make it through Christmas together.



MY LIFE IN 10 OBJECTS

Long term patron and supporter Martin Bell (OBE) is a former MP and BBC foreign correspondent. His connection with Hope and Homes for Children dates back to the former Yugoslavia, in 1992. It was there, while on the frontline in Sarajevo, that he met with our charity's founder, the British Army Colonel Mark Cook (OBE). Mark told Martin about a pile of rubble which was all that was left of an orphanage, and how he hoped to rebuild it. On the same day Martin was seriously wounded by shrapnel while reporting live in air for BBC News. Mark was on hand to provide First Aid, before brazenly using the occasion to pick up Martin's microphone and tell viewers about his orphanage project.

Thankfully Martin survived, and the resulting publicity led to the birth of Hope and Homes for Children. We're now active in 10 countries, and our mission has shifted from building orphanages, to closing them down.

Today, we fight to keep families together, to reunite them, and to create new ones. And Martin is one of our most treasured founding patrons.

1. Toy windmill

made by a German prisoner of war in 1944. At the age of seven I bought it in the village shop in Redisham Suffolk for 27 shillings and sixpence and have prized it ever since.

2. Sergeant's sash

Sergeant's sash from the 1st Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment, in which I served as a conscript in Cyprus from 1957 to 1959.

3. A spent CS gas canister

from the streets of Chicago during the Democratic Convention of 1968. This was at the height of the Vietnam War which I also reported on.

4. Rubber bullet

from the streets of Belfast during the early years of the Troubles, in which I also played a part.

5. Photograph

with President Ronald Reagan in the White House, 1986. I served as the BBC's correspondent in Washington from 1979 to 1989.

6. Souvenir

of Bosnia 1992, photograph of cameraman Nigel Bateson in the battered old BBC Vauxhall Carlton. When it stopped a bullet, I wrote to Vauxhall and thanked them for making a tank without knowing it. After that they sent us a proper armoured car.

7. 500,000,000,000 dinar note

from Serbia, during the economic crisis of 1994. From 1991 to 1995 I was assigned to the Balkan wars and wounded in one of them. It was during this time that I was present at the founding of Hope and Homes for Children.

8. An Accidental MP

the book I wrote about serving as the Independent MP for Tatton in the House of Commons from 1997 to 2001. I found it a strange experience.

9. A ceremonial dagger

presented by the Government of Yemen during my visit as part of a UNICEF delegation, 2012. I have been a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador since 2001.

10. An image

of myself with my wife Merita, whose love sustains me.

♥ Love. It's at the heart of what we do. To ensure a family's love is enough to sustain their children, donate now at hopeandhomes.org/donate or via the form provided. Just £17 a month can provide the support to keep a family together and stop a child losing the people who love them.



1 OBJECT IN MY LIFE

Keeping the smallest babies where they belong: close to mum in Moldova



Our new partnership with baby carrier experts, Ergobaby supports new parents to get those first special moments of connection, promoting strong bonds and helping healthy relationships to flourish.

We’ve been working with families for nearly 30 years to keep children out of orphanages and safe at home, close to the people who love them. So it was an easy decision to partner with Ergobaby, the baby carrier experts who share our intimate understanding of the essential role of family in providing the love and care all children need.

Every baby deserves to experience those precious moments of connection with their mum and dad. It’s what makes them feel safe and loved. For small children this is even more important – for every 3 months spent in an orphanage, children lose on average 1 month’s growth¹.

That’s why our teams support thousands of parents every year to give their children the best start in life, by keeping them close.

To celebrate the start of our partnership, Ergobaby delivered free baby carriers from their new range, Embrace Soft Air Mesh, to Moldovan families supported by our programmes. The carriers are supporting parents with the smallest of babies, helping families bond, stay close and together. Here, three of them share their delight at receiving this support.

In addition, Ergobaby’s vital support will help us raise awareness amongst up to 100,000 parents and carers, of the harm done by orphanages and the importance of supporting children and parents to make this connection.

Our local partners CCF Moldova have represented Hope and Homes for Children in Moldova since 2005. Their work over the past 17 years has been extraordinary. They have closed six orphanages and returned 940 children to loving families. Day-to-day - they assist with family support, day care, nurseries and foster care in order to prevent the separation of children from their families.

The team in Moldova has been working alongside our partner Ergobaby to deliver free Embrace Soft Air Mesh carriers to Moldovan families with the smallest of babies

“Since I have been carrying my child with Ergobaby, he is no longer agitated; it seems to help him against intestinal discomfort. That’s what I think. He became calmer. I am really happy.”

Galina

♥ Everything we do relies on partners, whether fundraising, influencing governments or our work on the ground. If you know of a company, church, school or club that we could work with let us know by calling 01722 790111 or emailing fundraising@hopeandhomes.org.

¹ D.E.Johnson, ‘Medical and Developmental Sequelae of Early Childhood Institutionalization in Eastern European Adoptees’, in The Minnesota Symposia on Child Psychology. Vol 31: The Effects of Early Adversity on Neurobehavioral Development, ed. by Nelson (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2001).



“I am just happy to receive this baby carrier. I was thinking how I could raise some money to buy one, maybe a second hand, so that I could hold my baby in my arms as long as possible. It is really comfortable for me and my child to feel close.”
Maria, mother of 5 children



“I would never have known what it is like to carry your child in your arms so comfortably, if I didn’t have a baby carrier now”
Ana, mother for 6 children



THE UNBREAKABLE BOND

Hope and Homes
for Children Bulgaria

“Tears poured forth from Ivan’s eyes, which he tried to hide, and his lips whispered, “My boy, my boy, I won’t leave you here.”

This is what my colleagues and I were witnessing at each meeting between Ivan and his son Stoyan. Cruelly separated from the love of his family, Stoyan was languishing in one of the communist-era children’s institutions, in the most northwestern region of Bulgaria.

We walked slowly and silently down the long, dark corridors, where there was a screaming silence, even though there were children hidden in its cell-like rooms. These meetings were painful - the child in a stroller, his crooked little feet struggling to reach the floor. Light screams coming out of his mouth, and a father fighting all the prejudices of society, to keep his son.

Stoyan is born prematurely, with low weight and visible impairments. His mother struggles, but his father Ivan is convinced that they will cope. They live in Ivan’s native village, where everyone knows him as a good and hard-working man.

In the village, however, they find it difficult to accept that the mother is from another ethnic group. People Ivan has known all his life begin to suggest they leave. Soon the couple receive threats; one way or another, they will be forced to leave the village. Someone calls the child protection department, informing on the couple, suggesting Stoyan’s mother is not taking care of him.

Finally, one day when Stoyan’s mother was in Sofia and he was with his father

in Vidin, the local authorities reported that a child had been left alone in the house and the parents were gone. In the evening, social workers were waiting for Ivan and Stoyan on their return to the bus station. The next morning Stoyan was taken from his family and placed in a baby institution. Ivan left the village, and broke up with the mother of his child.

He had lost everything.

Too often, we silently ignore racist behavior and do not even think about the resulting trauma for the victims. In this case, a one-year-old child was “sentenced” to pay with a stay in an institution of over a year. Deprived of the care and caresses of his parents, for a whole year.

Ivan visited Stoyan religiously. After each meeting, he cried and wondered how to dispel the clouds of doubt that filled him, “A single father won’t be able to cope with raising a disabled child!”, “He won’t be able to cook and clean for him!”, “He wants to receive social benefits!” “This child will never walk!”, “It’s dangerous for the child!”

Breaking the shackles of prejudice

With our support, Ivan managed to break the shackles of public prejudice and now takes care of his child. We stood firmly by Ivan’s side as he fought to get Stoyan back.

The attention Ivan lavished on Stoyan helped him learn to walk. With the continued love and attention of a doting parent, he can now pronounce a few words. And after a few operations, he can even climb stairs.

It is all so nice, but for the last year and a half of struggle, Stoyan grew up without the family and love he needed. There is no compensation for that time missed!

Since last autumn, Stoyan has been attending school, and Ivan has gone back to work. Even through the coronavirus pandemic, when they were left alone at home with just a little money, they are happy together.

From now on, it’s only tears of joy for Ivan.

“Together we can do everything”

Hope and Homes for Children Bulgaria and partner Bulgarian electricity provider Elektrohold decided to support Ivan with practical items like a cooker, because Stoyan is already learning to eat solid food and developing chewing mechanisms, and this is extremely important for the development of children’s brains. This will give another chance to this Bulgarian family to live a more dignified life.

“Ivan and I visited Stoyan and every time he smiled at me and said: “Look at him! He is my son. See how much we look alike! I want to take him home”

Regional coordinator of HHC – Bulgaria for Vidin district



♥ The end of orphanages is within reach. Bulgaria hopes to close its last baby home within two years, so no other Bulgarian family has to suffer what Ivan’s did. You can help reunite families who’ve already been torn apart, from just £43 at hopeandhomes.org/donate

♥ To make a donation

Visit donate.hopeandhomes.org, call **01722 790111** (9am–5pm, Mon–Fri) or use the form enclosed.

It costs £600, or **£17 per month** over three years, to keep a family together. Rarely has the need been so overwhelming to ensure that children, orphaned by COVID, are kept safe from orphanages. Our experienced family support workers are working with families every day, providing them with the tailored support they need to stay together.

It costs £1,140, or **£32 per month** over three years, to reunite a child with their family. Our expert teams are working right now to trace children’s birth families, preparing children and their parents to be reunited, and supporting them through this complex and challenging process.

It costs £1,680, or **£47 per month** over three years, to build a new family for a child rescued from an institution. Our teams are in the field each day undertaking the skilled work needed to help a child feel loved in a new family. This includes recruiting and training foster parents, the complex work of preparing a child to join their new family, and the resources they need to make a success of their life together.

♥ Use your Will to change a life today, a generation tomorrow, and the world forever

Our supporters have enabled us to free more than 268,000 children from the threat of family separation, and help us champion the global movement that will bring the antiquated orphanage system to an end. By remembering Hope and Homes for Children in your Will, you can impact children for generations to come whilst bringing us even closer to a world without orphanages. For more information, please visit hopeandhomes.org/leave-a-legacy or contact our Head of Supporter Care, Joe Sutton, on **01722 790111** or joe.sutton@hopeandhomes.org