

My Experience

By Katie Brennan
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Hi, I'm Katie. I went on my first trip to Romania in August 2008 after hearing about CAST at the Medlink Conference.

Before the trip I was really excited, but a little apprehensive, as I didn't know what to expect. I was lucky as I already knew somebody on my trip but I also made great friends with the rest of the team, we all met up for the first time in Heathrow Airport!

When we got to Romania, Alex, our project co-ordinator met us, she really helped and I don't think we would have found the train station without her! The train journey from Bucharest to Bacau was 4.5hours, although it was long it was a good laugh and we even got talking to a lovely Romanian couple. My worries had already left me.

For the first two days in Bacau we stayed in a children's centre and planned activities with the Romanian volunteers, who were all very helpful and welcoming. Then we went to the village in the mountains to work with the children. This was the most amazing time of my life! When we arrived the children were a little wary of us, but by the end of the trip they wanted to be playing with us all the time and my back was hurting from giving more piggy backs than I could ever imagine!

Everyday the children would turn up in the morning ready for the days' activities - sports, arts, music, English and dance. I particularly enjoyed the evenings when the children would come back for a disco, one night we even made a campfire and the children cooked us all corn on the cob. I also remember one day after the activities had ended and the children were going home, some of the boys decided it would be fun to pour water on our heads, it ended up being a huge water fight with all of the children soaking us!

On the last day of summer school we had a party for the children, giving them prizes and gifts we had brought over, I'll never forget the smiles on the children's faces. The hardest part of my time in Bacau was leaving the village and saying goodbye to the children who I'd become so attached to. Hopefully I'll be back in Bacau next year and I'll get to see all of the amazing children again.

Romania really was the most amazing and happiest experience of my life. I will never forget the beautiful children I had the privilege to work with, it was definitely worth sleeping on the floor with bugs and showering in streams!