

Lydia Magazine article; March 27/2013

Elisabeta Maduta-Kubassek
Vice President, Fundatia Porti Deschise – Open Doors Foundation

It was an extremely hot day in July 2000, so hot that the asphalt stuck to pedestrian's shoes. Beti Maduta waited for five hours at the Medgidia train station after an 18-hour trip from Oradea. She was supposed to be met, but was forgotten about and those who were to come had gone out of town. After much effort in trying to make contact, a young girl came along to take her to the place she was to stay.

Beti isn't a light packer, with all the heavy baggage being dragged behind they went to the address the girl thought was the right place but it wasn't. Considerable time was spent in the scorching sun searching for the right house. Hungry and near total heat exhaustion, Beti was shown where she was to stay. At first Beti thought she had a room to herself, but the largest cockroaches had a highway along the wall and up the curtain. As hot as it was that night, Beti crawled inside a duvet cover and buttoned it up rather than let the bugs get to her.

During her bible course Beti was told she needed to do the steps of practice as Jesus told His disciples. "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth." She had completed the first level with a children's ministry in Baila Felix. Beti's family spoke with her pastor to not give her the letter she needed to be accepted in Medgidia. They were afraid that from there she would go to some cannibal tribe that would kill her. The Lord intervened and Beti did get recommendation papers from her unwilling pastor, but only because Brother Joseph Ton made the request. The local Baptist church where she was sent had no outreach to the Muslims and Gypsies and was not considering starting one at that time. This place that seemed so uninviting was to serve as a stepping-stone to missions in India, Africa to Muslims or some uncivilized tribe.

Beti had been working as a waitress and was promoted to VIP hostess in a hotel that served up to 1000 people a day. Gratuities were much higher than her salary. Beti's charming demeanor and meticulous work was highly appreciated by both management and clients. Others thought that Beti had it made, "why would she ever want to leave?" Beti didn't want to accept funding from others and wanted to be self-sufficient for housing and other costs of living whether at home or on the field. The Lord enabled Beti to buy a bachelor suit near the hotel where she worked so she would always have a place to come back to, from the mission field.

Now the "Samaria" Medgidia reality was in her face and it was quite a shock and a stark contrast to the relative affluence of Oradea and the thermal springs of Baile Felix resorts. The comforts of her little apartment were 760 kilometers away and here she was sharing her room with these big creepy bugs. She did not stay in that room very long however and over a period of time lived in other homes. The

problem was that she could not receive visitors in the homes where she stayed because the people she was reaching out to were very unclean, having lice and fleas. Finally the Baptist Church gave her a room in a small house that it owned. It was a place to call home but the conditions were barely tolerable. With no heat for some periods because of the poor electrical wiring, the water would freeze in the house and washroom. The earthen block walls and floor were growing with mould. Beti however was happy that she was able to receive guests in the court, here they poured out their troubled hearts. She would pray with them and tell them about the wonderful love of Jesus.

Late one night she heard someone trying to break into the door, she tried calling the police, but was whispering so as not to scare off the burglar. The police asked her if she was drunk or crazy and hug up on her. Finally a family in the church came to her rescue.

On foot with backpack and faith, Beti walked the rough streets of Medgidia, praying as she went, for homes and locations that Lord brought to her attention. In the Ali Baba area, home for around 5000 Turkish Muslims she befriended families and went to great lengths to transfer a orphan boy to a Christian high school in Oradea.

The family was opposed and felt that this boy should continue living with his grandmother and attend the Muslim high school. The boy on the other hand said "he would not continue his education if he had to go where they were indoctrinating him with Islam." You see, he had come to believe in Jesus as his Saviour. His mother had died and his father had been gone to Turkey for a long time and the family did not know his status. The boy was encouraged to pray and ask God to bring back his father, if God answered his prayer he knew Jesus was real and he would serve him. Would you believe it, just as the bible tells us, God knows our prayers before we ask Him. When this prayer was prayed, his father was already on the way to Medgidia and the next day he arrived.

Beti went to all the ministers in the Constanta area to see if they would be willing to help her speak to officials and provide funding to transfer the boy to a Christian school in Oradea. It was right after 9-11, Sept.2001 and the world trade center in New York was still smoldering. "Can anything good come out of this Muslim boy" was the response of one minister. Beti spoke to several directors of Christian schools throughout the country without success. Finally Beti spoke with Bro. Joseph Ton and his response was, "if we do not take this boy and put him into a Christian environment we will have to give account on judgment day." Bro. Ton promised to do what he could to get a scholarship and a family for him to live with. The boy's family was not very willing to let him go. Finally Beti laid her life on the line and said. "Your child will be in Oradea and I will be living here. If something happens to him I give you the right to take my life."

Beti had some money but it was being saved for university and her family was adamant that it was used for that. However, no one else was willing to take any risk

with this Turkish boy and there was no other money available at the moment. Yes, Beti took the risk and used her university money and borrowed even more to get legalities done and buy the train tickets for the boy, his uncle and herself. The uncle had a good report and the relatives were happy that someone in the family would have an education and become somebody in society.

After high school, he attended Immanuel Baptist University, which he also graduated from. This young man is presently ministering to the people in his original neighborhood Ali Baba, and has been consecrated by the Baptist community as their leader of missions to Muslims in Romania.

Beti was taken to the Casa Alba by a family who was responsible for a joint social project of the Baptist church in partnership with city hall. Here she met ninety families living in the most deplorable conditions imaginable. No one in that block had ever gone beyond grade four and many had never gone to school. There were women in one room, bound with chains being forcibly used for prostitution. The stench alone would keep most people out, but it was also a very dangerous place. Mail carriers would not deliver mail for fear of being robbed and neither would a police go there alone.

Guess who went alone when everyone else refused to go, yes Beti. After ministering to one particular family for one year they moved out and allowed her to use their room / apartment, 4 meters by 2.80 meters. All the apartments in the block are this size. This family accepted Christ and became members of the Baptist Church after two years. The hand of God protected Beti in a remarkable way. After the man in the family gave his life to Christ, he testified in church that whenever Beti came to see his family he had the urge to get some other men to drag her into a room and rape her. There was something he could not understand that restrained him from doing what was in his evil heart.

When Beti requested the youth group from church to come and sing Christmas carols she was refused on the basis of putting the group at risk. Beti felt very let down and the Holy Spirit spoke her heart.

Now it was New Years Eve and Beti had numerous invitations to homes where celebrations were arranged, however she told them she already had plans. With bags of cookies and other treats, coffee and soft drinks, Beti climbed the four unlit stairs to the cold dark room, number 91. Here she lit candles and spread the table with goodies and waited. One by one the children and youth came and listened to Beti tell stories of Jesus' love while they enjoyed the special treats. Before Beti and those around her realized, it was glowing in the east. Without heat and only candles for light the cold didn't matter, the Lord was doing something special and these hungry souls in the White House knew someone really cared about them. Hardened and suspicious hearts melted that freezing cold, New Years Eve.

Beti had prayed the night before that the Lord would send some snow, as there was none yet that winter. She was thinking about Oradea and her home village of Carandeni, her sick mother and loving family. It was so beautiful with all the sparkling snow covering everything with its wonderful blanket. Beti loved the snow but in the Medgidia area it was warmer and it rained instead. When Beti walked outside that New Year's morning, she realized it must have been snowing all night long as it was up to her knees deep. This may seem like a small thing to some, but to Beti it was a confirmation that the Lord cared about her smallest desires and that she was where the Lord wanted her to be.

This first room became a busy place, as Beti would spend all day teaching children and adults to read and write. They learned about the love of God through the gift of His Son Jesus and quickly learned to sing songs of His love and salvation. Isus iu beste pe ficare, schimba-mi inima, cine a creat stelele pe cer and many others. The working conditions were very trying with no heat and only a sheet of plastic covering the window openings. When it rained it came through the roof in numerous places, dripping into strategically located pots and containers. Long before day's end Beti's feet were so cold that she had no feeling in them. The living and working conditions were taking a toll on Beti's health and her family said she aged fifteen years in the first three years in Medgidia.

Wow what a journey. After the revolution in 89 in which Beti took an active part in Oradea, she was happy to see the changes and freedom in Romania. In the hotel where she worked Christians came for conferences that she was able to attend. One day Beti served breakfast to Elisabeth-===== the editor of the Lidia magazine and Elisabeth offered Beti a copy.

While listening to messages on Radio Voici Evangelia, she realized she wanted a change in her life. She had received Jesus into her heart and had been baptized at age fourteen. She had challenges and temptations in her work place and personal life and wanted to rededicate herself. The Lord also prepared the right people to be her mentors and help her grow spiritually.

In 1999 she attended the School of the Prophets in Emmanuel Baptist Church, in Oradea and the Bethania Missionary School in Cluj simultaneously. In 2001 she completed six months of studies at the Trans-cultural Missionary School in Constanta (SMED) and a bachelor's degree in law at Spirol Haret, Constanta, 2002-2006.

In 2004 a missionary named E. Hardi Kubassek came to Medgidia to manage a self-help project. It wasn't long after he and Beti met that he started volunteering at Lumina Project, a Saturday morning boys and girls Bible club Beti and sora Annie from the USA started. Later that year Hardi and Beti exchanged wedding vows and began working together full time in spreading the good news of the love of God through Jesus Christ.

A second room was purchased in the Casa Alba; the separating wall was removed which double the space. With wedding money the rooms were renovated and city hall put a new roof on the whole block so no more weeping ceilings. Today this space serves as a chapel.

In Feb 2006 Hardi and Beti received approval and establish Fundatia Porti Deschise – Open Doors Foundation. By this time many more relationships had been developed with children, their families as well as social services, city hall and healthcare professionals. The early years were very lean financially as personal funds became depleted and total donations one year was only \$5,000..

When an appeal was made for the funds needing to be on hand for registering the foundation, a family in the USA responded with the required amount. Slowly but surely the Lord touched the hearts of family and friends and they began sharing their means to help the children, the poorest of the poor. It continues to be amazing how the Lord provides and meets ministry and personal needs. No guarantees of income, but a faithful Heavenly Father, who feeds the sparrows and also feeds Hardi and Beti. Today they have partners in six countries who give, as they are able, along with the most important ingredient of daily prayer and sending teams to help with camps and special events.

One day as Beti was walking by garbage dumpsters she saw a mother lifting her child into the containers to pick out some food to eat. Beti spoke to the mother and asked her to let her put the child into school. The mother swore at her the most vulgar words that cannot be repeated. Finally the woman said, “come to my house and I will show you what to do so you can have your own children and leave mine alone.” Upon asking why she was so angry she told Beti that she had given clothes to other families in the neighborhood but not to her. The fact was that clothes were given to children who wanted to go to school, but she had not made this effort.

Beti told her that she would help her with clothing and speak to the principle regarding enrolling her children in school and preschool. To this she agreed and two children were enrolled.

Some time later Beti became aware that this mother had a seven-year-old child who seldom went outside because she was very ill. The mother agreed to let Hardi and Beti take her to a doctor who told them that she had a very serious heart condition. The next step was to take her to see a cardiologist in Constanta. This doctor was so booked up that at first he refused to see this very thin and malnourished little girl. If you know Beti, she seldom takes “no” for an answer when she is convinced of a situation needing help. After listening to this little heart and reading the electrocardiogram the doctor’s face turned very pale and emphatically he said, “this is a very serious situation.” “If this girl does not have surgery soon she will only live for six months.”

Upon asking the mother if they didn't know about this heart problem she replied that they were told she needed surgery before she was three, but had no money to do it.

It was well past the time for this family's preschool son to be home and he was nowhere to be found. The mother frantically looking around the neighborhood and started asking if anyone had seen him. One woman said, "oh, the Foundation van picked him up to sell him for body parts." The mom panicked and immediately went to the police and laid charges of abduction. Police officers were dispatched to the neighborhood to begin a search, upon checking the home they found he had returned.

The tables were quickly turned and the police fined the family with 500. lei for false charges of kidnapping. This was a lot of money for the family, more than a month's income, now what were they going to do? The father of the children who had not been previously met came back to Medgidia and then to Beti, begging for help to have the penalty (fine) dropped. Beti went with the couple to the police station to meet with the commandant. Upon explaining to him why the meeting was called, the commandant said, "lady, are you crazy, you are trying to help these people who have made such a serious charge against you?" Beti explained how poor they were and that yes; she did want to help them.

In order to have the penalty dropped a report was to be written in front of the police officer. As Beti started getting information from the father he was very inconsistent and before long he had three different stories as to where he had been at the time of the reported abduction and also how he returned to Medgidia so quickly. Finally Beti said, "stop lying right now or you will have to deal with the police yourself and I'm out of here." Now the truth came out and after completing the report and request for clemency the commandant accepted the request, but only because Beti had asked him to do so. The court decided to drop the charges.

The parents now came to ask for help so their daughter could get the operation she so badly needed. They realized she did not have long to live without this life-saving surgery.

After prayer and serious thought, Beti approached them with a list of requirements they would have to meet in order to get the needed medical help. The conditions were as follows. The father had to take ownership of his six children and legally marrying their mother. He had to find a job to provide for the family. The children had to go to school. The filth and horse manure in their small yard had to be cleaned up as well as the home.

Would you believe, they agreed and rather quickly met all the conditions? Beti arranged for them to have a civil ceremony with reception and photography. At this point in time their seventh child was on the way. Beti was able to help secure a job upgrading the rail lines; this job lasted for over a year. The two oldest children were

going to school and yes the yard was cleaned up, the inside of the house whitewashed and it was a new beginning.

Inquires were made of cardiologists in the polyclinic and the Heart Institute in Cluj. The operation if possible could cost over 3000 Euro, more money than the foundation had at the time. Appointments were made and over 600 km were driven to Cluj with the mom and her emaciated little girl whose facial expression suggested mental and physical retardation. This sick little girl wasn't even returning smiles.

Before leaving Medgidia, Beti had to treat both the mom and child for lice, spending many hours combing out nits. At the hotel close to Cluj, Beti went into their room and told the mom she needed to take a shower. Well would you believe it, that this was her first time under running water and she screamed, "I'm drowning" as the water ran on her head and over her face.

From office to office they went, in each there were tests and comments as well as referrals to yet another doctor. After leaving one of the offices the mom started to cry and said, "what is the matter with these people, they are not asking for money but instead they have given my little girl chocolates and candy." "I don't understand, in the past when I have gone for medical help I had to give money or I was denied."

Upon completion of the many tests and exams it was evident that Rubie had a large hole in her heart and the institute was willing to do the surgery. However, the numerous infections and conditions in Rubie's body had to be first taken care of. She needed to be as healthy as possible in every other respect before they could take the risk of surgery.

When the van arrived at home it was after midnight. When Beti entered the one room home she saw a bed, it filled half of the room and the whole family including the grandmother were sleeping on it like sardines. Beti's heart sank and she said to herself, how can this child ever get well enough for surgery living in these conditions. She went to the van and fearfully asked Hardi, "can we take this girl into our home, she will not get healthy here." Hardi could hardly move his eyes after driving for over twelve hours and many through mountains. He asked Beti, "does she want to come with us and what do the parents think, are they willing?" Do you know what all is involved in this? Beti returned to the house and asked the parents and they asked their daughter, she replied, "I want to go with Sora Beti."

She stayed in the Kubassek home for over four years. She had to have two open-heart operations, and was medicated very often for infections and the liver cyst that she still has. Today she is in a Christian home in Oradea attending a Christian school. The doctors who diagnosed her to be retarded and never able to learn are calling her a miracle. Those who operated, as well as all the others in Cluj, refused to take any money for their services. God is so good!

Beti made every effort to give this child, all the help possible to catch up socially and educationally. She was put into the very best all-day kindergarten, later enrolled into a better elementary school, received paid tutoring and given many hundreds of hours of help at home. For two years in a row she was in the top five in her class.

Open Doors, as most people call the foundation has grown beyond all expectations. Through this ministry many thousands have heard the greatest story ever told at the yearly Christmas dramas of the birth of Jesus. Children and their parents have been told about His life and message, death and resurrection, all because He “so loved the world.”

In 2006 Beti and two volunteers worked tirelessly with a group of children aged five to eight who we were preparing to enter the public school system. These children had more challenges than can be imagined. They didn't even know how to sit on a toilet, some had no identity, lice crawled in their hair, and they spoke another language. There were no bathing facilities at home so they and their clothes seldom got washed. Some of these children continue to go to school today and are doing well.

Beti continued her education while working often fourteen to sixteen hours a day. As her ministry extended, more schools and government agencies became interested in having partnerships. Beti felt it was necessary to have legal qualifications and it has helped open more doors for ministry. As Vice President of Open Doors, Beti now also has a bachelor's degree in Social Services and a Masters in public politics from the university of Oradea. 2004-2010

At present there are two centers where children receive a hot breakfast and lunch on school days. A pre kindergarten is helping children to socialize and learn to behave as well as receive helpful basic education. At two locations children are helped with homework. On Saturdays a boys and girls Bible club teaches songs, bible verses, prayer and faith and good citizenship. Open Doors also distributes tons of food and clothing every year along with heart to heart counseling and personal help to those who are the least, the last and the lost. Weekly services are held at Casa Alba and Casa Ciobanelui.

At Open Doors we continue to pray that the Lord will send laborers into this ripe harvest field. We depend on teams and individuals who have a passion for Christ and are able to see the destitute and lost as looking at Jesus. Presently we are renovating a building to be a Healing Center and are praying for a dentist and other health care and counseling professionals who can minister either periodically or long term. Summer camps are almost here and we are looking for people with a heart and skill to work with children. Perhaps your heart is being drawn to selfless service to the Lord, we would appreciate hearing from you today.

As a small child, Beti spent months with her grandparents where all the neighborhood children were Gypsies. Beti loved playing with these children and

dreamt of being a princess, living in a big castle and bringing all these children to live with her so she could care for them. To this day Beti grieves over the deplorable conditions and neglect. Girls as young as nine years old, are being sold to be brides.

From the mayor to the smallest child this love slave of Christ is known as Sora (sister) Beti. The Mayor also calls her “the mother of Romania.”

If there is one word that describes Beti, it is “passion.” Passion, that endures all opposition and challenges without counting her own personal cost. That’s my Beti!

By E. Hardi Kubassek



Beti with special needs child