



OM
MOLDOVA



20
years
1995-2015



Thus far the Lord has helped us. (1 Samuel 7:12b)

beginnings

In the 1970s and 80s OM smuggled Bibles and Christian literature into the Soviet Union, of which Moldova was a part. The communist regime suppressed the Christian faith, but an OM team based in Vienna used specially adapted trucks to bring Bibles into the country in secret.



Truck used for smuggling Bibles

After the fall of the Soviet Union and Moldova's declaration of independence in 1991, little was known about the country other than a rumour of extreme poverty and a reputation of being a 'bandit, mafia country' that was dangerous to visit.



The call to Moldova

In 1994 Matthew and Helen Skirton had just joined OM's *Greater Europe* team (based in Vienna, Austria) and Matthew had been given responsibility for literature distribution in Romania. He remembers one watershed moment during his first visit to Eastern Europe in October 1994:

"As we drove along beside a river I looked on the map and saw that we were driving very close to the former Soviet Republic of Moldova. There was something exciting and fascinating about the mysterious country that I could see just across the river and when we stopped for lunch I wondered what it would be like to go there. Before we set off again we decided to pray for Moldova – this 'unknown country' that was literally a stone's throw away across the river. I prayed what I considered to be a reasonable prayer of blessing for the country and that God would strengthen believers and his Church there. Then Karin began to pray. She prayed for Moldova generally and then she finished her prayer with 'and Lord please would you send Matthew and Helen there as missionaries one day.' Where had that come from? Surprised, amused, intrigued and somewhat nervous I asked her why she had prayed in this way. She just smiled and shrugged and from that moment I could not get this strange, mysterious new country of Moldova out of my mind." (excerpt from the book *Missionary, Me?* by Matthew Skirton)

Thus the vision for OM Moldova was born.

1995-1998

During the first few years of ministry, there was no permanent OM team in the country. Visits to Moldova brought literature and humanitarian aid and also the first outreach teams came to do evangelism. At the same time relationships with local churches and national believers were built.



First visits

- 1995** June - first OM visit to Moldova
several trips followed, bringing literature & humanitarian aid
- 1996** September - first OM outreach with a team from Romania & Ukraine
November - outreach with a team of mixed nationalities in Cahul, Râbnîța, Soroca, Cinișeuți
- 1997** first **Love Moldova** summer campaign
- 1998** May - Matthew & Helen move to Moldova
First full-time OM team established in Moldova (based in Nisporeni)



Autumn outreaches 1996



First 'Love Moldova' outreach 1997



The early team worked with the local churches in Nisporeni, also doing ministry in the nearby villages of Miclăușeni, Vânător and Soltanești. This period saw a growth in the literature ministry, aid and development projects and short term outreaches. In 2000 the ministry reached a turning point, marked by the move to Chișinău and a new focus on motivating and equipping national believers for evangelism and world mission.



CiM students at the Logos II

1999 spring - first Moldovans sent to an international conference in Russia
 autumn - first **national missions training** and outreach
 first two **Moldovans** join OM, one in Moldova and one on Logos II

2000 spring - first **Challenge into Missions (CiM)** training
 a building is bought and renovated in Chișinău

Start of the National Ministry Team in Chișinău

Challenge into Missions (CiM)

Challenge into Missions is a ten-week training course that takes place twice a year. The participants - mainly young Moldovans - learn about the basics of faith and evangelism and put these into practice in outreaches in Moldovan villages.



First national missions training & outreach

The main ministry, now located in Chișinău, became more organized and strategic, as OM Moldova got officially registered as a legal entity and departments were opened to focus and develop the ministries in the areas of Literature and Relief, Development & Business. At the same time several local ministries were started in different parts of the country.



Action Team

Local Ministry Teams

Smaller teams are living in different parts of the country, working together with the local churches in serving the communities.



Kids' Games in Telenești



Literature

2002 first **prayer bulletin** printed and sent to all evangelical churches

2003 **Local Ministry Team** started in Telenești
 start of local ministry in Paicu
 board of OM Moldova established, OM Moldova registered as a legal entity

2004 first **Kids' Games** in Telenești (2 weekends)
 start of **Action Team** in Șoldănești and Anenii Noi
 opening of departments 'Literature' and 'Relief, Development & Microbusiness'
 seven Moldovans participate in 'Love Silk Road' outreaches in Azerbaijan & Russia

These two years saw the Relief & Development ministries really take off with the opening of the first Day Centre and Elderly Care project, women's groups, the first business courses & loans and the building of the first playgrounds.



First Elderly Care project



First Day Centre for children



First playground



Women's groups

2005 first **Elderly Care** project started in Paicu
 first playgrounds built in Paicu & Anenii Noi
 print & send out world map to encourage prayer for the world
 first **microbusiness training** course
 Kids' Games in Nisporeni and Căușeni

2006 first **Day Centre** in Anenii Noi
 first women's groups established
 first people receive **loans** to start a small business
 Kids' Games in Orhei

Elderly Care & Day Centres

In our **Elderly Care** projects old people who have nobody to look after them receive a daily warm meal and experience fellowship. **Day Centres** provide a safe place for the most vulnerable children of the community, offering meals, help with their school work, Bible lessons, games, attention and love.

Business for Transformation (B4T)

B4T offers business training on different levels and subjects as well as small loans and ongoing consultation, so Moldovans can start and run their own business, providing for their families and creating work for others in the community.



Bus4Life in Moldova

Bus4Life

The Bus4Life visits Moldova several times a year, being used for street evangelism, children's programmes and as a mobile bookshop, café or cinema.



First church-based football teams

The opening of the Mission Centre gave us the facilities to train more people - whether workers of the Day Centres and Elderly Care projects that started opening in bigger numbers or workers for the new sports ministry. Having organised several 'Kids' Games' sports events in previous years, now a permanent work was established, training local believers to do an all-year ministry for boys in their villages through a network of football teams.

2007 opening of the **Mission Centre**
 first 'Train the trainers' football conference
 start to establish **church based football teams**
 start of Local Ministry Team in Nisporeni
 first Moldovan trained at **OM Lifehope** (UK)

2008 first Christian **football camp**
 start of Local Ministry Team in Rezina
 first DELTA programme ("A year for God")
Bus4Life in Moldova for the first time
 seven Elderly Care projects provide daily meals for 70 elderly
 & 10 Day Centres care for 185 children.
 opening of the **church building in Paicu**



Opening of the Mission Centre

Sports

Local believers train football teams, investing in these boys. We train the trainers and organise camps and championships. Besides these, sports festivals or table tennis tournaments are organised in communities.



First football camp

These two years marked milestones in our goal to mobilise and equip believers for missions: We celebrated ten years of Challenge into Missions with hundreds of young Moldovans having been trained and there also was a shift within the OM team, as the majority of team members were now nationals and many of the leadership positions in OM Moldova were taken over by Moldovans. At the same time we saw a growth of our Love Moldova summer outreaches, as new options were offered and for the first time around 200 participants from all around the world could be mobilised.

Love Moldova

Every summer young people from all over the world experience missions first-hand, using various means to reach out to the people in Moldovan villages.



Challenge into Missions 10-year-anniversary

National Workers

About two thirds of our team are Moldovans. We are passionate about recruiting and training Moldovans for ministry and leadership, as well as helping churches learn what it means to send and support a missionary.



'Love Moldova' River Adventure & Cycling

2009 monthly **food parcels** given to 114 elderly throughout the year plus an extra 132 parcels during the winter months by the end of 2009 ca.200 people have received business training and 133 families have started a business

Moldovans take over many of the leadership positions in OM MD

2010 introducing new options for Love Moldova:

first **River Adventure, Cycling & Trekking** outreaches take place relief projects provide **winter clothing** for needy children Next Generation department runs the first 'Extreme Games' camps & **table tennis** tournaments B4T establish first farmers association (10 farmers helped to start agricultural projects & to network) CiM run the 19th & 20th programme and have a **10-year-reunion** at the end of the year

The relief & development ministries introduced many new projects, always seeking to meet the perceived needs and to empower people to move towards providing for themselves. Winter projects and help for people with disabilities, building wells and playgrounds, providing school supplies, seeds or chickens - all these brought much-needed help and also in some places paved the way for the planting of churches.



Vegetable seeds

Development

Offering vegetable seeds or farm animals, we seek to help families provide for themselves. Other projects like building wells or playgrounds aim at strengthening the entire community.

2011 relief projects provide **school supplies** for 220 children an Action Team serves in Bravicea first **newsletter in Romanian** ('Mission in Action') is published hundreds of books are sold, large increase in Bible sales

2012 winter relief: clothes for 950 children, 1525 monthly food parcels, **firewood** for 467 families development: 1500 families receive **vegetable seeds**, 23 families are given young **chickens** B4T: for the first year a group of foreign investors help seven businesses develop Love Moldova: 329 people reach out to 41 communities Bus4Life visits 29 communities, reaching 2710 people

Relief Projects

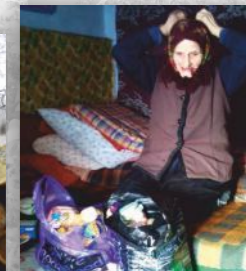
Seasonal projects seek to cover needs as they arise, like providing school supplies in autumn or firewood, food and clothes in winter.



Winter clothes for children



Firewood for the winter



Food parcels

We ventured into some new areas, launching a ministry through arts and looking into ways we can contribute to address the problem of human trafficking & exploitation in Moldova. At the same time some old ministries were closed, most notably the team in Paicu: though keeping strong ties with the church there, we encouraged their independence after ten years of having a local OM team in the village.

- 2013 start involvement in the fight against **Human Trafficking**
 - in April a team member participates in the Freedom Climb on Everest
 - 20by2020** vision is articulated (sending 20 Moldovans into World Missions by the year 2020)
 - in June the first candidate leaves to Central Asia
 - start of the current Local Ministry Team in Micleușeni
 - B4T starts their own business to raise funds for OM projects and our Moldovan workers
- 2014 our longest-running local teams in Paicu & Rezina are closed at the start of the year
 - first conferences for **girls at risk** from our Day Centres
 - launch of the **Arts** ministry
 - first horse & cart outreach during Love Moldova



Puppet ministry

Arts

Using creative means like puppets, we bring the gospel to children in a way that to them is both captivating and comprehensible.



Girls' conference

Anti Human Trafficking

Holding conferences for girls at risk from our Day Centres and cooperating with other organisations, we try to help those most vulnerable to protect themselves against exploitation.



Puppet show at a Day Centre

2015 marks more milestones for OM Moldova:

We are celebrating 20 years of ministry - looking back with gratitude and amazement at all that God has done and looking ahead with excitement and expectation, trusting in His continued grace and faithfulness.

This year also sees the first change of field leadership in the history of OM Moldova. Matthew Skirton (UK), who has led the ministry from the first days, is stepping down as field leader in March, handing over this responsibility to Eugen Ciumac (MD).



Eugen Ciumac (left), new field leader, and Matthew Skirton (right), founder and leader of OM Moldova until 2015

20 by 2020

We want to increasingly see Moldovans sent into World Missions. While a good number have been abroad with OM over the years, in 2013 this was made a priority, setting the goal to see 20 more Moldovans sent out by the year 2020.



Mission & Discipleship Training 'Eastern Europe Extreme' (MDTe³)

This new training programme will be launched in autumn 2015 and is facilitated together with OM Romania. Participants will stay in the training for a period of either six months or one year, alternating between the two countries every six weeks. This cross-cultural adventure combines theory and practice, focusing on the following areas:
Spiritual Growth and Leadership
Mentoring and Discipleship
Missions and Evangelism

The
OM Moldova Team
over the years



1998



1999

2006



2007



2000



2001



2002



2008



2009



2003



2004



2005



2010



2011



2012



2013



2014



(Team picture summer 2014)

OM Moldova Team 2015:

62 adults:

- 40 Moldovans
- 22 foreigners from 8 nationalities
(UK, Switzerland, Indonesia, Canada, Austria, USA, Netherlands, Germany)

16 couples/families

26 children

This team is serving the Church in Moldova by:

- informing & encouraging churches to pray for the world
- equipping and training believers for mission
- partnering with local churches in our various projects (relief, development, sports etc.)
- sending outreach teams to serve alongside local churches

Helping place Mission at the heart of the Church and the Church at the heart of the community



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