

We want to see vibrant communities of Jesus followers among the least reached

Security: N – no restrictions



Is God really this rich? (p.4)

- winter relief projects open doors for God's Word



Not the only one (p.6)

- Bus4Life encourages an isolated believer and brings the gospel to unreached villages

“We must be global Christians with a global vision because our God is a global God.”

John Stott

Sometimes our vision and perspectives can be so narrow, as we limit them only to what we can do, to what is possible humanly speaking. We need to make sure we create enough room in our vision for God to show up in an amazing way and do the work only He can do.

At least this is the feeling we have, as we have sought to define our vision as OM in Moldova and continue to work on building a good team and strategy for achieving it. We continue seeking the Lord for our globally-oriented vision:

By 2025 we desire to mobilise 10,000 people for local and global missions, practically equip 1,000 for this same purpose and help to establish 100 new vibrant communities of Jesus followers in Moldova.

This is a much larger vision than anything we can accomplish ourselves; therefore, we need God at the forefront - along with so many prayer partners around the globe. God is calling each one of us to look not only at what is in front of us, but also to have our heart beat for the ends of the earth, where the gospel needs to be preached as well.

So, I call on you, as prayer partners, to intercede, that together we can make this a global vision, where each one of us has a part to play, so that in the end the Lord will be glorified through this.



Eugen Ciumac

Field Leader
OM Moldova

Matthew Skirton (right), founder and former field leader of OM Moldova, speaking at the national youth conference in November



Here I am - send me!

Mobilising the young generation of Moldova's believers for mission

While there are definitely places in Moldova where local people might never have met a believer, there are also a good number of churches in the country and followers of Jesus who have the potential to impact their country and the world for God - a huge potential that for a great part still lies untapped, especially when it comes to world mission. Sometimes what keeps them is a lack of knowledge - knowledge of the need, knowledge of the possibilities; sometimes it is a lack of confidence - feeling unprepared, the financial challenge, the idea of missions being only for 'rich Westerners'; sometimes it is a lack of conviction. As over the past year we have worked on becoming more relevant and intentional about how to mobilise the young generation of believers in Moldova to get involved in local and global missions, we try to overcome these often deep-rooted convictions, show the need, tell them that they *have* a role to play and point them to concrete steps they can take.

In November 2018, for the very first time we had the chance to run a national youth conference together with one of the Church Unions. About 1300 young Moldovan believers gathered for three days to consider the role of their generation in the Church and through different speakers and workshops heard about the least reached people of this earth, God's work in the world and possibilities how they can be a part of it.

“We definitely had responses”, Vlad, who leads our mobilising ministry, shared afterwards. “People said, ‘I want to go. Send me! I am ready to stop what I am doing, to leave everything...’ - but it really is still too early to say what the true impact has been.” The emotional responses of that moment were honest, but will they turn into a true conviction of calling? Many hearts have been stirred and we pray that God will give each of them a clear understanding of His individual calling and the courage to follow it in faith against all apparent odds.



One result of the conference we can already see are the connections with regional youth leaders that have been built there. Over the following months Vlad met up with several groups of leaders. “This is crucial for really reaching and impacting the youth,” he explains. “The conference, as a national event, was great for getting out there and being seen, but the more important and effective work happens on the smaller, more regional levels.” We see the Church Unions as well as many individual pastors, youth leaders or young people having a desire to reach the least reached: If we can all work together, who can tell what God will do in and through this small nation?

The people of the good faith

Christmas provided many opportunities for us to share Christ in public places and with all kinds of audiences.

The season also offered the perfect framework for launching a new Local Ministry Team.



“The people of the good faith” - this is how the mayor introduced the visitors; “the people of good deeds” they were called by another local woman: It was an encouraging welcome our church planters from Lozova received by the locals in a nearby village, where they visited a school and two kindergartens with Christmas shoebox gifts and a programme sharing the Christmas message.

In Moldova the Christmas season lasts until mid-January, and we thank God for the many opportunities this period offered for our local teams and church planters to share Jesus - through children's programmes at schools & kindergartens, Christmas services at the local churches, going carol singing from house to house, running winter camps for children and youth or simply personal visits with local people.

The Local Ministry Team in Cobileia again prepared a Christmas puppet show, which they could perform in several locations in the area, among others a special programme where children with disabilities and children from foster families were invited - precious human beings who in this country are nevertheless at the margins of society and often overlooked. For them, along with their caretakers, it was felt as a special honour to receive such recognition - besides the joy and laughter produced by the puppet show and the gifts they received at the end; all of this underlining the message shared by the team about God's gift for them and their value to Him.

Having prayed and searched for a suitable location and partnership for a new Local Ministry Team for several months, it was a special joy for us to be able to send a team to another little reached area in northern Moldova just before Christmas. Temporarily based in the town of Soroca - which is home to the only evangelical church of the whole area - they found that the Christmas season provided the perfect opportunity to find open doors in new places and start building relationships. Partnering with this church in Soroca, they prepared a Christmas play and, also equipped with gifts and relief projects, approached the local authorities of the surrounding villages. They received a warm welcome - literally, as several villages opened and specially heated their “culture house” (similar to a small town hall) for the occasion - and were encouraged by the openness of local mayors who offered these public spaces, opened doors to visit a kindergarten or directed them to families in need, where the team could visit with food parcels. All these events were also occasions where they were able to share the gospel, and at the children's programmes it was an encouraging surprise to also see many parents come and listen attentively.

As we, together with the pastor of the church in Soroca, are planning and praying how to plant churches in that area, these Christmas activities have provided a stepping stone, an entrance into several of the surrounding village communities. With more winter relief projects offering the opportunity to stay connected in the subsequent period and weekly children's programmes having already started in one village, the team is enthusiastic about the future, looking forward to seeing how God will lead and use them.



This is just the very beginning of a new local ministry; much still needs to be decided or clarified, and we very much appreciate your prayers for this: Pray for wisdom and unity within this new Local Ministry Team (made up of six young Moldovan OMers), for a good understanding and clarity in the partnership with the church in Soroca, for finding continued openness and developing relationships in the area, and for wisdom to know how and where to focus the ministry - also with the view of the team moving into one of the villages for a more effective witness and ministry.





Is God really this rich?

"Is God really rich enough for this?" A concerned expression showed on the face of the teenage boy as he looked at all the brand-new winter clothes he and his peers had selected - and that now needed to be paid for.

When the local church in Lozova received money to bless 20 children with a new set of winter clothes, they had a special idea: figuring that some of the teenage recipients might enjoy buying the clothes themselves, they organised a special day out for the teenagers, taking them to the capital, and at the end of the day went to a shop which offered discount prices and a good variety of children's clothes.

At the entrance of the shop they told the teenagers that God had a surprise for them: new winter clothes which they could choose themselves. Most of the young people had never been shopping for themselves - definitely not in such a nice-looking shop - so this was an exciting new experience for them. They were told how much they could spend and that they should choose wisely what to buy, looking for what they needed the most - a coat, a warm sweater, trousers etc. After about an hour all the teenagers had found what they needed and wanted. When standing in line to pay for all the clothes, one boy asked - a bit concerned - if God truly was that rich? He didn't think that God could pay such a large bill. We assured him that for God this amount is small and He can handle this easily.

The teenagers were thrilled about their new clothes as well as the whole experience of the day: such a different world compared to their home situations. It was a stark contrast when the next day, back in the village, our workers walked up the hill to a small, old, dark and mouldy house - the home of one of the teenage boys - to bring clothes to his younger siblings as well. Yet in that environment, where the need was much more visible, the greatness of joy was obvious, too: both the excitement of the children and the gratitude of their mother. These gifts were clearly the answer to a great need. Later the church also heard from another mother that her two teenage girls had been praying for winter coats just one day before the trip - God had answered their prayer the very next day!



"So much wood! All this wood - for me?" The lady kept repeating these words as she was watching the team unload the precious gift into her yard. When asked if she had any firewood herself, she had shown them two armfuls of twigs - all she had, though it was only the beginning of winter. While the boys continued working, the girls talked to the lady - who lives alone and has no other living family left - taking the chance to encourage her and share their reason for bringing this gift: the love of God who cares for each individual and freely offers His own gifts of forgiveness, reconciliation and a new heart.



Besides bringing desperately needed help, we see again and again how relief projects open people's hearts for the gospel and open doors with authorities, especially in new places where there are no believers yet.

With a financial gift (through your local OM office) for 'Moldova, Relief of Need', you can partner with us in bringing physical and spiritual help.

A generous heart

Generosity - it is such a joy to encounter, yet often a surprise, sometimes coming from those you would least expect it from.

When elderly people were visited with food parcels in the village of Vorniceni, one of these gifts went to an elderly lady who lives in one small room of 2x2m. Most of the time she decides not to turn on the light, staying in the dark, because she can't afford to pay higher electricity bills. However, at the end of the visit this lady asked the accompanying local social worker, "Can you now take the bag I prepared?" While the other visitors still wondered what this meant, the lady brought out a bag containing various small but useful items she thought she could spare: a pair of warm slippers, a pyjama, a headscarf, some candles. She had heard about another elderly lady going through hardship, and though she herself had very little and was obviously trying to live as economically as possible, she had prepared this surprise bag for a fellow elderly in need, asking the social worker to deliver her gift.

Though bringing a blessing, home visits delivering physical help can often feel depressing and hopeless, as you witness the desperate living conditions, terrible life stories and often similar darkness of the souls. But there are also exceptional experiences, like this lady's generosity, and it is moments like these that make you walk away feeling blessed yourself - and also challenged, even shamed, by such an example of true sacrificial love, which in the midst of the deepest need still looks for something to give.



The harvest is plentiful

recent highlights from our local ministries

The village of Cobîlea experienced its first Thanksgiving celebration this past autumn. A good harvest is essential for life in the villages, where poverty is high, jobs are scarce and wages low, and families depend on the crops they grow themselves for survival. So it was with sincere gratitude that the Local Ministry Team and the small new church in Cobîlea offered their expressions of thanksgiving, but also used the opportunity to point their local community to God, the provider. Besides visitors from the mother church in Șoldănești, 20 new guests from the village enjoyed the message, songs and subsequent time of food and fellowship. We praise God who opened the way to deepen relationships with the local community through this event.



Also in autumn, another harvest of a different kind was celebrated by this young church: the baptism of Ion, the very first believer who had come to faith through our local ministry in Cobîlea in spring and over the following months had seen both of his parents follow him in a decision for Christ. It was also encouraging to see these new believers get actively involved with our team in leading a children's day camp in a nearby village during the Christmas break.

In a similar way, the young church in Lozova is encouraged to see people take steps of growth in their walk with God. In October, they celebrated a baptism as well, as three more locals desired to publicly commit themselves fully to God - the youngest being only 15 years old and the oldest over 70. What a joy to see believers across all generations worship and serve together!



Discover Jesus in the whole Bible. This was the topic of a series of Bible study days which the church in Lozova organised throughout the winter months and which was attended by local believers from several villages in the area. Good teaching by a specially invited speaker, discussions in small study groups and unrushed fellowship: for these believers - many of whom are young in faith, often with no church background, little theological knowledge and limited opportunities for studying or receiving thorough teaching - this series was a valuable offer, inviting and enabling them to take important steps towards a deeper knowledge of God and closer walk with Him.



A heart on fire

After living and working in Italy for nine years, Catea understood God was calling her to mission in her native country Moldova. She returned to attend our "Challenge into Missions" (CiM) training and then joined the OM Moldova team in autumn 2016, where she has been working in our Training & Outreach ministry and is currently responsible for the second level of the CiM course.

Please share about your journey of faith until joining OM!

Growing up in a traditional Orthodox family, I was religious but knew nothing about a personal relationship with God. The first time I prayed was at age 10, being sick in hospital. Through a group of believers that visited the hospital I began to attend a children's ministry, where over time I came to understand that God loves me and that I need forgiveness, and eventually decided to receive Jesus into my life.

When I was 17 I moved to Italy, wanting to earn money to help my family. I didn't know any church there, stopped praying and reading the Bible and so drifted away from God, but He spoke into my life once more. I found a church to attend, began to again have fellowship with God and other believers and grew much closer to God than I had ever been before. I also got involved in a ministry to people living on the streets, where I understood for the first time that God can use *me*. Over time I became convinced that God was calling me to mission. I asked Him where He wanted to send me, but when the answer was Moldova, I was not enthusiastic - I had been ready to go anywhere, just not my home country! But God told me that He wanted me to start from my home, my country, before thinking of the ends of the earth.

Returning to Moldova after nine years was not easy. I went to do the CiM training at OM, thinking that after this course God would send me to a different country. During the final days of CiM I received peace about staying on with OM in Moldova for the present - though I do believe that God will not keep me here forever but is still preparing me for something else.

What brings you the most joy in your work?

When I did street evangelism in Italy, I thought I want to do this all my life, but being involved in CiM I understood God's plan for me was still bigger: to invest my life in other young people for ministry. Together we can do so much more than I alone. I also join outreach teams, being in direct mission situations for about nine months of the year, and really enjoy this: to share God with people who don't know Him, pray for them and see many people come in contact with the gospel for the first time.

Are there aspects you find difficult or challenging?

In the beginning many things were new to me, I had no higher education and had not learnt how to lead. I actually said, "I don't want to be a leader", but God told me clearly that it was not man who had put me in my position, but He Himself. This still reassures me today. Working with young people also brings challenges: different personalities, conflicts, spiritual battles, exhaustion... And as I do things from my whole heart, giving my all, all this together can often lead to tiredness.

Where do you find motivation during such times?

In God and His love; I am learning how to rest in Him. It all comes down to my relationship with God: that it is personal, there's real conversation, He talks to me, strengthens me.

Not the only one

When the Bus4Life was in the north of Moldova in autumn, it again visited several villages that have none or only a few believers and no evangelical churches. Besides the curiosity the pure sight of the bus always evokes, and the regular "attractions" - like children's programmes, literature, hot drinks or just someone to talk to - this time we were able to also offer to measure people's blood pressure on the bus. Many adult visitors were grateful for this possibility - at the same time this also provided numerous opportunities for the team to talk to people. On one occasion, they chatted with a 12-year-old boy, while his grandmother's blood pressure was being measured. "Have you heard of Jesus?" a team member asked him and, as the boy shook his head in response, followed up with the question, "Do you want me to tell you about him? He is very important." A Children's Bible was pulled out and soon this boy heard about Jesus and what He did for us, and in the end, he received the Bible as a gift.

In another village one of the visitors was Maria, an elderly woman, who is the only believer in that village. While a volunteer on the bus was measuring her blood pressure, Maria explained that every Sunday she travels to a nearby village to attend church. This is exhausting for her and also a financial sacrifice: As there is no public transportation available, she hires someone to drive her to church. The money she spends on one single trip to church would buy her bread for almost a month. But she considers this investment worth the sacrifice, in order to take part in a church service and have fellowship with other believers. The visit of the Bus4Life was a special joy for her and Maria was greatly encouraged to see a team of young believers spreading the gospel in her home village. For once, even if just for a few days, she was not the only one.



Tools in God's hand

The Bus4Life is not only a blessing to those it visits, but also an important tool for the "Challenge into Missions" (CiM) course, as it is one of the variety of outreach experiences the CiM participants go through in their training. In this way young Moldovan believers - with mostly no previous outreach experience and often not yet firm in their faith - develop practical skills for sharing the gospel as well as a deeper trust in God and the conviction that He can and wants to use them.

"Being involved in the CiM outreaches I felt how God is the potter and I am a jar that He models to form my character and prepare my heart for ministry," Snejana, one of the most recent CiM participants, explained. "I could share God's Word with elderly, adults, children and youth, explaining the gospel to them and passing on the love and joy God is pouring into my heart every day. I understood that I am truly a tool in God's hand which He uses for His kingdom - and that this is His will for my life. I am thankful to God for this possibility to learn how to serve Him with a grateful heart and to make Him the priority in my life. The CiM study sessions helped me to develop a strong relationship with God, to experience the joy of walking with Him and being led by His voice. Learning from His Word I received true peace, filling my heart with His promises. My faith was strengthened, and I learned to trust in Him."

Catea, one of the CiM leaders, confirms this experience for many of the CiM participants: "You can see them change and grow," she says, "though many still have steps to take when the course is over. During the CiM training many of the participants begin to really have a personal relationship with God, to worship in truth and to understand what mission means." But Catea also sees many who step out further: "I think of Mihaela, another girl who was part of our most recent CiM course in autumn: She is the only younger believer in her village, has only recently come to faith and was quite timid at the start of CiM - willing to try anything, but without experience or any idea how to do things. After the three months of CiM she returned home and immediately started a children's ministry in her village. She also pleaded with her pastor to recommend her for the second level of CiM. Seeing her develop and grow was a real encouragement."

Maria was greatly encouraged to see a team of young believers spreading the gospel in her home village. For once, even if just for a few days, she was not the only one.



What do you want to pass on to the CiM students?

Many of them come from difficult family backgrounds and do not know their true value and identity in Christ. I want to show them they are important and loved by God.

My deep desire is to plant the character of Christ in them, to help them take responsibility and give their best for God, to see them become people who are used by God to bring the gospel to others and to make disciples.

How do you see CiM contributing to OM's mission to see followers of Jesus among the least reached?

We are very practically involved in the least reached areas of Moldova, focusing our outreaches on locations that have no established church. In our teaching sessions our main accent is on the unreached places of the world. We pray and believe that through CiM young Moldovans will go to these places.

CiM 'level two' is being re-launched in a different format: What does that mean and how do you feel about it?

We are changing the curriculum to make it more effective to grow young Moldovans into leaders passionate about mission and able to lead others; who will go to do ministry, whether in their home village, with OM, in Moldova or anywhere else.

I don't know what the change will look like or how to go about it - that's challenging, but I'm thankful we are working on it as a team. Most importantly, I feel I am in God's will, and this gives me joy: knowing that I am doing what He has created me for.

Where do you see yourself in ten years?

My mission isn't limited to Moldova and my heart beats for the Muslim world. I sometimes ask, "Lord, when will the time finally come?" I am thankful that this past year I had the opportunity to do a short-term outreach in a more restricted area of a Muslim country, which confirmed and deepened the burden I feel for these people. I am waiting to see how God will lead me, but my dream is that in ten years' time I will have my own family and that together we will be serving among Muslim people.

Is there anything else you want to share?

Choose love - love of God and love for people! We can do a lot, but if we don't do things for God and out of love, they're useless.

How can we pray for you?

Please pray for me to always remain in God, to grow and deepen my relationship with Him.

Pray for my family: my brothers who do not yet know God, and my parents, who are recent believers and need growth. Pray for my ministry to bear fruit and to bring glory to God!



New Coats & New Hope



In early November we again ran a conference for vulnerable girls at our OM centre in Chişinău. Fifty girls from difficult and often abusive home situations, who are very much at risk of further exploitation and of making bad life choices, enjoyed three days of healthy fellowship and feeling loved and cared about by leaders who model a different way of life and teach God's truth to them.

Becky, the leader of this ministry, especially remembers three specific girls:

These three girls came to our November conference. During the sessions on the first day they seemed to be chatting, drawing, playing with their hair... anything but listening. In the evening the leaders had to go to their room many times to tell them to be quiet and go to sleep. "But wait!" one of them called, "We need to talk to you..." They ended up having a long discussion about boyfriends, their futures and God. Although the girls are young, it was obvious that they have difficult home lives and at least two of them were involved in unhealthy dating relationships.

The next morning, they found me and said that they wanted to stop living the way they had been living – they wanted to pray and give their lives to God. One of them had already called her boyfriend to end the relationship. Although he physically threatened her and said those Christians were making her crazy, she was determined to start making different choices and to grow in her relationship with God. Another one of these girls ran out of worship in tears that morning. She said she didn't want to go home and began to describe how difficult life really is for her. One of the things she was upset about was their poverty – "I don't even have a winter coat!" What she didn't know was that ten minutes later she would be receiving one as a gift. A local company had partnered with us to make sure all the girls are warm this winter. How great to see God provide and show His love and care for this girl in such a way!



PRAY

Please pray for these three girls (and all 50 of the conference participants) as they try to live out the things they have learned but are met with great temptations and trials along the way!

Get involved:



PRAY for our ministries

or



GIVE towards a project

or



GO - join a programme:

Love Moldova (2 weeks)
MDTe³ (5 months)

We are also constantly looking for people to join us mid- & long-term! Current needs include:

- a professional **accountant** willing to serve long-term
- a **Training Facilitator** for our 'Missions Discipleship Training' & 'Challenge into Missions' courses
- **Local Ministry Team** workers serving in a village community to start ministry in unreached areas

[Contact us for more information!](#)

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LOVE MOLDOVA

summer outreach options 2019:

- Love Moldova A:** 9-22 June
Village, Construction, Trekking, Mission by Faith
- Love Moldova B:** 29 June - 12 July
Village, Construction, River, Go4Adventure
- Love Moldova C:** 15-28 July
Village, Construction, River, Go4Adventure
- Love Moldova D:** 4-17 Aug
Village, Construction, Trekking, River, Go4Adventure, Mission by Faith

*Now is the perfect
time to sign up!*

GO



Contact your local OM office for more information or to sign up!