

Moldova News

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

Security: N – no restrictions



Small things with a big impact (p.4-5)

- students of the Mission Discipleship Training become confident about sharing God's love

From Moldova to the ends of the earth (p.3)

- the experience of a young Moldovan in East Asia



So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

1 Cor. 3:7 (NIV)

As we are heading into another summer full of short-term outreaches throughout Moldova, we are excited for what God has prepared, but also aware that all the amazing experiences of the past years have not been our own achievement but God's work, helped by the faithful support and prayers of many. So again, we want to thank you and ask for your prayers throughout this summer. We pray that many people in this country will truly encounter God through these teams. At the same time our desire is to help the many participants who will join us over this period to have an experience that will strengthen their faith and their desire to share the gospel, encouraging them to continue to live their lives for God and His mission even long after they leave Moldova. This year for the first time we also offer outreaches specifically for Moldovan groups. Please also pray for these, that through this experience young Moldovan believers will be mobilised for mission in their own country and to the ends of the earth.

In our last edition we introduced you to our vision that (starting with 2019) by the year 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. In this edition you can find out a bit more what this means in practice, whether through Local Ministry Teams serving in the least reached regions of Moldova, young mission-oriented believers getting equipped for ministry through the Mission Discipleship Training MDTe³, or the experience of a young Moldovan in world mission.

We pray you will be encouraged and blessed by reading what God is doing in response to your prayers!

Esther Hippel
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Putting our vision in practice

Over the past years all of our projects have undergone a process of evaluating, refocusing and adapting. To help you understand our vision and individual projects, here is an overview of the focus and goals of our ministry.

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

We desire for Christ's love to be shared with those who have never had the chance to meet Him, and as OM in Moldova we work towards this in a three-fold approach:

Mobilising believers for mission, helping them to understand the need and their unique potential to bring change, as well as coming alongside them as they take practical steps. This ministry includes initiatives to mobilise the Moldovan Church and to send more Moldovan workers to the least reached of the world, as well as providing one stepping stone towards mission for believers from other countries, for example by offering them an impactful short-term mission experience.

Equipping local and international believers so they will become an effective part of creating communities of Jesus followers where He is not yet known, making disciples who themselves go to make new disciples and carry God's love and truth into new places and communities. Various training programmes meet the needs of different groups of workers, whether international young adults preparing for mission service, Moldovans taking their first steps in ministry, or local pastors and church planters.

Being involved hands-on to see vibrant communities of Jesus followers among the **least reached in Moldova**, sharing Christ and supporting church planting initiatives in areas of the country that have no communities of believers yet. We have workers and teams permanently involved in local ministries in the least reached regions of the country and also offer various projects to be used as outreach resources in the context of such church planting initiatives.



Over the past months we organised several youth events in different regions of Moldova. Each time 60-70 young Moldovan believers from the surrounding areas came together and - in a colourful, interactive programme - experienced a taste of the world and its different religions, cultures, needs and opportunities. Moldovan OMs who were involved in global missions for a period of their lives, shared about their experience and encouraged these young people to not be intimidated by the obstacles, but - at the hand of God - go and make a difference for Him in this world.



From Moldova to the ends of the earth



An excited group of children playing football with bare feet on the dry, cracked, earthen ground and among them a young Moldovan man, who plays with them and helps them improve their skills - this sounds like it could be a scene in any Moldovan village, but although Călin himself is from Moldova, the beautiful dark-skinned and black-haired young people surrounding him are clearly not Moldovan, and neither is the thatched hut in the background, with its skillfully woven walls and rough bamboo floor, elevated from the ground on wooden posts. This scene is actually taking place in a small tribal community in the jungle on an East Asian island; a people with a simple lifestyle and their own tribal culture, religion and language - and in their midst a young Moldovan man. In 2016 Călin joined OM in Moldova with the desire to be prepared and sent out into global missions; one year later he left his home country for East Asia and now lives within this tribal community to bring the gospel to a people whose traditional religious rituals and requirements fill them with fear rather than peace or hope.

The children are part of a project Călin helps with, a kind of day centre where they not only receive football training but first of all learn to read and write. He also works with the youth and together with other believers does home visits in the community, where they share the gospel and pray for people. "Recently we visited an 80-year-old man who has no family left and whose health no longer allows him to work as he used to, thus also leading to material lack," Călin wrote. "We could share the gospel with him and tell him that although life on this earth is not easy, Jesus is preparing a place where there is no lack or sickness or tears. We explained about a personal relationship with Jesus and prayed for him, and when we left, he expressed his desire to come to church." There is a small church fellowship in that community, where Călin also helps by preaching and leading Bible studies, and often it is such personal visits to people's homes that spark interest in the faith shared there. "We have many cases where people we visited have started coming to church to hear more about Jesus," Călin says. Yet having a church fellowship nearby is a privilege not many have, so Călin and his fellow believers also go to neighbouring communities where the gospel has not been shared. In April it was very encouraging for Călin to see the youth he works with help run a children's camp in a new community, thus taking their first steps in ministry and learning to share their faith.

The road to world mission for a Moldovan is challenging - but it is possible. Călin is an encouraging example of this.

Considering the potential of believers in Moldova, there are not yet too many Moldovans in world mission. Many do not understand the scale of the need, many do not think they can go, and indeed the road to world mission for a Moldovan is challenging - but it is possible, and as OM in Moldova we want to mobilise, equip and send more Moldovans to the least reached of the world. Though his two-year term of service ends in autumn, Călin is an encouraging example for us and for his countrymen. At the same time he knows it is not his own achievement, but it is God's work in which he takes part and for which he depends on God and others: "Thank you for offering your support for me in the work God has called me to," he wrote in a recent newsletter, "you are part of this work - maybe you don't realise this right now, but one day God will reveal the whole picture."



Will you also be part of this work? Become a partner for a Moldovan mission worker by offering your regular encouragement, prayer or financial support! We are thankful for our Moldovans serving abroad, but want to see more go into global missions. You can bless them, as many struggle to raise their necessary financial support and all need prayer and encouragement.

2019 is our third year of doing MDTe³ and once again we are encouraged to see how much the participants have grown through study, outreach, mentoring and simply doing life together.



Small things with a big impact

"God has been breaking my heart. To watch girls who are getting married at eight years old and having babies at thirteen; these girls can't read, they don't know how old they are, they don't know how to tell time. I can't believe there are places in the world that still live like this. I realised my approach of just giving someone a Bible doesn't work if they can't even read His Word. I realised I have to BE the gospel, not just GIVE the gospel."

Spending two weeks serving in villages in little reached areas of Romania was challenging for our MDTe³ teams, being confronted with some of the injustices of the world as well as the necessity to find new approaches to sharing the gospel in a way meaningful to people living in such a different reality. Yet it was also a time of learning and encouragement for them. "I definitely saw God at work through a Turkish kids' program," one of them said. "To see these kids that have nothing respond so well to songs, verses, a puppet show or games was so amazing."

It was not just the children of these villages who lived in need but received joy through the teams. One MDT student testified to being deeply touched to the point of tears when understanding the difficult conditions and life story of an elderly woman they visited: "I realised how privileged I am and how ungrateful I've been at times." At the same time the teams were encouraged by seeing how much their visits meant to these lonely people, many of whom themselves were moved to tears - simply because someone had cared enough to enter their home and listen to their troubles. Small things can have a great impact.

"I struggled with the timing, being in each place for only one week," another MDT student shared after the outreach. "How much impact can we really have? I asked myself that question often. But then God showed up in so many ways: We met a woman during street evangelism, prayed with her, and she asked us to come to her home and pray for her husband who has cancer. During this process, the gospel was shared with her whole family. We came to a home on the edge of a village and a woman walked out in tears, telling us that we came in answer to her prayers for encouragement and fellowship. We played football with some teenagers for one whole evening of ministry and the next day, when we shared our testimonies about what Jesus has done in our lives, they actually listened. These examples show that the Kingdom of Heaven really is near. I learned that we do not need a lifetime in one place to share that. We don't even need a week. We simply need humble hearts, ready to be obedient to God. With only that, God will work wherever we are."



"I realised I have to BE the gospel, not just GIVE the gospel."



Overcoming obstacles together

One of the beautiful aspects of MDT is the way the teams become family through their time together - and then, when it comes to sharing the gospel they support, encourage and challenge each other to overcome personal obstacles. One participant remembered a day of street evangelism, walking around with two other MDT students: "I didn't really do much talking, but after a while, they encouraged me to go up to a girl at a bus stop. We worked out what I was going to say and then went up and I shared 'the Four' with her." A similar experience was shared by one of the MDT leaders during the snowboard outreach - one of the very first times the MDT participants were challenged to approach people and initiate conversations. "As I walked around with two participants, I saw how uncomfortable and nervous one of them felt, and we stopped to talk about what is going on and we prayed, asking Jesus for boldness and ways of starting conversations. I was so glad to see how after that they got more confident with each conversation and found their way

of starting conversations in a natural way." Many did not find it easy, especially when being rejected, but they were also encouraged by the positive responses. "I spoke with a guy whose one wish was just to finish the day, and I prayed for him," one of them shared. "I saw him again the next day and he said, 'Hey, you prayed for me yesterday. Thank you! After you prayed, my day was so great; I want to hug you.'" Another participant, after encountering repeated rejections, approached a lady and found she was open and really searching for God. It was the best conversation of the day. These experiences encouraged the MDT students to talk about God in ordinary situations in everyday life. One of them expressed it like this: "It was the first time I mixed my hobby with sharing the gospel - and I have so many hobbies I could do this with. It's something I want to start incorporating in the stuff I like to do. It's totally normal to just naturally start weaving the gospel into conversations. We don't just care about their day, but their eternity."

What have you learnt? How have you grown personally?

Here are some of the MDT students' responses:

God made me care about people. I saw how they live, how much they need to hear about God's love. My heart tells me that because I spoke to this person about God, they will remember it one day and may be saved. This makes me tell people about God's love, indifferent of whether I am mocked or rejected. I was not like that before, but I can see how much God has changed me.

God has been showing me over and over what it means to "bend the stiff-necked" in my heart, in my thoughts, in my motivations and actions.

I've grown in being more willing to open up about my weaknesses and struggles within a group.

The time in Romania made me realise how easy it is to fall, if you're not careful which doors you open, and how that leads to a hardness of heart - and you don't even know it.

I've been working on sharing my emotions with someone and to be okay with it to have emotions.

It was really helpful to have people supporting me in working through my anxiety. God has given me courage to talk about it and is also helping me get less anxious in situations. Part of it is also coming to terms with not knowing all the answers and what the future holds. It's still scary and frustrating, but I've definitely seen myself develop, learning to be ok with not knowing everything.

Realising that I can speak life and death with my tongue and that I need to control it.

Learning to submit to whoever is above me, praying for them specifically and trusting that God is guiding them, and just having a true servant's heart.

"It's totally normal to just naturally start weaving the gospel into conversations. We don't just care about their day, but their eternity."

Join us for MDTe³ in 2020

Allow God to challenge, equip and transform you, as you walk with Him to new horizons, sharing life with like-minded young people and participating in God's work in the world!

The next MDT in Moldova and Romania will take place **02 February - 04 July 2020** and is now open for registration!

For more details, contact your local OM office or write to MDTe3.md@om.org





The hope of a different life

A group of children who are labelled useless, many of whom are traumatised by experiencing situations no child should go through, and who often show defensive and destructive behaviour - it is not always natural to have love for such children and the patience and strength to work with them. However, this love and passion are obvious when you hear the workers of the Day Centre in Pîrlița share about their ministry. It goes way beyond just providing the warm meal these children would otherwise not get anywhere. It is seen in the sincere care and concern they show for these children and their future, the help and advice they offer, the effort to understand the children's home situations, the way they sit among them during mealtimes, the activities they offer...

Besides regular Bible lessons, these workers have arranged special activities for each day of the week, to help the children develop in different areas: One day there is a focus on sports and games, another day there are music lessons where children can sing or learn to play the guitar, piano or accordion, there are also workshops teaching skills like woodwork, cooking, crocheting or embroidery. The children enjoy these opportunities and are thankful for the love and care they receive. "I like it very much here," one of the younger girls said, "I attend workshops for cooking, music and embroidery. We eat very well here, the food is very tasty, and on top of it we even get fruit and sweets."

"I am glad that I have this opportunity," says 15-year-old Mihaela, "We have five teachers who love us and teach us many good things. We also get a very good meal." These are not things she takes for granted - outside of the Day Centre her reality is a very different one: Her mother, a single parent, is alcohol-addicted. There are four children, but the two youngest have been taken away and put in a children's home - temporarily, if the mother manages to sort out her life, but at the moment it does not look like she will. She does not work, so the only income is from child allowance - and this money is spent on alcohol. The home is dirty, the children are hungry and not cared for. Mihaela gets none of the support and advice a teenage girl needs from her mother, instead she sees misery and hopelessness. At the Day Centre she experiences that there is another way of living, and she has developed the desire and hope of a different life for herself. It is not easy, but the Day Centre workers are investing in her, praying for her and trusting God to change the life of this girl - as well as all the other precious children attending this Day Centre.



Mihaela reading the Bible at the Day Centre



workshops teaching music and woodwork



Building relationships in a new place

Partnering with the church in Soroca, our newest Local Ministry Team moved to that town in mid-December and over the past months started ministry in the area. They are currently involved regularly in five villages, doing weekly children's programmes in most of them and building relationships through visiting people's homes, many of which were opened to them with the help of relief projects.

"When we prayed for Olga and her family during our first visit to her home, she fought very hard to not cry," our Local Ministry Team in Soroca shared about one lady they started to build a relationship with. Having moved to Soroca in mid-December, within their first few months the team distributed several relief projects in a number of villages in the area, as a way to help people in need as well as share about God and build relationships in this new place of ministry. Olga was one of the people they met this way. Together with her two sons, she had moved away from her alcoholic and violent husband, and now lives in very simple conditions, facing a lot of hardship. "She is a good woman and very open," the team shares, "but also has a lot of pain in her heart. Through repeated visits we were able to befriend her, and she started to look forward to our coming. She was very amazed when we talked with her about God's power, that He can do anything - and that He wants to work in her family because He loves them. We hope that we can continue to be a blessing in her life and show Christ to her."

Olga is just one of many who received help and heard about God through the team. "These people's smiles and their gratitude encourage us to continue the ministry", the team says. "At the same time, visiting these families we see there is such a desperate need for physical aid - but most of all a need for God." Being new in the area, the relief projects offered the team an occasion to visit homes regularly and build relationships with a variety of people - not only those receiving aid, but also local social workers or political leaders. The mayor in one of the villages showed himself very open to the ministry and offered the local town hall as a place where a Day Centre for children could be carried out in the future. Besides witnessing to this mayor, this would already be establishing a more permanent ministry and an amazing opportunity to continually invest in a group of children who otherwise have very little prospect for their future.

Please pray for this ministry in Soroca, as it is also facing many challenges - obstacles, spiritual opposition, unexpected changes - both from without and within.



"There is such a desperate need for physical aid - but most of all a need for God."



Relief and development projects that were used by our local ministries this spring included providing families with vegetable seeds (together with some gardening tools) or distributing food parcels.

As we have started forming Local Ministry Teams in the least reached areas of Moldova and plan to still send more, we also have an increased need for vehicles (small vans) to help these teams do ministry in these mostly out-of-the way villages that have no, or very limited, public transport and can often be only accessed by travelling considerable distances on country dirt roads. Local teams usually are involved in several villages in the area, often also needing to transport relief items or equipment for children's and youth programmes or practical work. The team in Soroca, which is our most recently opened Local Ministry Team, is so far lacking their own mode of transport, and we face the same need for any future teams.

If you have, or know of, any no-longer-needed van that could become a blessing for a good purpose in Moldova, please get in touch with us! Specifically, what we need are vans with 7-9 seats, not older than 9 years (due to import restrictions).

Thank you!



Introducing Jesus on a bus

“I will read it today, and tomorrow I will come again and tell you what I have read,” Andrei explained as he stood in the Bus4Life with a Children’s Bible in his hands. He had told the team that what he liked best (besides playing with his friend) was reading, so when they offered him this Bible, he was very excited and eager to read it as soon as possible.

The Bus4Life spent two months in Moldova this spring, and although in some places it also encountered heavy opposition, there were again many opportunities to talk about God with all kinds of people - from curious children like book-loving Andrei to disillusioned elderly like 70-year-old Vanea, who lost his wife and almost died himself last autumn, when both of them lost consciousness and fell while fermenting wine (home-brewing is common in Moldova). His wife received a fatal head injury, while Vanea only survived because a neighbour found him in time. Telling his story to the Bus4Life team, Vanea said that a “guardian angel” had sent the neighbour at that moment. This offered the team the possibility to explain more about God, who has given him this second chance and can also save him for eternity. Though Vanea didn’t seem to fully understand this, a seed of truth was sown and he also received a booklet about Jesus and was encouraged to read the Bible.

Besides individual conversations that hopefully will remain in people’s hearts and bear fruit later on, the Bus4Life also directs people to the local church (where one exists) and can help overcome initial barriers that keep people from entering.

In one village, a handful of teenagers came to the bus to watch a film about Jesus. They liked the film and had a good time at the bus. The following evening their group had grown to nearly 40 teenagers who all came to the local church to attend a youth meeting.

The Bus4Life also supported the church plant in Lozova for a few days. “With the permission of the local authorities, the bus was parked just next to the bus stop in the village,” they shared. “Many people passed by and were invited to visit the bus, have a chat and some took a free Christian magazine home. We pray that all the work done will result in more people in Lozova looking for the Truth.”



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 ‘Mission Discipleship Training’ & ‘Challenge into Missions’ course
- **Local Ministry Team** workers serving in a village community to start ministry in unreached areas

Contact us for more information!

publications:

Contact us to subscribe/unsubscribe to:

- “Moldova News” (post or e-mail)
- monthly prayer calendars and bi-weekly prayer updates (e-mail)

More stories can be found on:
<https://stories.om.org/world/europe/mdq>

Check our website for more updates and information: www.om.org/md

We’re also on facebook (@OMinMoldova)

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Please remember to pray for our “**Love Moldova**” outreaches throughout this summer!

Only God can prepare people’s hearts for the gospel and bring fruit from our efforts; only He can prepare the participants and work in their lives what He wants to achieve; only He can control circumstances and provide resources, protection and guidance.

If you still want to join one of the outreaches, please contact your local OM office!

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*)