

Moldova News

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

Security: N – no restrictions



On fire for God (p.2 & 8)

OM training programmes help young believers learn to trust and follow God's promptings as they share Him

God uses my story (p.6-7)

Moldovans serving in global missions share how God uses their personal stories and gifts



editorial

It is incredible to see how God uses all types of people: the young and the old, the educated and the non-educated, the experienced and the inexperienced, the physically well and the handicapped, short-termers and long-termers, locals and foreigners. God uses everyone who is willing to say "yes" to following Jesus by faith. Through the stories shared here, we can see this to be true time and time again. We can see the power of each personal testimony and how God uses our stories to transform lives and bring more people into the family of God.

The journey of spreading the gospel among the least reached is often not an easy one, and in Moldova we have repeatedly experienced that it has been met with rejection and opposition by community members and the authorities. However, this journey is worth everything, and we see how, even when one door closes, God already sees ahead what gate He will open for even greater fruit than imagined.

Even though certain situations can appear to be grim and discouraging, we can continually put our faith and trust in the Lord who is Yahweh Yireh - the Lord who provides.

Thank you for your part in stepping out in faith through prayer, financial support and joining us in Moldova. Only together can we do it!



Eugen Ciumac
Field Leader, Moldova



Moldovans on fire for God

God continues to call and equip Moldovans for His work. During this autumn's "Challenge into Missions" (CiM) training course, it was encouraging to see how over the ten weeks the young Moldovan participants were becoming involved, growing in confidence and allowing themselves to be challenged to use their lives for God. It was a group coming from a variety of backgrounds and having diverse experience and plans, but united by the desire to be at God's disposal - and God led and encouraged them each in their own unique way.

One of the young women had a small disability (which in Moldova is usually a cause for being disregarded), combined with a very difficult family situation, living with an alcoholic mother and drug-addicted brother. Her background was one completely lacking affirmation and love. Yet this girl blossomed at the training and her face always shone. She got excited about sharing her faith and visiting people in need to share hope with them and expressed her desire to continue doing this after finishing the training. She was a true testimony that God can use anyone who is ready to be used by Him.

Another CiM student had emigrated to Italy with her family 20 years ago, but recently felt God calling her to return to her home country. After doing children's ministry for several months, she heard about the CiM course from a friend, who had participated in the spring programme of 2019. She then joined the autumn course, where her desire to be part of God's work was strengthened, and at the start of the new year she joined the OM team in Moldova full time.

When the CiM group was in the region of Telenești during one of their outreaches, another one of the participants already knew he desired to start a ministry in this area of the country. During that outreach the team leaders found that - while in the past throughout Moldova it was quite easy to get access to schools and kindergartens - now many of these asked for an official permission from regional authorities. However, applying for such a permission, the person in charge was very supportive and gave the team the freedom to do programmes in any schools and kindergartens throughout the whole region. It was a great encouragement to all of them, and a confirmation for that participant that God is at work and opening the way for him for continued ministry there.

Praise God for these young Moldovans and their enthusiasm to continue sharing Jesus! Please also pray for the next "Challenge into Missions" course (4 March until 14 May 2020). May God bring, equip and direct Moldovans to share Him wherever He wants to use them!



photo by Garrett N

"Two things really helped me grow," Oxana says. "Experiencing God's provision when circumstances were desperate; and being challenged to go further than I thought possible by people who saw more in me than I did myself. I want to be someone through whom God can do the same for others."

Oxana grew up in Moldova when the country was just forming after the fall of the Soviet Union - a time of difficulty and poverty, but also of spiritual revival. Among those coming to faith was Oxana's mother, who took her children to church from a young age. "She always told us that we can't inherit her faith, but must make our own decision," Oxana remembers. "One day I realised that I am going to church, but don't have Jesus in my heart, so if I die, I won't be with Him. I decided I would go forward to become a Christian at the next church service." Oxana now realises she could have done it right then and there, but at the time it seemed important to do it publicly.

Over the following years, Oxana got involved in her church's mission activities, but when she was invited to do full-time ministry by joining the local OM team, it was a tough decision. At that time Oxana had a paid job and was supporting her family who had struggled financially since her father's death a few years earlier. However, during their first desperate need, the family had experienced God sending people to them again and again with gifts of food or money. So when Oxana sought her mother's advice about joining OM, they decided to trust God again to provide when she'd give up her salary.

She soon faced new challenges. "In ministry, my most frequent worry was that I am not sufficiently equipped," she explains. "I thought that if I am put in a position, I need to know everything about it." She hesitated to accept new responsibilities, but is now thankful that her leaders believed in her and repeatedly persuaded her to try things she didn't think she could do.

However, the most important lesson came through an experience of failing to live up to her own expectations. At that time Oxana was part of a team she admired but felt inferior to: her co-workers seemed to be better and have all the right abilities, which she felt she lacked. She worked to exhaustion, trying to be like them, but still failed. "I was shattered," she says. "I cried every day and couldn't understand what was happening to me. But eventually, I asked myself why I had set them as my standard. God brought me to the root of it all: my

Start where you are, give what you have

After struggling with her own limitations, Oxana now trains others and encourages them that they don't have to wait until everything is perfect before they can be used by God.

identity and my desire to be accepted. I realised that for a long time I had done things in order to please people whom I considered important, and I constantly compared myself with others. But God showed me that none of the abilities I have, or want but don't have, will ever change who He sees me as: His beloved daughter. This started me on a journey of embracing how God made me, realising He doesn't ask me for something He hasn't put in me, while what He has given me is not for my status and reputation but for His glory."

Currently, Oxana is the training coordinator for OM in Europe while also working with the team in Moldova, supporting various training programmes that prepare young people for missions. For the past three years, Oxana has helped to lead the Mission Discipleship Training in Moldova and Romania. One of her biggest joys is the transformation God works in young people's lives through this course. "We keep in touch with former participants and it is amazing to see them pray with people, share Jesus wherever they are, or choose to go where there is no-one sharing God's love yet," she explains. Sometimes Oxana wishes to be out there herself, in one of the least-reached places of the world, but she understands the importance of her supportive role. "If I go myself, it's just one person; if I inspire and prepare others, it can be many more."

Passionate about helping people thrive where God has put them, Oxana comes alongside young believers whom God sends her way through her work or church. "I see myself in them," she says. "They have the same doubts, the same tendency to feel unprepared. Just like me, they need someone to push them." Sharing her own story is one of the best - yet hardest - ways to inspire them. "In Moldovan culture we try hard to appear to have it all together," she explains. "As a result, everyone fights their struggles alone. Mentoring is little understood or practised." Through OM Oxana experienced being mentored by people who were sincere about their own failures. Now she sees how powerful it is when she can tell young people that she, too, struggles with certain issues. They understand they're not alone, and that it is a life-long process, yet doesn't keep them from being useful for God today.

"Don't wait until everything is perfect or until you feel fully prepared before you do something for God," she tells them. "Start now, in the place where you are, giving what you have!"



Oxana with the 2019 MDTe³ group and teaching in her role as European training coordinator





The Bus4Life team talking to visitors, preparing for a children's programme and laying out literature and New Testaments (photos 2 & 3 by Garrett N)



Local Ministries

- where pain and blessings meet

"Through the regular children's programmes we are doing in different villages, we also got to notice serious needs that some of these children suffer." Members of our Local Ministry Team in Soroca had seen several children not having appropriate clothes to wear, especially as it started getting colder, so they were thankful for the start of our winter relief projects, enabling them to provide winter jackets and other clothing and so demonstrate in practice to the families what they tell these children in the programmes: that God sees and cares about them. "It is very painful to see the situations these children live in," the team shared, "but it was such a joy to be able to help them in a way we could be sure it would really reach them and we could immediately see it truly made a difference."

Although many families in Moldova are supported by members working abroad, still in every village there are also situations of desperate need, so we are thankful that once more we could provide warm clothes, food parcels or firewood for many people in need throughout the country. Many of these resources get distributed through our local ministries, where they can open new doors for our local workers as well as illustrate and confirm the message these workers bring throughout the year, not only to those receiving aid, but also the whole community.

"A door closed, but God opened a gate instead"

Closed doors wherever they turned - this was not at all what the team had expected and a very discouraging start to their outreach...

It was early November and the group of "Challenge into Missions" students was setting out on the Bus4Life for the second outreach of their training course. They had already been with the Bus4Life during their first outreach period, as they took their first steps in mission, and had benefitted from the interest this bus creates, taking care of the often difficult first step of initiating contact and conversations, and thus helping them to share the gospel with their fellow countrymen. Now they were excited to make the most of this tool once more, before the Bus4Life would move on to Romania a few days later. They were headed for Boșcana, a village where the local church of a nearby town had been doing ministry for the past 1,5 years, had recently bought a house to use for ministry and was on good terms with the mayor, who had also promised to receive the Bus4Life in the village, offering a spot in front of the town hall and the use of the building in case of rain.

Rejected everywhere

However, when Slavic, the OM worker leading that outreach, paid another visit to the mayor just before the team was scheduled to arrive, everything had changed: Not even looking them in the eye, the mayor explained that she could not receive the team. It was right after local elections and evidently a new member of the local council now strongly opposed the believers and their

ministry. Unwilling to further strain the relationship with the mayor, Slavic - who is himself a member of the church reaching out to that village - decided it would be better to look for another place to visit with the bus. Knowing another church member had often wanted a team to visit his home village, he thought now might be the chance to fulfil this request, but again they were disappointed: That village had elected a new mayor, who would not receive them, either. Finally another location welcomed the bus and team for the remainder of the day - but the next morning the local orthodox priest caused trouble, with the result that there, too, the mayor (who the previous evening had been very open) told them they had to be gone by lunchtime. There was just one more day left for the bus to stay in the country and no time to apply in yet another village, so the team drove back to the main regional town and - not having permissions to use a public space or set up stands and tables, play music etc. - they simply parked the bus by the side of the road with its doors open.

A visitor sent by God

That afternoon, when Slavic returned to the bus after a visit in town, he found the team in discussion with a man who was holding a pile of books he had bought from them. "There's Slavic!", they exclaimed - relieved, as apparently the man had not been satisfied with their explanations about themselves and now started to question Slavic about them and the bus. First Slavic felt the man was suspicious and negative, but as he

shared more about the Bus4Life and OM's ministry, the tension disappeared and the man actually approved of their work - including the fact that they work with churches and share about God when they visit people with projects. They found out he knew the evangelical church in this town, who had bought their property from a relation of his, and had a good opinion of them. "Do you work only here?" he asked Slavic, to which Slavic replied with an account of their past two days and all the rejection they had encountered. "If you want other locations for your projects, the whole region is open to you," the visitor unexpectedly assured him in response, "just refer them to me." It turned out this man was a regional political authority. By evening he had given them the phone number of the mayor in a neighbouring village, Coșernița, with whom he had already arranged that they could come with the bus the next day, park in front of the mayor's office, get electricity from there, etc. This was a very encouraging turn of things - moreover as Coșernița has no evangelical church or believers, and Slavic's church had long discussed and prayed about how to get involved in this exact village. On the team's arrival, the mayor took them through the village with her car, showing them the homes of poor people they could visit, and the Bus4Life was set up and opened for visitors. The following day - though the bus already had to leave - the team was invited to remain, they set up a bouncy castle at the kindergarten and were allowed to lead a programme for all the children of the village.

New opportunities

A bit later, Slavic and another local church worker again went to see the mayor of Boșcana, the first village, and initially were again met with coldness and rejection. They made it clear they desire to work in this village, but added, "However, if you do not want these projects, we'll go to Coșernița, where Mr. G. from Criuleni invited us to work." The mention of this man's name clearly overruled the mayor's fear of the new council member's opinion and, turning to a co-worker, she commented, "Why should we lose all these good projects just because of one person?"

At Christmas the church got permission to come to this village with Christmas gifts and a programme held in the town hall, as well as the possibility to visit several families at their homes. Church members who went carol singing from house to house also stopped by the home of the mayor and were warmly welcomed. The good relationship with her has been restored.

"A door closed, but God opened a gate instead," Slavic says. After men seemed to have shut all doors in Boșcana, now the village is open to the church again, while in addition ministry has been extended to the village of Coșernița, where a similar Christmas programme was held for all the children of the village.

Local authorities have a big influence on how local churches and our projects are received and which possibilities for ministry are open to us - but God is above them, too, as this encouraging experience showed once more.



Children were happy to receive winter clothes through the team in Soroca.

In November a Day Centre for children was started in Cobileia.

Our local ministries play a crucial part in our vision to see communities of believers started in areas of Moldova that are little reached with the gospel - but it is also a difficult work. Often there is suspicion and even outright opposition from the local population or authorities; sometimes partnerships with churches don't work out as anticipated; and there is a big need for more workers in these projects. We would like to open teams in more places - at the moment especially in the region of Criuleni, where the Bus4Life recently found doors were opening - but right now we are not even certain we can continue both current local teams, in Cobileia and Soroca, because of a lack of workers. Our church planting families in Lozova/Vorniceni and Pânășești/Gălești continue their beautiful work, but also face various difficult circumstances.

Please support these faithful workers through your prayers, and please pray with us for more people willing and able to serve by living among those who have no knowledge of the gospel and no believers in their communities!



firewood and winter clothes in Lozova/Vorniceni

The OM ship "Logos Hope" has become a valuable partner in our desire to help Moldovans become involved in reaching the rest of the world. Moldovan OMer Katia first joined this ship in January 2018. She shares some of her recent experiences during the ship's visit to Brazil this past autumn:



God uses my story

For the last two years the Logos Hope has travelled around Latin America. I had never thought of serving God there, but through the ship God has shown me the needs of a part of the world I had never been thinking of, and how much He loves people there and wants them to be saved. My first year I was working as a nurse on the ship, which allowed me to use my education and skills. Now I work in the bookfair, which is a totally different experience. I have more connection with local people and the possibility to share the gospel more often during the day, but it's also more emotionally exhausting and difficult spiritually. Every day something happens and every day you experience God in many different ways!

In one of the Brazilian ports, not far from the ship there was a bridge, and locals told us that every day people commit suicide from it. During our stay in this port, one day a 16-year-old wanted to finish her life there. When she went onto the bridge, she saw the Logos Hope from there and the huge line of people waiting to get onto the ship. She wondered why all those people want to visit this ship; what is so special about it? So she decided that - before jumping from the bridge - she would visit this ship, too. When she came on board, she heard the story of the prodigal son and God's forgiving love. God touched the heart of this girl through this story, and with tears in her eyes she accepted Jesus. God saved her life not only from physical death, but also from eternal suffering.

During one of my ministry days I went to a children's hospital where we visited every room, sharing the gospel with the children and their parents and praying for the people in that room. I remember one room accommodating teenage girls with depressive suicidal syndrome. At first, they didn't really want to listen to us. We asked if they believe in God and just one of them raised her hand. It was quite challenging to talk to them, but God put it on my heart to tell them my testimony. While I was sharing my story, I saw tears on the faces of the parents, and the teenagers themselves listened to me with open mouths and did not take their eyes off me. When I finished, one of the parents came to me in tears and hugged and thanked me. God touched everyone in that room through my testimony, and in the end all of them wanted to pray with me. I saw how much these teenagers needed to hear about the hope we have in God and I believe that God will continue to work in their lives. Never be shy about sharing your testimony because it has a huge power from God!

Besides Katia, who extended her time on the ship, three new Moldovans joined the Logos Hope this past summer and another one is on the way to reach the ship in February. We are excited about each of them and hope to mobilise many more Moldovans for this opportunity. A term on the ship allows them to reach other nations with the gospel, but also opens their eyes to the needs and opportunities in other parts of the world - an experience which can become a stepping stone for further involvement in global missions.



Moldovans on Logos Hope, autumn 2019



Anastasia, another Moldovan lady, finished her term on the Logos Hope in autumn and returned to Moldova with her heart burning for the world. She will now spend a few months in Brazil, joining a ministry she helped during the ship's visit there, while also seeking further direction from God.

Moldovans in Global Mission



What do you have in your hand?

Călin is another Moldovan who finished his term abroad in autumn. Looking back on his two years of ministry in the Philippines, he wrote the following reflections:

"What do you have in your hand?" God asked Moses. "A staff, Lord" was the answer - and Moses went and allowed this staff to be used to the glory of God: turning into a snake as a sign to Pharaoh, parting the sea to save the Israelites, bringing water out of a rock in the desert.

"What do you have in your hand?" - God asked me that same question when I arrived in the Philippines.

What do you have in your hand?

"I have a burden and desire to do something for the homeless and poor on the streets of Cebu." - So [during the first months in the Philippines] I went onto the streets, brought them food, shared the good news of Jesus with them and prayed for them.

What do you have in your hand?

"I long to see the tribal people know and turn to You, Lord." - So [having moved to a tribal community] I started visiting homes to share about Jesus and helping people study the Bible at the small church. As a result, several tribal people came to faith, eleven were baptised and many new people are coming to that church, which also started to reach out to a neighbouring community.

What do you have in your hand?

"I may not have a mode of transport, but I have two functioning feet." - So I walked about 7 km each day to reach different schools and communities.

What do you have in your hand?

"I know English and can teach children." - So I served as a teacher in the schools of two tribal communities.

What do you have in your hand?

"I can play football." - So I led a weekly training for the children of the tribal school.

What do you have in your hand?

"I have experience in working with young people and am pained to see the tribal youth bound in fearful worship of spirits." - So I bought a volleyball net, a table tennis table and some basketball shirts and simply played sports with these young people. Friendship led to studying the Bible with them and at the end of my time there, many of them were involved in church ministries, with two boys wanting to attend Bible school in order to help lead the church and two girls planning to go to University - the first time ever that anyone of this community had done so.

This is a small part of my story - the story of God using a simple person with the desire to reach a discriminated and isolated tribe and bring salvation, healing and freedom.

"What do you have in your hand?", God is asking you as well. He has given you gifts and talents, which He wants to use for His glory. Often, like Moses, we object that we can't speak well, people will not believe us, we are afraid... but God demonstrated to Moses that He can work miracles through an ordinary thing. All we need to do is put ourselves at His disposal, and He will do things we never dreamt of.

Please pray for our Moldovans in global missions - those on the "Logos Hope" as well as others who have already served for many years in Asia and North Africa.

Pray also for more Moldovans to be willing and equipped to go, as well as for those who have returned and now seek God's direction for further involvement.



What do YOU have in your hand?

Have you ever thought you do not have the right kind of skills or personality for mission work? The truth is that God uses all kinds of people in all kinds of places, and the skills you do not immediately think of in the context of missions may be the ones most desperately needed...

Jesus' call to share His Good News extends to every believer everywhere. YOU are essential to the plan!



Why are you so happy?

The MDT Europe programme sent their participants to Moldova for one of their mission experiences this autumn. Here is one girl's highlight from their outreach:

One family we set out to visit didn't want to receive us, so instead we went to an elderly lady, Vasilia. The room we were in was tiny, so the guys went outside and helped out in her garden, while we girls stayed inside and talked to her. After a while I wanted to go out and help the guys, because it was so warm and smelly in the room, but I really felt the Holy Spirit holding me back and that God wanted me to stay. So I stayed and was like, "Okay God, You wanted me here, so You will have to give me words." I asked her about hope and then got to share about Jesus and the hope that He brings. It was really special, because I felt the Holy Spirit speaking through me, even though she didn't really get it. After that, we went out into the garden, where Ludmila, Vasilia's adult daughter, was talking to our outreach leader. I was just standing with some teammates and we were talking about the experience, and how it's okay that we don't always see the harvest, but rather plant a seed - a truth God had reminded me of the day before. As we were talking, Ludmila came over and looked at me. "Why are you so happy?", she asked, so I got to share the gospel and my testimony with her. I explained how God created us in His image, but then we sinned and were separated, but His love is just so great that He sent His son, so that we can be with Him again - and when I know that, I just can't NOT be happy! Then Ludmila shared about her daughter, who is around my age, and how she is never happy. We got to share about the joy we have in Jesus, even when times are difficult, that when He is our foundation, we will always have joy, even in our suffering! I also got to encourage her from my own story that maybe her daughter doesn't see or understand right now that she is loved, that her parents love her, but she will. And then I had the privilege to pray for Ludmila. She really wanted her daughter to meet us, but we had to refuse an invitation to her home because she lives in another village, but we also prayed that God will send believers into her life. Then our leader asked Ludmila if she wanted to ask for forgiveness and commit her life to Jesus. He made it very clear, that he wasn't pushing her, but he could say a prayer that she could choose to repeat after him - and she did! It was so special, and then we gave her a Bible, and she was so happy - it was such an amazing experience!

Will you also join us in one of our outreaches this summer? Year after year hundreds of people are encouraged by seeing God at work during short-term mission trips in Moldova. This can be a good preparation if you are thinking about becoming involved in mission work longer-term anywhere in the world, or simply a chance to offer two weeks to God and see Him use you and your team to bring help and hope to people in Moldova.

Summer outreach options 2020:

Love Moldova A: 07-20 June
 Love Moldova B: 27 June - 10 July
 Love Moldova C: 13-26 July
 Love Moldova D: 02-15 August

Love in Action - Village Outreach
 Construction Outreach
 Church Planting Outreach
 River Adventure*
 Trekking Adventure*
 Go 4 Adventure
 Teens in Mission

Register now through your local OM office!

**River & Trekking not available in period A*

There are also possibilities to arrange customised outreaches for groups at other times throughout the year.

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:*

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

[Contact us for more information!](#)

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