



The 2019 Transform missions conference was held in Athens, Greece, under the theme 'Unleashed'. Close to 150 people gathered from five continents and 30 countries, for a week of training and equipping for missions. Most of the participants went on outreaches after the conference; some in Greece, others to Albania, Romania or Turkey. This is a brief report of what the outreach teams encountered.

## Romania

The Transform team were able to share the Gospel with several people in a village where many come from an Orthodox background. Often, people follow the rules of the church but miss out on a relationship with Jesus to bring hope in their lives. The team shared the gospel in homes, as well as on the streets with individuals. Specially designed children's and youth programmes were really popular. One highlight for the team was visiting and sharing the Gospel in the capital city of Bucharest

## Love Albania

This team focussed on the village of Kolonje, where they led a children's programme each morning. They loved seeing the kids every day and having the opportunity to share the good news of the Gospel.



During house visits in the afternoons, they found the people welcoming and open to talk about God. In some families, sharing personal testimonies proved an encouragement to the believers, as it helped them explain more about Jesus to non-believing family members. Some of the children had asked God for a specific person from the team to come to his house and was very excited when the group arrived with the person he had prayed for! How wonderful to see God answer the prayer of a child, and for all of us to understand a little more about our God who listens and cares for all of us.

## Journey to the North

Four foreigners and six Albanians spent 16 days seeking to reach out in the "Albanian Alps" (North Albania) and into Kosovo.

After preparing for an upcoming kids and youth camp, the team enjoyed an outing to the "Blue Eye" a clear blue, cold spring.

The camp took place across the border in the country of Kosovo, with 50 kids and youth. The majority came from Muslim backgrounds and had never heard about Jesus. Stories and children's songs about Jesus and dramas to illustrate the message, were part of the programme. Competitions, exploring nature, finding blueberries and sitting around the campfire in the evenings, all added to the experience.

Erjon\* shared his testimony at the campfire and explained how he had given his life to Jesus. Little Fatjon" asked: "But how is this possible? If you give your life to Jesus, you don't have your life any longer. So how can you live if you don't have your life anymore?" What a deep question for an eight year old boy! He had listened, thought about what he heard and had enough courage to ask in front of everyone.

After the children had left, the team spent a day doing practical work on the camp site: digging holes, mixing concrete, carrying stones. It was a physically taxing day, but a good way to help improve the facilities.

In Summary these 16 good sometimes quite challenging days, meant people stepping out of their comfort zone to do things they had never done before. These days brought a team who has been a blessing to others and have themselves been blessed by the almighty God. \*names changed

## Albania



# Greece

## Heartbeat for Greece

A year ago, the Mati region east of Athens was hit by huge fires. Over 100 people lost their lives and houses in a large area were burnt down. A Transform team joined a group from the Evangelical churches, helping residents clean out rubble, burnt furniture and tiles from homes destroyed by the fire. After hours of hard work, the team prayed for the house owners, who couldn't stop expressing their gratitude. Pray for the people who lost houses as well as hope in Mati.

The team also took part in the Sunday morning service, in addition to visiting the elderly at Lois home, singing, sharing testimonies and praying.

## Dance Team

"Who else invites me to call Him father, Only a Holy God..." As the music flowed from the loudspeakers, the dancers' rhythm and movements underlined the message. They hoped the spectators would grasp a glimpse of God through their ministry. The lyrics had been explained to the crowd before they started, translated to Greek, as the performance drew crowds -- from homeless people in the Pireaus Harbour to tourists by the Acropolis in Athens.

Highlights for the Dance team included a performance at a refugee camp one day, followed by two days of giving 'dance as therapy' lessons. "I love to share dance as a heart cry to God, and see many conversations open up," shared team leader Linda. "Our time in Greece was a pioneering experience that deepened our love for Greece and the many traumas they have experienced, i.e. crashed economy where overnight Greeks lost half their salary, to the influx of refugees just a few years after.

Sometimes the unexpected does happen. While it can be frustrating, it can also be a way of seeing God turn a difficult situation into something good. "We prayed hard, and trusted God to give us something," shared team leader Linda, "as we realized upon arrival that there had been some misunderstanding. I took us up on the Acropolis to dance and do the "One Wish\*" two days, and later we worked with the team in Piraeus among the homeless, and at night we danced at the Harbour. While it was pretty discouraging at first, it turned out fabulous," concludes Linda.

\***One Wish** is a simple method of sharing Christ. <https://onewish4u.com>

## Be a brother to the local Roma

The Bus4Life was part of the outreach in Patras, Greece, which served as a prayer hub as well as a beacon to draw people's attention. "It was great to be able to give free Bibles and New Testaments to people in languages including Greek, English, French and German," wrote team member Jenna.

The team did Open Air outreaches in the city's square, a children's programme in a Roma village and served the community by cleaning up the beach. Although the team had to face several challenges, they were able to see God at work and experience him leading the team members to people who were open and interested in finding out more about Jesus.

## Serving a small-town church

In the down of Drama, the team blessed the church by doing paint work around the church building, including a basketball court. They also ran a one-day VBS (Vacation Bible School) for children and a two-day Bible camp.

After the team had worked one day cleaning up garbage in the municipality, the Mayor got so excited about their work and servant attitude, he asked for more help and posted photos of the team in action on the municipality website.

A team outing to nearby Philippi made the New Testament letter to the Philippians come alive. The group enjoyed a devotion on the very same riverside where the Apostle Paul met Lydia and others, almost two thousand years earlier. They were also able to visit the site where Paul and his friends were whipped and jailed (Acts 16).

One day the team got stopped by the police during a random check. At the police station, they ended up witnessing and praying for the officer who stopped them. They also told him about the church. "Maybe God had a plan, wanting us to reach out to the police officer in sharing and prayer," said team leader Gabby.

# Turkey

## Refugee Road

Joined by local Christians, the Transform team visited a refugee encampment of about 150 people with around 70 children. As they arrived, the children started running towards the van almost swamping the team as they were greeted with smiles and kisses. The children spoke mostly Arabic and only limited Turkish, which made it tricky to communicate. Syrian men and women also gathered around to watch. A ball and a rope were all it took to have the group erupting into shrieks of joy.

Starting in the morning, the van was packed with sanitary essentials, baby nappies and food, the team set out to the camps near the Syrian border. These camps are near agricultural farms and anyone over the age of 12 can report to their 'gang master', who is a local Turk who deals with local farmers; he sends refugees to work and controls their wages. Many children are left on their own when their parents or older siblings go out to the farms to work and come back late at night. The goal visiting these camps, apart from distributing essentials, was to love them, especially the children. Who knows what horrors of war these children have experienced?

The team stopped by smaller camps, where refugees live in farmers' sheds. The biggest camp they visited had 51 families in it. Each family was allocated what they needed, according to how many women and babies in each family.

## Truth Travellers

In Igdir, the women's team prayed for a lady who needed surgery and gave her a tract. They also had a really open and quite intense conversation with two ladies in a travel agency. One of the ladies was defending her Islamic faith, while the other was quietly listening to the gospel message. The group were able to give the ladies an Ingil, (New Testament) each, before leaving.

The men's team went to the location where (presumably) Noah's ark was found! After arriving and seeing the beautiful views of Mount Ararat and Noah's ark, they talked to some men whom they discovered had met a believer seven years earlier and given one of them a New Testament. The man explained that he had unfortunately lost it. The team was able to give him another New Testament to replace the one he had lost.



The team asked God for a specific prayer request: to bring someone to them. They had been sharing all evening with all kinds of people, but it was always themselves initiating the conversations. When they arrived back at the hotel, they had to rearrange some luggage before they could sleep.

Suddenly there was a knock on the door; two Kurdish men asked if they could quickly grab their suitcases that had been standing in the team's room. As they got to share and talk with them about Jesus, they really felt that God had answered their prayers and sent these two people.



The next day after Danny\* and Joshua\* had shared the gospel with the two Kurdish men the previous evening, one of the men called Joshua, saying his friend wanted to become a Christian! They met with him and his friend that night in the hotel. After explaining the Gospel in a deeper way, the friend said that "Jesus' way is the way that must be walked". They both took steps in turning to follow Him. Praise God!

In **Artvin**, the team was able to share with the night receptionist. He was very open and loved the New Testament they gave him. The next morning, he asked if they might have another one for him! They gave him a card with a web address, so that he could order online and receive follow-up support.

In **Ardahan**, the team was able to talk with Danny's friend and colleague for almost three hours. They got to share about Jesus and download the YouVersion Bible app on both their phones and explain how they could ask Jesus to come into their lives. Their friends listened intently; pray that they will make the choice for Jesus.

Pray for the people, children, youth and adults, of Romania, Albania, Greece and Turkey. Pray that they will understand and receive the hope they can have through a relationship with Jesus. Pray that the seeds of the Gospel will take root and grow. Also, please pray for the local churches who hosted and worked with our teams and continue ministering all year round. \*names changed

