

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

Security: N – no restrictions



What he wanted above all was a Bible (p.6)

- people of all walks of life are hungry for God's Word

God is going in front (p.2-3)

- the right people are brought in the way of outreach teams going to little reached areas



As I reflect on this first year of our new Local Ministry Team (LMT), I am amazed to see God's work at hand. What began in spring 2017 with a simple conversation, discovering a shared vision between OM and a local pastor, has now developed into something quite extraordinary. The LMT was sent to live and serve alongside this pastor and local believers to help so that one day a church might be planted in the unreached village of Cobîlea. Little did we know how soon God would make this vision come to fruition.

In this village there is one elderly lady, who stood firm in her faith as the only believer for three years. In autumn 2017 God provided a Christian family along with the OM team of six, to partner together in the vision to "see a vibrant community of Jesus followers" in this village. The team and local believers met weekly to pray and seek the Lord together; relationships formed within the community and in this way a house church began.

Through friendship evangelism we saw God work in the lives of a young man and his mother. This man began spending time with the local team, seeing a difference in them. His curiosity led him to ask the team more questions about their faith. When he attended the first church service in Cobîlea, on 22 April 2018, he asked the question, "How can I know and get closer to God?" This was the day that changed his and his family's life forever. Through the changes in his life, his mother also came to know Jesus. They continue to seek the Lord with sincere hearts and are actively involved in the new local church.

Every second counts, every moment matters. Through the time spent together in prayer and many moments of forming relationships, the first Evangelical church in Cobîlea began. Not knowing how God would lead the way, the local team simply moved into this village by faith and began building connections with the local people - and God worked miracles.

It's wonderful to see God helping us to come alongside the Church in Moldova and create vibrant communities of Jesus Christ. All the credit goes again to God!



Eugen Ciurac
Field Leader
OM Moldova



Though local authorities had refused teams access to this village in the past, a short stop with the raft this summer found people very open.

One 'River Adventure' team was covering a stretch of the river that included a village which teams in previous years had passed by. At an earlier attempt the local Orthodox priest had caused trouble and the mayor then had refused his permission to do any activities there. This year however, the team had a strong conviction that they needed to go to that village. They tried to get hold of the mayor, but without success. Finally they argued that nobody could refuse them to put up camp and stay the night to shorten the long journey they'd have the following day, so they decided they would camp at the edge of the village and see what God would do. On the way there, a thunderstorm forced the raft to stop for a while, so by the time they arrived and set up camp it was evening, and as they had to set off at 6am the next morning, there seemed not a lot to be done there. But though they believed God had led them there, what He had prepared for these few short hours was beyond their imagination. They set up the bouncy castle (having several families with children on the team, this would seem reasonable, if anyone should object) - and word spread like fire: Within a short time, many parents or grandparents turned up with their children, excited about this special opportunity. Among the first adults who came was a woman, who had been the local social worker for 15 years. After a short conversation she offered to take part of the team to visit some people in need -



people like the 82-year-old lonely lady who wanted to die and was in real need of the encouragement and hope the team brought and also very happy about the food parcel she received. In the meantime, more and more children gathered at the campsite and while some team members did an impromptu short programme for them, others could talk to the adults standing nearby. Only when it was getting dark the crowd slowly dispersed - but shortly after, some teenagers started to arrive and at around 11pm there were 17 young people of the village sitting at the campsite, attentively listening to testimonies and discussing with the team. One teenage girl was especially open to the gospel and spent a lot of time talking to Petru, the Moldovan team leader. She was not yet ready to surrender her life to God, but a seed was planted. When she was in a difficult situation about a month later, out of all her acquaintance she chose to call Petru to ask for advice: a young desperate girl seeking the fatherly advice of a godly man. We pray this relationship will lead her to find her true Father.



God is going in front

Some outreach teams - like the "Go4Adventure" or "Mission by Faith" - set out into little reached regions of the country without previous arrangements about which villages to visit or where to sleep and eat. They experienced God had gone ahead of them to provide for their needs and prepare the people He wanted them to meet.

Without knowing where they would sleep or what they would eat, the 'Mission by Faith' team set out towards the north of Moldova, into one of the least reached regions of the country. Arriving in the village of Soloneț late in the afternoon, the team prayed for a place to stay. "The moment we said 'amen' a man walked up to us and offered us to stay at his home", they remembered. The next day they tried to find another accommodation for part of the team. The very first place they entered was the home of an elderly lady, Eugenia, who looked at them suspiciously and was obviously not sure what to think of them. But right at that time there was also a car with some young people - apparently visitors - at her home, and one of them recognised a Moldovan team member: they were from the same church in Chișinău! Even more, this team member found out that her father had often been in this village in earlier years, when there had been a group of believers there. The lady's attitude changed immediately, she opened her house to the team and they found out she was the only believer left in the village. At one time there had been a group of 11 believers, but all the others had died or moved away from the village, so now Eugenia was the only one left - and had often prayed that God would send her more fellow-believers. The team stayed with her three nights and every evening held an evangelistic meeting in her house. One evening they also prepared a meal and about 50 people followed the invitation and listened to testimonies and the gospel message, and as a result about ten of them gave their lives to God - among them the man at whose house the team had spent the first night and his mother. During one of the testimonies another lady left with a sad face, but a team member went after her and listened as she shared about her troubled life, including hunger and poverty, a violent husband and a recent suicide attempt. As the team member shared the gospel, the lady said she would need time to think about it. The next day the team went to her house to bring a food parcel, and she said that she had been crying all night about the things she had heard from them. Out of her own initiative she asked to receive Jesus. Now this village again has a small church fellowship meeting in Eugenia's home.

As the team moved on to different villages, God continued to guide and amaze them. "Our whole outreach was filled with these kind of moments," one of them said. "God provided for us", was their conclusion after the outreach. "We prayed for a place to stay and someone would come to offer us their home. We prayed that it would not rain and the rain stopped. Many people came to faith and will follow the Lord. God has definitely increased our faith through these two weeks!"



When the 'Go4Adventure' team was preparing to set out for a new place by bike, they had several villages in the area to choose from. They understood God was leading them to the village of Fântânița, where they had heard a believing family was living, but they had no details or any way to contact them. As they arrived at the village in the evening and stopped at a shop, a boy of about eight years was drawn by curiosity to all the bicycles. The team started to talk to him and asked if he knew the family of believers. It took a while for him to understand who they might be referring to, but in the end he seemed to understand. "But they will not receive you, because they have a different religion", he told them with conviction. They still persuaded him to show them the way to that family's house, and to the extreme surprise and amazement of this boy, the believing lady who opened the door welcomed the team warmly. Later that night, as they had fellowship, the family shared about the difficulties of being the only believers and the prejudices and misconceptions about them prevailing in the village. The lady told them that just that afternoon she had felt very sad and discouraged - and then God had unexpectedly brought the team right to her door.

The next day the team ran a children's programme and was able to explain to the children and parents the truth about their faith, which the community had been so suspicious about as promoting 'a different religion'. Through a small boy and a simple act of hospitality, God had provided a place for the team to stay, He had encouraged the only believers of the place, and to the watching village He had disproved some of their prejudices against His children.



PRAY

We are so thankful for these opportunities, open doors and new believers. Please pray with us, as we continue to focus our ministry on these least reached areas of the country, especially for the start of another Local Ministry Team by winter!

Open houses - open hearts

When visiting people in need with food parcels and words of encouragement and hope, outreach teams found they were led - often unplanned - to those who not only opened their homes to them, but also opened their hearts to God.

We visited Sonia (26) and her daughter Sara (8). Recently Sonia lost a big part of her own family, when both her parents and a sister with a child died in a road accident. She lives with a man who is not Sara's father, but his family rejects them because they are of Roma (gypsy) background. Sara doesn't go to school, so she can't read and also doesn't seem to have a lot of friends. A lonely situation. But when we visited and started sharing the gospel, Sara told us about a dream she had had just a few days earlier. In that dream she had seen Jesus who had asked to come to her house, and when she invited him in, had made everything clean and beautiful. Now as we were at her house, Sara was very eager to hear more about Jesus and we shared Bible stories with her, using the illustrations in a Children's Bible we had brought with us. As a result, the girl prayed with us, inviting Jesus not only into her house, but into her life.

We visited a lady with four young children, who didn't really respond to our attempts to talk and share. When we asked if we could pray for her she agreed, but still didn't want to be open about her needs. During the prayer, however, she suddenly started crying and afterwards she really opened up about difficulties in her life and her struggles in raising the children alone and in poverty. We could share more of God and Jesus' love and the strength He can give. She was still emotional during all this and at one point she said, "Don't worry, these are tears of happiness about your coming to visit me." When we gave her a food parcel at the end she said, "Thank you so much for this food - but the fact that you came to visit me and talk and pray with me was the way bigger gift."

The woman we planned to visit was not at home, so we continued walking down the road and stopped to talk to a young lady washing a carpet in her front yard. Soon her mother came outside and invited us to sit down and served us some fruit from her garden. We began to talk to her about Jesus and explained why God had sent His son to die for us on the cross. At one point, while we were still sharing the gospel, she started to cry and asked, "Who sent you to me?" We continued to share; she listened and took everything in, asking questions and sharing her thoughts. At the end we prayed, and she accepted Jesus in her heart. The next day we visited her again and encouraged her in her young faith.

We visited a couple who had been married for 47 years and had had their share of trials and storms in life. The man had gone through a near-death sickness several years ago and at that time had clearly encountered God and understood He had given him a second chance. They both believed in God but were each unsure what the other would think if they repented of their sins. Also, they explained that they both had problems with their legs, so they were not able to walk to church to repent. We could tell them that they don't need to be in church to repent or need a priest to pray to God, but that they could come directly to God and could do it anywhere. So right there, just inside their house on a little covered porch, they prayed together, asking for forgiveness and repenting of their sins.

During one visit we met a family whose little girl had a problem with her foot and needed surgery, but the family could not afford to pay for it. We as a team were touched by the situation and wanted to help, so we pooled our money together and collected enough to pay for the surgery. The mother was so grateful she came back to thank us. On that occasion we could speak with her about Jesus for a while and she ended up accepting Christ. It was amazing as we only gave a little each, but to her it meant everything.



It is true!

"It's them; it's them!" a girl walking on the road with her grandmother shouted excitedly as the white van passed them, driving towards the river a bit beyond the village of Zălucaeni - an out-of-the-way village in northern Moldova where nothing much happens and where (as in the whole surrounding region) there are no evangelical churches or believers, but outreach teams visit each summer. The van that had caused the girl's excitement was carrying the kitchen and camp supplies for the River outreach team, accompanied by a few OMer, while the rest of the team arrived by raft on the water a bit later that evening. The next morning, when they came to the field where they were going to lead a children's programme, they saw that indeed they had been eagerly awaited: a crowd of people was already gathered - not only children but also many parents, grandparents, youth and other curious villagers. "Ever since hearing of your arrival yesterday evening, my granddaughter has been so excited, she couldn't wait for morning to come!" one lady told us, while another commented, "My girl didn't want to eat breakfast, she didn't want to lose any time coming to the field; she was so afraid of missing something." Though we are blessed to meet a ready welcome in many places throughout Moldova, it is still tangibly stronger in these 'forgotten' villages along the river, and it's a truly humbling and amazing experience to witness the joy and excitement of the children, the gratitude of the parents, the openness of most local authorities - and the general thirst for God. "We are waiting for this all year," another woman explained on that green field in Zălucaeni. "There is really nothing for the children here and nobody comes to offer them anything like what you do."

But the excitement about games, bouncy castle or face-painting is obviously not the only thing the children are taking away from the annual programmes: These children remembered Bible verses and songs from previous years and responded to questions with a surprising understanding of gospel truths - truths that other teams had taught them in earlier years, that had obviously taken root in their hearts.

The children of Zălucaeni listened and watched with wide eyes and open mouths as the team talked about the crucifixion and afterwards used an illustration where water was turned brown and then made clear again, to explain how Jesus' death can cleanse our sin. While all this was going on, a team member overheard the conversation of two onlooking ladies. They were obviously paying close attention, and one seemed ready to believe the truth of it all, while the other was sceptical: "How can that be possible: Dying and coming to life again? Being freed from sin? We are not able to be holy, we're too sinful!", she commented. "Listen, they are telling you how it's possible: through Jesus!" the first one replied, but the other still tried to discourage her, insisting there is no way we can be clean. Right then the illustration was coming to its close and as the dirty water turned back into a clear colour, all the children gasped in amazement, but for that lady it was the last bit of confirmation she had needed: "It is true", she exclaimed with conviction, "we can be cleansed!"



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At one point, while we were sharing the gospel, she started to cry and asked, "Who sent you to me?"



As we send more workers to live and serve in the least reached areas of Moldova, we need to raise finances for these new Local Ministry Teams.

This money helps them meet people's needs through different projects, cover expenses for travel between villages, or subsidise Moldovan team members.

If you would like to contribute, please donate to your local OM office or online (www.om.org/give), indicating "Moldova, Local Ministry Teams".

What he wanted above all was a Bible

As teams ran children's programmes, visited people in need, talked to authorities or shared the gospel on the streets, they met many people eager to receive a Bible. Outwardly these people could not have been more different, but they all shared one thing: a hunger for the Word of God.

Tudor is almost 70 and has been left paralysed by a stroke: his right arm doesn't work at all, his legs are fixed in a crossed position and his speech is impeded. There are times when Tudor can't sleep at night and cries out in pain and frustration. Sometimes his wife calls the ambulance, but when he arrives at the hospital, the doctors say there is nothing they can do. When a team visited this couple, they found out that at the time when Tudor had his first stroke and was in hospital, a man had read some passages from the Bible to him - and ever since then, Tudor had wanted a Bible himself. So, on another day the visitors returned to his home to bring him one. A smile broke onto Tudor's weary face as he received the Bible and full of emotion kissed the long-awaited gift.

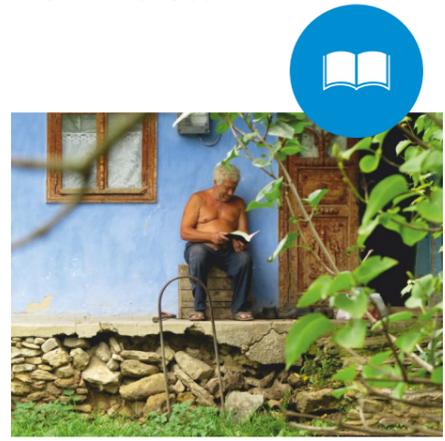
Throughout the summer we had the joy of seeing people's true desire to hear from God and the opportunity to give away many Bibles to open and seeking individuals across all levels of society: many people like Tudor, living in poverty and suffering, looking for hope and comfort. One team was walking through a village to invite children to their programme, but on the way noticed a house in a very neglected state. They spontaneously decided to visit, and inside they found a man who has problems walking but can't afford to have his swollen foot looked at by a doctor. He has no money, no family, no food, not even a place to cook - only a neighbour helps him by sharing her food with him. The team talked to him about God, shared from the Bible and encouraged him. When they returned later that day with a food parcel, he was surprised and thankful - but what he wanted above all was a Bible! So the team returned to visit him a third time that day, bringing him this much desired gift.

Another God-led 'chance' visit (the person they should have visited wasn't home, so they approached another house) brought a team to a lady who was a believer but had been waiting for a leg operation already for two years and because of this couldn't go to church, but also didn't have a Bible. "As soon as we gave her one, she started reading her favourite bits to us, sharing what it meant for her and offering advice to us in our lives," a team member shared. "I think we were meant to visit that lady, even if it had not been in our plan."

Then there were also many children: open-hearted and curious and excited to receive illustrated Children's Bibles with interesting stories about this Jesus they heard of in the programmes. One outreach participant was excited to find a boy whom she could communicate with in Italian. She was able to share the gospel with him and afterwards gave him a Bible - and the next day found out he had already read it the very same day!

Another team, after leading a children's programme, was invited by the mayor into her office in order to thank them for their investment in these children. During this time of fellowship, the team could openly share the gospel with the mayor, who showed great interest and promised to read the Bible which the team left as a gift for her.

Outwardly these people could not be more different - a crippled and suffering man, a young boy, a mayor, a lonely believing lady - but they all shared one crucial attribute, more important than health, wealth or position: a hunger for the Word of God.

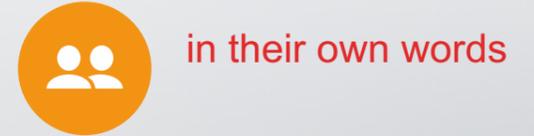


PRAY

Most of these people have no permanent Christian witness or fellowship in their village. Please pray that new believers will be sustained in their faith and all those who received Bibles will continue to seek God and hear directly from Him through His Word, even where there is nobody who can explain it or who encourages them in their pursuit of God.



Personal transformation



"It's given me a huge burden to pray for Moldova and I would love to bring other teams here - to support the work in Moldova, but also for their own growth as disciples of Jesus." This was the conclusion of one of the participants, and it reflects our prayer for all our short-term outreaches: that God would make a difference in Moldova, but at the same time work in the participants' own lives. Here are some of their more personal testimonies from what one of them called "an incredible and unforgettable experience":

"Sharing the gospel is not as hard as I thought."

"I've learnt to always turn to God in prayer before taking action."

"I've never felt God's presence closer."

"Prayer changes everything!"

"I just take many things in my life for granted, but after this outreach I will be more grateful."

"We led programmes for teenagers for four nights. I was asked if I would give my testimony on the first night and agreed, but then we had a big group of teenage boys and only one girl. I didn't feel comfortable sharing my story with this group, as it was very personal, so someone else did. I kept on praying for more girls every night, but none came. On the last night I knew I would have to share my testimony - and out of nowhere 14 girls came! I shared my story with them and it was a great and personal time. Afterwards two Moldovan girls came to thank me, as they were experiencing something similar. If you keep trusting God, He will provide and take care. And don't think your story isn't worth telling; keep trusting and sharing!"



"God really spoke to me that the least-reached people have to be reached."

"It's really awesome that you can encourage someone with your prayers."

"God has shown me that He is way more powerful than the things I'm worrying about."

"My plan is not always the best way - God has a good plan; He prepares everything; trust Him!"

"I enjoyed seeing people give their lives to Christ. To me this was amazing that God can use us to save others."

"I never realised how easy it is to tie God into a conversation. I will look for ways to do this in conversations at home."

"There was a moment when I realised, 'Wow, there is so much to do, but I don't know how much time I have left.' So I don't want to waste time anymore on unimportant things."

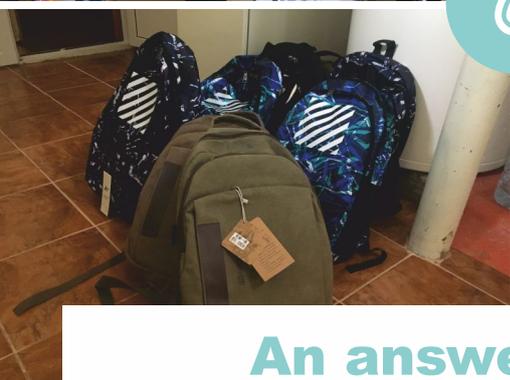
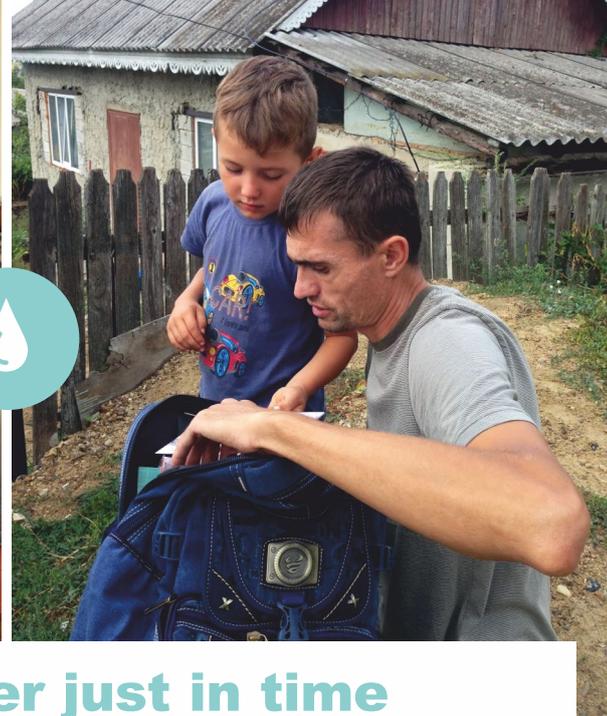
"I am encouraged about going to mission abroad."

"I was impacted by seeing that even if you don't have a lot, you have enough to give."

"I shared my testimony with our team one evening and it really resonated with another team member. He told me he had been looking for signs from God to work more with students and my testimony solidified that he should. This made me feel so happy that God used me to help someone else in my team."

"I found God! For a long time I had thought I was good enough for the world and for God. Yes, I had sins, but I did not feel sorry for that. But here God showed me how holy He is and how sinful I am, and that only because of Jesus' offer I can come to Him. In that moment I realised who I really am, but also how He wants me to be His child. Now I can be myself in Him. I found God in Moldova, so I will keep this country in my heart."





An answer just in time

Few things are more encouraging than to experience how God uses you to answer someone's prayer, which you had known nothing about.

During our last outreach period in August, teams got involved in the distribution of some of our relief & development projects, being able to offer material help like washing machines or school supplies. In the village of Rumeanțev the team met a family with four children, the oldest girl being due to start school in September. It was obvious that the family was struggling financially, and on the last day of the outreach the team decided to give them a school bag filled with necessary supplies, like pens and notebooks, and also some money to buy school clothes. Then the grateful parents explained that this need had been a great burden to them. They did not have the money to buy the necessary supplies for school and had prayed to God, asking Him to provide - and telling Him that if He did not supply by a certain date, they would have to borrow money or apply for a loan. The day the team brought these gifts was exactly the date the parents had set in their prayer!

We are thankful that already for many years we have been able to provide school supplies for children from families that struggle financially. For many families it is a huge challenge to buy all the required items, especially if they have several school-aged children, but without these supplies the children suffer in school - besides struggling to keep up with school work, it can also mean they get discriminated by their classmates and even teachers. This year, through the school supplies project, over 350 children received backpacks and all the needed supplies for the new school year which started on the first of September.

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!

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 are also on facebook ('OM Moldova')

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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



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