

Moldova News

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

A life turned upside down (p.6)

Her faith was superficial and reserved for Sundays at church, but then Valeria's life was turned upside down by participating in our trainings.



Meeting the God who cares (p.5)

Receiving aid through our winter projects in her desperate need caused Viorica to become open to God for the very first time.

editorial

Across our different efforts, from church planting to relief projects to discipleship training, we are all working together for one purpose: to see Christ made known within our neighbourhoods, across the country and around the globe. When you encounter the true Jesus, your life is never the same. This testimony is seen all over, as we hear stories from local church planters, as we see hearts and homes open for the gospel when they receive firewood or food, or as we see someone who grew up being 'churched' now personally receiving Jesus for the first time.

New relationships and partnerships are springing up to see this very thing: lives being personally transformed as they encounter God and His Word. Every believer who shares a food parcel, a winter coat, a bundle of firewood or God's Word, and displays His love in action is allowing people to encounter the One who has eternal hope for us all.

We are all called to this Great Commission in some way. As each of us continues to ask: "What is my part?", the Lord takes the little we have and does great and extraordinary things. We see this: from young people excited to go into mission in Moldova and abroad, to elderly ladies reaching out to their neighbourhoods, or to a small church congregation gathering in prayer and giving the little they have for missions. What is God stirring your heart to do? To pray and intercede for the lost souls in Moldova and among the nations; to gather funds for missions with your church; to go and share the gospel practically and through His word on your own street, or further to the least-reached parts of the world? Wherever and however He calls, may we continue to say, "Here I am Lord, send me!"



Eugen Ciumac

Field Leader, Moldova



Moldovan pastors and church planters during a conference about church planting, which we hosted in November

Church planting in Moldova has many faces and includes a wide range of activities, as local workers interact with the community and reach out to people on many levels, wherever they are at - but at the core of all these activities is the desire to lead people to an encounter with God and His Word.

As we partner with pastors and church planters who work in communities that have no evangelical church yet, we seek to inspire and support them in all this variety of needs and approaches. This can mean offering relief projects through which they can meet needs in the community; or encouraging and providing resources for activities that expose people to the Word of God, like leading Bible studies for seekers. It also includes providing training and helping to set up partnerships for them; or supporting themselves and their families in practical ways, so that they in turn are freed up for their ministry.

A mayor acknowledges God

Continued involvement in the community through our relief projects enabled a local pastor to build relationships and see a growing openness to God, not only in those receiving aid, but also with the mayor.

"Petru now has a word to share, please listen to him." There is no difficulty in finding an opportunity for sharing the gospel when you receive an introduction like this from the mayor himself. Petru is one of the local pastors we partner with, and he recently told us how the relief projects we offer have led to a special relationship with the local mayor, who joins this pastor in all the visits to the people who receive aid. Although a few years ago this mayor was not interested in collaboration, he now asks to be told in time whenever Petru plans any visits, so that he can free himself to join. During these visits, this mayor humbly disclaims any part in the aid given: "We as the local political authorities do not have the possibility to help you, but the church has," he tells people, and then actively creates opportunities for the pastor to share a message with those they visit. Petru is very encouraged by the good relationship that has grown and the open doors this creates - open doors to the hearts of needy people within the community, but also in the life of the mayor himself, who even prays with Petru for the people of the village.

Praise God with us for this open door; and pray that throughout the country these projects will lead to many similar relationships with people from all levels of society, bringing them to an encounter with Christ!

supporting church planters
in Moldova's little-reached places

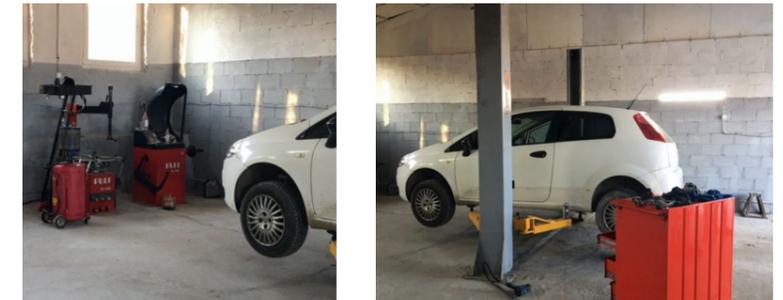
Practical partnership

What it can look like to come alongside church planters and help them serve:

Leading people to an encounter with God and His Word

As we come alongside those who serve to see new communities of Jesus followers being started in Moldova's little-reached places, one thing we want to help them do is to lead Bible studies for interested people in those communities. We especially want to encourage them to start this, if it is not yet happening, but also to support those who already do, but who may face different obstacles: They may not have suitable material (e.g. study guides to help them know how to lead such a "beginners' study", or Bibles to offer to people), they may struggle to find the time (often they lead a church in their own village, besides doing church planting work in one or more surrounding communities, plus having to work to make a living), or it can be a financial challenge (each week having an additional journey to another village is a significant increase to their fuel expenses).

Helping church planters generate an income



In autumn we could help one of the church planters we partner with set up a small car repair, to help him create an income. This spring, others will be starting to work with bees or greenhouses which we could offer them.

The aim of these is to help church planters be able to provide for their families, and to do this locally, at the place where they live and serve, instead of needing to go abroad at regular intervals to earn some money - a practice which is quite usual in Moldova.

Providing training and partnerships

"The mission of Jesus is not something that can be accomplished by a single individual or one charismatic leader. We must come together..." This was one of the main messages that was explored in its different aspects and applications during a conference for church planters, which we hosted in November. About 45 of the pastors and church planters that we regularly partner with were present. Listening to teaching sessions and testimonies which were broadcast live in different locations across Europe, our local participants then had time to extend their reflections on these topics in small group discussions.

They received inspiration for their efforts to plant new churches and were challenged to seek partnerships for this - e.g. by connecting with nearby believers or churches, even if they may belong to a different denomination, or learning to better collaborate on a regional or national level, or through a long-term partnership with one specific church in another country.

"They were encouraged and inspired," was the conclusion of our team members, who coordinated this meeting. "Now we pray that they will truly be able to apply these things in practice in their ministry."



In early February we received a truckload of new Bibles, which we had printed abroad. Now we again have the possibility to freely offer Bibles to interested people we meet in our many outreaches or for the use of local ministries and church planting initiatives.



At the core of all these activities is the desire to lead people to an encounter with God and His Word.



Please continue to pray for these workers, who serve to see new communities of Jesus followers being started in Moldova's little-reached places!

Pray also for a basic business training we are planning to run in spring for about 30 church planters whom we have offered a small business project, like a greenhouse or bees. Pray that these projects will truly serve the intended purpose of enabling them to stay in the community instead of seeking work elsewhere, yet leaving them enough time to invest in their ministry.

Sincere gratitude

The church in Lozova distributed wood briquettes to over 100 families in need in the surrounding villages:

Veronica got divorced because of domestic violence and alcohol abuse of her ex-husband. Now, all on her own, she is taking care of her five children, aged between two and 15, with a sixth one on the way. Although they have only a small two-room house, she has created a warm atmosphere for her children to grow up in safety, but it is difficult to provide for all their needs from the child support, which is her only income, amounting to just over 200 EUR per month. When she received wood briquettes for heating, she was very thankful and couldn't stop smiling.

Elena's oldest son is in prison, because his alcoholism led to severe domestic violence. Elena herself shares a small, broken house with two other sons, who also have a habit of drinking and bring their mother more trouble than help. Whenever she can, Elena works as a day labourer, especially pruning and caring for vineyards, which she is skilled at - but this means that in winter there is hardly any income. During the summer Elena and her sons gather as many branches and pieces of wood as possible, so that they have at least something to heat the house with during the winter months. Seeing the bags full of wood briquettes that were brought to her home, Elena was overjoyed, knowing that now she would be able to stay warm for the rest of the winter.



Meeting the God who cares

Receiving aid in her desperate need made Viorica open to God for the very first time.

In the country, owning some land to grow fruit or vegetables is essential for survival, so if someone cuts down part of their vineyard for firewood, they must be desperate. When Alina, who is part of the OM team, heard about a lady who had not only done this, but when that wood had been used up, had proceeded to also cut down two fruit trees in her garden, she knew she must get that lady included in the firewood project.

Viorica is the mother of four children, two of which - aged 10 and 12 - still live with her. Two older daughters have already moved out; one of them, Iulia, is a believer and is praying for the rest of her family to also know God. After Viorica's husband died last summer, a pastor serving in the area visited Viorica several times, but found that she was not open to the gospel and also refused to allow him to pray for her.

However, when Alina visited that family to bring them the help which she had been able to secure through the firewood project, she found a completely different situation: "Viorica received us with great warmth and hospitality," Alina shared, "asking us into the house and offering us tea and biscuits." Alina was impressed, seeing the proof of care and hard work that Viorica obviously invests in her home and family, although the situation is a poor one, as Viorica has no stable job, but works as a day labourer whenever she can get some work in the village.

Although during the visit Viorica did not speak much herself, she attentively and with increasing openness listened to all that the visitors shared. "We could explain the gospel to her very openly," Alina said, "and when we asked if we could pray for her, she agreed." Alina found out that Viorica had received a Bible from the pastor who had visited her earlier, but she couldn't read it, because reading causes her eyes to water excessively. Alina encouraged the children to read to their mother from the Bible, and then told Viorica she would stay in touch and talk to her about what she had read. Seeing this openness and having the hope of being able to continue sharing God's love with this family was a very encouraging experience for Alina, as well as for Iulia, who had herself been very much amazed at the change in her mother: Iulia had never before seen her so open to the gospel!



Alina talking to Viorica and sharing from the Bible



Can you imagine having no possibility to heat your home during a freezing winter? Or not being able to afford food, because your bills are so high and there's nothing growing in your garden during winter, either, to help you get by?
For many people in Moldova, winter is very difficult, and this year even more so, because gas prices increased greatly, and as a result other means of heating also became expensive and hard to get. We are grateful that we were again able to help many people in need through our winter projects: At the beginning of winter about 700 children received warm clothes and boots, and throughout the winter months we provided monthly food parcels as well as firewood or other heating materials.
As our aid is delivered by our team members or collaborating churches, the visits also bring people to an encounter with believers and the gospel.

Warm clothes brighten children's eyes

"I believe in miracles: I prayed that God would help me - and He did!" This was the grateful exclamation of one mother, whose family had been included in our winter clothes project. "I did not have the possibility to buy winter clothes for all my children," she explained: "I could only buy something for my eldest daughter - but God responded to our need!" This lady does not really know God, but in her despair turned to Him, and He answered. The local social worker, who had decided which families to put on the list for this project, had become God's tool, without knowing anything about that prayer.

Excited about new clothes

At the beginning of winter, we could bless about 700 children with warm clothes and shoes for the cold season. For families who struggle to make ends meet, the additional expense of winter clothes is a big challenge. Children from such families are often not suitably protected from the bitter cold. Many of them have never owned new clothes, wearing whatever gets passed down from elder siblings, however insufficient.

In one location, the person coordinating the project took the children to the market and told them they could choose what they wanted to get. "I was touched, seeing the amazement on their faces, when they heard how much money was available for each of them," she said. "With great enthusiasm, they set out to get themselves a coat or boots. Some were deliberately looking for cheaper things, so they could get additional items for other siblings that had not been included in the project."

Joy in difficult circumstances

This gift was a great joy to hundreds of children throughout the country, many of whom not only suffer material need, but also carry the burden and trauma of difficult family situations - like twin sisters Maria and Elena, whose father spent a long time in hospital after surgery and now has to stay in bed most of the time. The main income for the family comes from their two older brothers - aged only 13 and 15 themselves - who spend the summer and autumn helping other villagers bring in the harvest from the fields and get paid a little for their help.

Another example is the family of Andrei and Tatiana - five and eight years old - who lost their mother two years ago: She had taken a loan from the bank, spent all the money on alcohol, and then - in her hopelessness - committed suicide. Their father works their land, doing his best to provide for them, but it's hardly enough to pay their bills and buy food. When the weather was already turning cold, he knew his children's clothes were not sufficient for the season, but he had no way of buying them a coat or warmer shoes. The project came just in time for their situation of great need, and despite their general sorrow caused great happiness. The local worker distributing the aid was very touched to see their reaction and later thanked us, saying: "It is impossible for me to convey in words the joy this brought to them."

Right up until Christmas six-year-old Marin had been wearing worn-out sport shoes that were moreover too small. He was very happy to receive a good pair of boots that would keep him warm and dry in the winter.



"I believe in miracles: I prayed that God would help me - and He did!"

“Challenge into Missions” - training Moldovan nationals



We were excited that in autumn we were able to run a “Challenge into Missions” training again - after a break of 1,5 years, during which Covid-related restrictions had made this impossible.

Ten young Moldovans spent two months with us, learning to grow in their personal walk with God and to share their faith with others; discovering more about God’s work in the world, as well as the spiritual needs in Moldova; and very practically coming alongside local church planting ministries in Moldovan villages.

A life turned upside down

Her faith was superficial and reserved for Sundays at church, but now she is passionate about mission and wants to show God’s love to people around her: Within just a few months Valeria’s life was turned upside down by participating in our training courses for Moldovans, “Impact” and “Challenge into Missions”.

Passionate about mission and eager to know how she can be part of God’s work, 16-year-old Valeria got fully involved in the *Challenge into Missions* course this autumn. What a difference this was to her own life only a few months earlier! In July, Valeria had also been a participant in one of our *Impact* courses - a shorter training we had offered for the first time last summer. She now admits that at that time, she had come to the course without passion, purpose or expectations, but simply to avoid being home. Having just finished school and looking for an occupation, when she had heard about *Impact*, she had signed up simply because she had nowhere else interesting to go. She acknowledges that she had had no idea what mission really is, despite having grown up in a believing family and joining her parents in going to church. “But I was really leading a double life,” she now explains, “outwardly fitting in at church and at home, but not feeling that I belong there, and being a completely different person with my friends, who I joined in doing lots of bad things.”

When learning about different evangelism tools during the *Impact* course, the participants were asked to each write down their personal testimony. This exercise changed Valeria’s life: “While everybody else was writing busily, I suddenly realised that I had nothing to write about, that I had no personal relationship with God”, she explains. “Though knowing much about God, I had never decided to follow Him.” That same day, in a simple prayer and with tears in her eyes, Valeria asked God’s forgiveness and dedicated her life to Him.

Returning home after the *Impact* course, Valeria experienced that her decision was not accepted by everyone, and it cost her the friendship she had most cherished before: a girl from church who had joined her in her duplicity. Though it was painful that her former friend now rejected her, Valeria was happy that her relationship to her family was restored, and

she was amazed to see how God changed her heart: Where before she had been critical of people, she now felt love and a genuine interest in knowing who they are inside. “It was as if my eyes had been blindfolded, but now God had exchanged them with eyes of love,” she explained.

Valeria’s interest in mission had been awakened through the *Impact* course, so she decided to also join the *Challenge into Missions* training in autumn. “Here God continued to show me how amazing He is,” she said, “and how I can get closer to Him and understand His heart for people - how much He loves them and wants them to be saved.” Valeria explained how much this love had also grown in her own heart during this focused time with God and other like-minded young people, learning and serving others throughout the course. “I want to show God’s love to people,” she concluded. “I want to be a missionary - here, in my own country.”



Valeria (second from left) doing a home visit to an elderly lady, as part of an outreach during the “Challenge into Missions” course

“I had no idea...!”

Having come to see the world and their own country with new eyes, the “Challenge into Missions” students went home eager to continue working for God.

One of the study-weeks of the *Challenge into Missions* training was spent discovering more about God’s work in the world, about different religions, people groups or global needs, as well as the spiritual situation in Moldova. The feedback from the participants showed that they were powerfully affected by what they heard. They were touched by spiritual needs they had not known existed in the world and were motivated to pray beyond their own limits of experience. Most of all, they had come to see their own country with new eyes: “I had no idea how many locations in Moldova have no evangelical church,” some said. Others were impacted deeply by an in-depth presentation of the beliefs prevailing among the Moldovan population. In a country where most people claim they believe in God, and many have heard and confirm basic Bible stories, it can be harder to see how far they truly are from understanding their meaning or from knowing God. “I only now realised how much they really need somebody to share the gospel with them,” one participant said.

In a second step, the young people were challenged to come up with ideas how to practically react to these realities - e.g. to go from astonishment at the lack of churches in the country, to one step of action in a neighbouring village that has no church. We were encouraged to see them make concrete plans how to reach out to their surrounding communities with the love of God, how to mobilise their churches to become involved, or how to encourage their friends to pray for these needs.

We pray that the impact of these experiences will continue long after the course has finished - that God will keep this passion alive, that the participants are able to put their plans into practice and continue growing in the knowledge of God and the desire to be used by Him.



“Challenge into Missions” students at our training centre and during an outreach in a Moldovan village



Helping churches take action

“I never thought that I can be a missionary!” These were the words of an old lady at a church where we shared about missions. She had felt that mission work was beyond her means, strength and ability, but after this meeting walked away encouraged and with a sense of responsibility, convinced that her sphere of influence - even if it was just the street she lived on - was her mission field, where God had placed her for His purpose.

We are regularly visiting churches all over the country, sharing about the spiritual needs in the world and in Moldova, and helping believers to understand how they can be involved in meeting these needs: from going into global missions, to praying or giving, or simply sharing their faith in their own community.

“Maybe not all of us can go, but we definitely must all commit ourselves to praying and also to giving,” the pastor of that church told the congregation after our presentation. He went on to explain they would set up a donation box at the church entrance marked “mission”, which in future would always be there; and the church would commit to using whatever money was collected there for doing outreach activities in their own and neighbouring communities. After the service two young people approached us “We want to be involved next summer in your ‘IGo’ - outreaches; please sign us up already!”

Many Moldovan believers do not know about mission needs, especially in their own country, or simply don’t know what they can do. We thank God for the openness of churches to receive us and be challenged into action, and we pray that God will use us to inspire and empower many to become involved in praying, giving or going, and to understand the missional value of their own everyday lives.

She had felt that mission work was beyond her means, strength and ability, but after this meeting walked away encouraged and with a sense of responsibility, convinced that her sphere of influence - even if it was just the street she lived on - was her mission field, where God had placed her for His purpose.

It is encouraging to see Moldovans get excited about what they can do for God! Would you like to take part in this work even from a distance? With a financial gift you could help us cover recurring expenses (e.g. travel costs for church visits), or enable Moldovans to be part of a training or a short-term mission experience. We offer these opportunities at a price they can afford, but this does not cover our actual expense for these activities. If you want to contribute, please donate through your local OM office, designating the gift for “Moldova - Mobilising nationals”.

Love Moldova 2022

Will you join us in bringing God's love to the people of Moldova?



"It is sad when you hear old people say, 'I am all alone; I want to die.'" One of our team members posted this statement in autumn, while he was helping to lead an outreach team that had come to Moldova to partner with a local church planting ministry. Some circumstances in Moldova can truly leave our hearts weeping for these people. Yet we also know we can make a difference for them, as we partner with those who work to see communities of Jesus followers spring up in these places, addressing their hopelessness as well as material needs. We want to invite you to join us in this, whether through a long-term partnership, or simply one short-term outreach. This may seem just a momentary activity, but such an outreach encourages those working there long-term and can impact people deeply: A simple food package can make a big difference to someone's material need, a home visit can be a huge encouragement to those who feel forgotten, a children's programme can be a highlight which they still remember years later, and sharing a prayer and the hope of the gospel can bring peace and an answer to a person's deepest need.

Will you consider offering some of your time to reach people with God's love in ways and places that go beyond your usual surroundings and everyday life?

We are again planning several opportunities for you to join us for short-term outreaches in Moldova this summer. Come alone or with a friend and join others from around the world, or come as a group, and see how God will work in and through you, as you live out God's love among the people of Moldova!

Get involved:

- PRAY** for our ministries
or
- GIVE** towards a project
or
- GO** - join a programme:
 - Love Moldova (2 weeks)
 - REACH (5 months)

We are also constantly looking for people to join us mid- & long-term.

Please contact us for more information about current needs and opportunities!

info & publications:

Check out our [website](http://www.om.org/md) for more updates and information: www.om.org/md

You can **subscribe/unsubscribe** to:

- "Moldova News" (3x/year)
- [Prayer Updates](#) (2x/month)

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JOIN US FOR:

Construction Outreach

Serve by coordinating a children's program and using practical skills to support the local church and community. Practical work can involve cleaning, painting, building a playground and more, depending on the specific village.

Love Moldova: A, B, C, D

*Note: Groups only. Teams are encouraged to raise additional funds for a playground.



LOVE MOLDOVA

For more than 20 years, we have sent out teams and individuals to share the gospel among the unreached through our Love Moldova camping. Join us in 2022 and be involved with what God is doing. We know God still has even more to come. Check out these unmissable options for Love Moldova Moldova 2022:

Go 4 Adventure

Go by four different modes of transportation: horse and cart, train, trekking and cycling. Take the gospel from village to village through children's programs and family visits, and also encourage the local believers.

Love Moldova: A, B, C, D

Love Moldova 2022:

A: 5 - 18 June

B: 26 June - 9 July

C: 17 - 30 July

D: 7 - 20 August



Love in Action - Village Outreach

Partner with local churches in two different villages. Love in Action means doing good to the people in their village and showing them God's Love. You will do this through children's programs, family visits, practical help, church visits etc.

Love Moldova: A, B, C, D

River Adventure

Teams will sail on a team-built wooden raft and camp in tents along the river, travelling to villages in the least-reached region of Moldova. Share the gospel through children's programs, family visits and relationship building.

Love Moldova: B, C, D



Adopt a Church Outreach

Teams will travel to a least-reached village and start to partner with a local church planting ministry, with the goal of building a long-term relationship with this church and see a vibrant community among the least reached grow.

*(groups only)

Love Moldova: A, B, C, D

TIM Village

An opportunity for teenagers to grow in their view of missions, be challenged to live out their faith and experience God using them to share the hope of Jesus with others.

Love Moldova: A, B, C, D

Trekking Adventure

Trek from village to village, up to 15 km per day, between five or six villages. Opportunities for ministry are endless with children's programs, family visits, practical help and encouraging the local believers.

Love Moldova: B, C, D

To sign up or find out more about short-term options in Moldova, please contact your local OM office. More information can also be found on our website: <https://www.om.org/md/en/go/stm>