

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

Security: N – no restrictions

A new Adventure

- our first MDTe³ has started

(p.6-7)

*Missions Discipleship Training
"Eastern Europe Extreme"*



A fresh vision (p.2-3)

- OM introduces a new mission statement



editorial

As you are about to read some of the statistics regarding the evangelised and the unreached people of the world, let's take every bit of it and see which role we feel God wants us to play, in order to see salvation brought to those who don't know Him yet.

There are so many great opportunities in which we can get involved and, through the Holy Spirit, see the least reached population decrease, in this way speeding Jesus' return.

As OM Moldova we really want to look around and see where God is leading us. Working alongside Moldovan churches, we want to identify the areas of the country where there is no evangelical presence yet and bring it there. We are also starting an increased effort to mobilise the Church here, helping them to see the needs of other nations in the world and to take part in bringing the gospel to these as well. While equipping Moldovans to be sent to the ends of the earth, we are looking into ways of subsidising them in their financial support, as raising funds only from the churches of Europe's poorest country is not enough.

So please pray with us, as we want to see vibrant communities of Jesus followers among the least reached. Pray that the Lord will guide us and open doors, so that together with you we will see Jesus followers from Moldova, taking the gospel to touch the least reached of this country and to the ends of the earth.



Eugen Ciumac
Field Leader
OM Moldova



A new vision for OM

Throughout 2016 the leaders of OM International were prayerfully evaluating the role and calling of OM on a global level in today's world and from this process of praying, seeking and working recently introduced OM's new mission statement:

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

Although the percentage of those considered unreached in the world has decreased, the absolute number of individuals is growing. Credible estimates speak of 2.8 billion people who are beyond any current effort of proclaiming and living out the gospel, and every day 57,000 more individuals are added to that number. They are separated from the truth by barriers of language, ethnicity, economics, geography or other issues placing them on the margins of society. The need is much more than only spiritual, as these unreached tend to be concentrated in the most unstable and often most violent areas of the world. Also 85% of people living in poverty are located in the unevangelised world. At the same time unreached groups are found in the midst of otherwise "reached" areas: e.g. over 1 billion people globally living in slums, the millions living in refugee camps (sometimes for decades), or the uncounted victims of human trafficking, who are hidden away in the shadows of our very own societies.

This does not mean that other places do not need ministry, or that those who have heard the gospel at least once no longer matter to us, but comparatively much is being done for them and they are likely to continue being exposed to the gospel, while at the same time millions do not personally know even one believer and are not likely to hear unless we make a special effort to go. Only an unproportionally small fraction of all Christian ministry concentrates on the least reached and as a missions organisation, OM feels called to address this imbalance.

How do we define "least reached"?

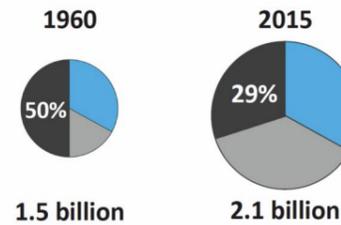
- no one has lived and proclaimed the gospel among them nor has there been a positive response to God's grace in all its truth
or
- there has been gospel engagement but no gospel-centred and gospel-proclaiming community of Jesus followers is present
or
- there is a community of Jesus followers living and proclaiming the gospel, but due to geographical distance, cultural barriers or linguistic obstacles, access to it is significantly limited for the vast majority of that people or community

What do we mean by "vibrant communities of Jesus followers"?

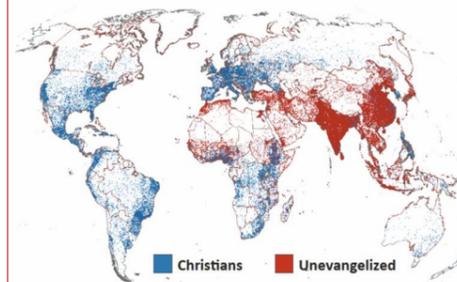
Our passion is for communities of people who reflect the glory of God, worshipping groups of people committed to each other and to Jesus Christ.

- Such vibrant communities are:
- agents of **transformation** in their own neighbourhoods and beyond
 - multiplying** - intentional about taking this life-changing message to the people around them
 - self-sustaining** - not perpetually dependent on others
 - led by locals** who take ownership of the community of Jesus followers

Global realities:



Globally the percentage of unevangelised dropped from 50% in 1960 to 29% in 2015. However, due to population growth, the number of unevangelised individuals increased by over 600 million people in that same time frame – unevangelised populations are multiplying faster than they are being reached with the Gospel.



The unevangelised are concentrated in particular parts of the world - mainly in the stronghold regions of other faiths and often also the most unstable and violent areas. 85% of people living in poverty are also located in the unevangelised world.

Unreached groups are also found in areas that are otherwise considered reached:

One in six people globally live in slums – over 1 billion people! Less than 1 out of 500 Christian missionaries works in the slums.

Only a tiny fraction (perhaps 0.01%) of national workers (such as pastors) work in slums in their own countries. But of those who move into cities, 80% end up in slums.

There are 232 million international migrants – together they would be the fifth largest country in the world by population. The average stay in a refugee camp is 17 years. These are cities in their own right, where people are born, live and die without hearing the Gospel or experiencing Christ's love.

A fresh vision for Moldova

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

The challenge we (like any other OM field) currently face at OM Moldova, is considering what this means in our local context and how it applies to our ministry. Two main questions are: "Who are the least reached in Moldova and how can we focus our ministry on them?" and "How can we, situated in this country, contribute to the mission of reaching the least reached of the world?"

Some of our current ministries already contribute to the new vision and we will strive to strengthen and develop these. We will continue to put an emphasis on motivating and equipping people for missions, in particular helping Moldovan churches to embrace and share in the task of reaching the least reached of this world by preparing and sending Moldovans into global missions. On a national level we want to put a bigger focus on those regions in Moldova that have no churches and believers yet: establishing Local Ministry Teams in these areas, supporting church planting initiatives and working together with those churches that have a vision to reach the unreached places of their own country.

For some of our ministries it will mean that we need to change the focus or even give up certain projects - though with the hope that they will not cease to exist: Most projects were developed with the goal to support Moldovan believers in building up a ministry, helping churches become such vibrant, transformational communities; now the time may be right to hand over projects to be carried on solely by these churches - e.g. most of our sports ministry. We are also aiming to improve our cooperation with other organisations working in Moldova, especially in the area of relief, in order to make our ministries complementary rather than competing. We don't cease to care about the poor and neglected in places that have a local church, but may decide to withdraw from projects which churches are able to lead themselves or which are also supported by other organisations, so we can instead focus our resources on places where there is no local church and where help is both more desperately needed as well as more effective as a witness to those who have never seen people display Christ-like love.

Please pray for this period of transition as we continue to evaluate our ministry in the light of this new mission statement and begin to implement changes. As we continue to work under the authority of the local Church, it is essential that the churches also understand and embrace the vision together with us.



Local Ministry Team & Church Planting

Our current Local Ministry Team serves communities in central Moldova and has helped start church plants in two villages. Praise God that in Lozova (the newest church plant) the small group of believers continues to meet, the first three people of the village were baptised in summer and recently this small church celebrated their very first dedication of a baby. Also - after two years of repeated refusals - they have finally received building permission and plan to start construction in spring.

As OM Moldova we want to grow in effectively supporting the Church in their church planting efforts in unreached villages. At the same time we'd like to form more Local Ministry Teams in the least reached areas of Moldova. However, for this we need local contacts and, most of all, suitable people to lead these teams. Please pray with us for these needs and plans.



The One who can comfort

“While we talked to them about God, the mother and the old lady were crying. We could see in their eyes that they were in a difficult situation and that they had been longing for someone to pour out their hearts to – all their worries and problems – and we could lead them to the One who is always there and who can truly help and comfort them.”

As the outreach teams of our most recent “Challenge into Missions” (CiM) course visited the needy, ran children’s programmes, did street evangelism or travelled with the Bus4Life, they saw how God brought them to the right people at the right time - people looking for spiritual relief, whom they could introduce to God and connect with local believers; people who needed physical aid and received food parcels or practical help. One team arrived at an old man’s home to find the owner trying to chop some firewood although he was almost blind. They were happy they had come at the perfect time to be able to help - and when the work was done were invited into the house, where they could encourage the old man and pray for him.

Even the bouncy castle helped them identify a family in hardship: When one girl’s turn came to go on the castle and she took off her shoes, team members noticed she wasn’t wearing any socks, although it was late autumn and quite chilly. “I am not cold,” was her first explanation, but then she admitted “I don’t have socks because my mum doesn’t have money”. Besides providing socks for her, the team could talk to her mother, who was open for the gospel but afraid that if she committed to God, she’d upset the only people she had to turn to for help. “But if you care about me, pray for me” she added.

Workers for the harvest



CiM not only serves to reach others with the gospel, but above all God works in the participants’ lives, opening their eyes to the needs and possibilities and preparing workers for His kingdom. “Through this course I’ve learnt how to serve others, and now I desire to go further,” one of these young Moldovans said. Many were touched by their visits to needy people and confessed they were amazed to see the situations many people in Moldova live in. For some participants it was also the first time they evangelised or did children’s ministry.

“I was very encouraged by the change I saw in Petru’s life,” Ion, who works in our training department, said about one of the participants. “He came without any experience and in the beginning he was shy. He wanted to get involved, but if he took a responsibility for the children’s programme, he then wouldn’t finish the task because he got so nervous in front of the children. With time he began to grow and take initiative. Some time into CiM I asked him how the training was for him and he answered, ‘I am no longer who I was in the beginning. Through this programme God has changed me and has given me the desire to serve Him and do His will in my life’. He then told me that he would like to go back to his village and start a ministry for children and youth, applying all that he learned during CiM.”

In the 16 years of CiM, hundreds of Moldovans have gone through this training and returned to their churches with new vision, skills and passion; some have planted new churches; many joined OM to reach their own country and the world. At CiM many for the first time find out about global realities and can’t remain indifferent as they discover how many people in the world have no possibility to know Jesus - and how few work among those least reached. “I had the opportunity to see how people live without God and that there are places, even countries that are unreached. Now I have a desire to go into global missions”, another participant of the most recent CiM course shared. Others have gone this road before: most Moldovan OM workers have gone through CiM, several of them are preparing to go into world missions and we pray many more will follow.



A visit from Jesus?

Christmas - for many it is a busy period; cooking, cleaning, purchasing gifts and food. In the midst of the rush, the real reason for celebrating is easily forgotten: the birth of Jesus Christ, the priceless gift from God, manifesting His love, mercy and goodness to the world. Often we also forget to show His heart to others around us who need our help, yet there is blessing in kindness shown even to strangers.

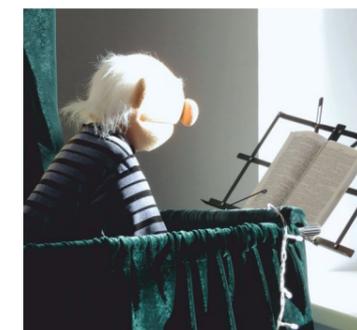
In December and January, we visited various villages with our Christmas puppet show, to remind people of the reason and purpose of Christmas. As they waited for the show to start, the children were expectant and curious - what would the story be about? Surprise showed on their faces as the first character appeared: an owl, the narrator of events. This time we presented the story of the shoemaker who waits for Jesus to visit him, but instead a lot of needy people turn up at his door, who all receive his care and hospitality. In the end he understands that Jesus truly has come to visit, though not in the way he expected, and that all he did for these visitors was really done for Him. Some of the children maybe had heard a similar story before, but through the puppets it truly came alive for them. Afterwards we asked questions to help them understand the meaning of the play: At Christmas God came to us - in an unexpected way - and the way we treat others reflects whether we receive Him and is a gift we can offer to Him. The children answered with enthusiasm and great understanding. 12-year-old Grigori, whose parents encourage him to give to those who have need, wanted to answer all the questions himself and told us, “This story was specifically for me.” In another place, one boy so much enjoyed the show that at the end he immediately asked: “Can we see it again?”

At the end of our programme we gave the children some chocolates, which always brought a big smile onto their faces. However, in one place more than double the amount of expected children had come, and even though chocolate bars were cut in half, some children remained without any. Seeing that they still left with great joy confirmed that they had not only come in the hope of receiving a gift, but had truly been blessed by the programme.

We talked to one boy whose parents try hard to provide food for their four sons, but still cannot make ends meet. He leads a difficult life but you could not have guessed this from seeing him at the programme, where he had been very excited and full of joy. Most of the children who attended have very difficult family situations, facing neglect, abuse and poverty, and though what we could give may not seem much, they could find joy and hope - hope in Jesus Christ and the knowledge that even simple acts of helping others can be gifts to Jesus and, most importantly, that they can offer Him their heart as a precious gift which will be treasured by God.

We visited churches and Day Centres, schools and kindergartens, where not only children heard about Jesus but also their teachers and caretakers. They watched the entire programme, witnessed the team effort and saw the excitement and joy of the children. Our hope and prayer is that what they heard and saw will not be forgotten but bring them to Jesus. One time we even had the chance to perform the puppet show to the police and their children, who had been invited by a local pastor on the occasion of a “day of the police”. For many it was the first time they visited a Christian church. What a great blessing to be able to bring Jesus to the country’s officials!

Now all the material used for the show is neatly packed again and the puppets carefully stored - but they are only waiting for the next time they can become alive and bring another story of God’s goodness, mercy and love to the world.



At the end he immediately asked: “Can we see it again?”



Love Moldova A: 11-24 June
 Village Outreach
 Construction Outreach
 Trekking Outreach

Love Moldova B: 30 June – 13 July
 Village Outreach
 Construction Outreach
 River Adventure
 At Risk Boys Camp

Love Moldova C: 16-29 July
 Village Outreach
 Construction Outreach
 Creative Arts Camp
 Go 4 Adventure

Love Moldova D: 6-19 August
 Village Outreach
 Construction Outreach
 Trekking Outreach
 Cycling Outreach
 Teens in Missions Village Outreach
 (10 Day option 6-15 August)



When God changes your plans...

Three of our MDT participants decided to already come to Moldova in September 2016 and have spent several months with the OM team. One of them is Josua from Germany, whom we talked to right before MDT started.

What made you decide to join OM Moldova?

I first heard about OM Moldova at an introduction seminar with OM Germany. I was not interested in Moldova then; I was focused on serving among Muslims and considered joining the Turning Point team in the UK. But then it seemed unwise to continue with this plan, so I had to look for other options. Now, after some months in Moldova, I see God intervened and led me here. I came to the seminar in Germany with the desire to work longtime on the mission field, but with the plans to go to the UK destroyed, I had no idea what to do and where to go. I decided to take part in an MDT - because it is many-faceted and includes many kinds of ministries - with the hope that during that time God would show me how He wanted me to continue. I'm not sure why I chose Moldova out of the OM fields offering MDT, but I think one reason was that I wanted to see extreme poverty to be more thankful for what I have.

What has been the highlight of your time so far?

Living for two weeks in a Moldovan village: Only in the village you will experience the true Moldovan culture. It was a challenge to adjust to the quite different lifestyle in the village, where people usually do not have so much. But more than that it was a really interesting and exciting time.

What has been difficult?

Definitely the language! It takes a lot of time and energy to learn a new language. But it's absolutely necessary in order to communicate with locals and share the Gospel with them.

Was there anything that surprised you?

It surprised me that it was so easy for me to adapt to all the changes. Before coming to Moldova I had a fixed schedule, I hated changes and was not flexible at all. Going to Moldova I expected the transition to be very hard for me but it turned out quite well. God did not disappoint me when I decided to ignore my fears and trust in Him when I left my home for Moldova.

So far, what is your impression of Moldova as a country?

Moldovans are really friendly when you get to know them and are ready to share anything they have, even the things they don't have. You also see that decades of Soviet oppression changed their way of thinking and behaving. For example, they learned to stick together and to be hospitable, which I really like and which is quite different from Germany.

Which three words describe OM Moldova for you?

Family, diverse and reliable

What are your expectations for the MDT?

I expect to learn a lot and to try many things I've never done. But I also know that it will be challenging and again a big change after having started to work and use my IT-skills here.

What do you think will be challenging?

As an introvert and someone who likes to have a place to settle, it will be hard having people around me all the time and moving often between Moldova and Romania. The schedule will be tight and include many outreaches - which are also challenging, as we're not used to the rough life in the villages.

What are you excited about?

I'm looking forward to meeting all these new people and especially to the fellowship. It's also great to have some specific time set apart to deepen the relationship with Jesus. So, I'm excited about all the things I will experience and learn.

In which areas do you hope to grow?

I want to use the time during the MDT to draw closer to God and to get to know Him better. I hope that through all the challenges that will come, I will learn to trust God in every circumstance. I also hope to grow in things I've never thought about - like leadership, mentoring or evangelism.

How have you changed during your time in Moldova?

I learned to trust more in God, especially through all the changes. You are a lot more dependent on God when you are in a foreign country and don't know the language. Through the Moldovan culture I also learned to be more flexible. You must adapt a "We'll see when we get there" mindset here. But only those who knew me before I came to Moldova will see how much I changed and they will be surprised.

What do you plan to do after the MDT finishes in June?

I am planning to expand my time in Moldova, to continue serving here with my IT-skills. I studied computer engineering and seeing the need for a specialist in OM Moldova shows me why God led me here. I also have other plans, like doing my master studies, but right now these are still far away.

What would you like people to pray for during this time?

Pray that I can really use the MDT to draw closer to God and that I can also be a blessing for other people. I'd like to grow in so many different areas for which I need God's help. So pray that He will continue to work in and through me.

Missions Discipleship Training - Eastern Europe Extreme



MDTe³

After a long period of dreaming and planning, our MDTe³ finally started at the end of January. Brandon Craig, who is responsible for overseeing it, gives an introduction to what MDTe³ is all about:

Can you shortly explain the vision of MDT?

MDT exists to disciple and equip believers to take part in creating vibrant communities of Jesus followers among the nations.

What does MDT cover?

MDT focuses on four core essentials to facilitate growth:
Spiritual Growth & Leadership: Grow in your relationship with God as you study, discuss, share and explore Biblical truths. Subjects studied will include: Identity in Christ, Nature and Character of God, Apologetics, Biblical Basis of Missions, etc.
Mentoring & Discipleship: Experience how God calls ordinary people to do extraordinary things. As part of an international team you will practice new languages, share your life and faith with others, learn the importance of discipleship and help others in their walk with Jesus.

Mission & Evangelism: Half of your time will be spent working alongside churches, putting into practice cutting edge innovative ways to share your faith through sports, puppets, drama, testimony, and humanitarian and social work.

Cross-Cultural Adventure: Spend weeks in wild, challenging conditions; build rafts and sail down rivers to unreached villages, explore old castles and monasteries, trek, and even ski or snowboard – demonstrating Christ's love wherever you go.

How do you decide on the schedule, content and teachers?

Experience shows that to realistically achieve the outcomes, an MDT should run full-time for a minimum of 5-6 months. Teachers and mentors are chosen based on a list of requirements including previous experience and excitement/passion for discipleship and investing in young people.

How will MDT benefit the participants, churches or OM?

MDT is an introduction to a life-time involvement in missions. It can serve as a "gap" programme preparing participants for a missional life at home or as an introduction to cross-cultural mission service. On completion each participant will:

- have grown, and be able to continue growing, in their knowledge of, and intimacy with God.
- have experienced transformational growth in their journey towards fullness in Christ and awareness of self.
- be equipped to love, serve and work with all kinds of people.
- understand God's heart for the nations, be aware of the needs and be equipped to respond.

What makes this MDT unique compared to other MDTs OM offers in different places?

MDTe³ is unique in its full partnership between two fields - OM Moldova and OM Romania, each field offering the best opportunities for outreach and learning. Between these two locations, participants experience various outreaches to different people groups, faiths and needs. Our programme is in a strategic location, with participants living and experiencing where two cultures collide – post modern Western Europe with former soviet Eastern Europe.

What would you like people to pray for during MDTe³?

Partner together with us in praying for the participants, that God would bring about transformation in their lives, instilling a fresh passion and clear vision for how He is at work in them and around them, and what their role is in becoming history makers among the nations.

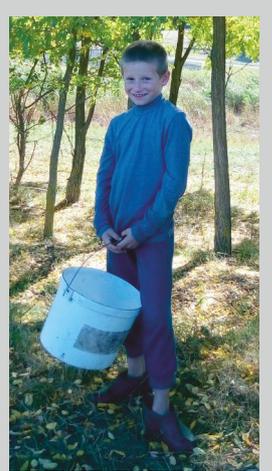




Eagerly welcomed gifts

It was an overcast November day and the air was already chilly with the oncoming of winter, when Pavel's family received an unexpected visit. Not many people come to their old house at the furthest end of the village, where parents and three children live in one single room. Neither of the parents has a job, but they try to earn some money by doing odd jobs for their neighbours, while also working their own land to grow some food for themselves. Still, providing for their children is difficult and frequently there is lack. Now imagine their joy and surprise when they found out the purpose of these visitors: bringing new and warm shoes for their children - as a gift!

This family was one of the beneficiaries of our winter clothes project. In the ice and snow and freezing cold of Moldovan winters, not having good winter shoes is a serious problem, affecting children's health but also impacting other areas, e.g. keeping them from being able to go to school in winter. Another aspect is equally painful to them: In a culture where appearance is of great importance, not having nice shoes to wear lowers your social standing. Because of their poverty, Pavel and his siblings often feel marginalised and looked down upon by their peers - but this winter they can walk proudly, having warm feet and not fearing to be ridiculed.



Pavel helping at home

Pavel's mother with the new shoes she received for him



a good exchange for Pavel's sister

Harsh winters severely aggravate the needs of those who already live in difficult circumstances. Through our winter projects we could once more help churches relieve some of these needs in their communities, as 950 children benefitted from the clothes project, 625 households received firewood for heating and 1200 food parcels were delivered monthly over a four-month period.

One of the pastors we partnered with shared that during the past year he had held three baptisms that had resulted from last year's winter projects. We pray again for spiritual fruit from this material aid and thank God for all who contributed financially and in prayer.

Get involved:



Pray for our ministries
OR



Give towards a project
OR



Go - join a programme:

- Love Moldova (2 weeks)
- MDTe³ (5 months)
- Global Action (2 years)

We're looking for people to join us mid- & long-term! Current needs include:

- a married couple to provide **Pastoral Care** for our team
- a **professional accountant** willing to serve long-term
- **Local Ministry Team** workers: live in a village community & work with local children, youth or elderly
- a **videographer** to help promote our vision and ministry

[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:

<http://news.om.org/country-news/mdq>

We are also on facebook ('OM Moldova')

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We are excited to announce the launch of our **new website**

where you can find information about our ministry; stories, pictures and publications; prayer needs, possibilities to join and much more:

www.om.org/md

(More resources and updates will be added with time...)



Be part of the ministry in Moldova