

In Gepiu Community Centre, for many years now, we put in a lot of effort in providing a wonderful facility and service to the children from the village, in regard to their education. Ioana, our social worker, as well as a number of volunteers, Dan included, were always ready to offer their input for helping the children grow not only in knowledge and wisdom, but also spiritually, for becoming good not only in what they could do professionally, but to also have high standards and ethics when they will deal with life.

The challenges were many, but we stuck at it, and we will continue to provide a service there, but with limited and more streamlined input.

The generations have changed and Gepiu is not an exception. The young families who are still living in the village are fewer and fewer, as they either moved in the city - Oradea, 20 miles away - or moved abroad and start a new life elsewhere. That means that fewer children are enrolled with school and so, we are forced into adapting our offered service to this reality. There is a group of children though that were part of our project for many years, basically since they started school, and we are very happy to see them becoming teenagers, and we want to continue supporting them, as well as others, as needed and possible, to continue their education in the city, after the eighth grade.



But obviously, the most recent developments, with COVID restrictions imposed on everything, affected our projects significantly. We are determined to still have two meetings every week with the children and youth from Gepiu and although this is not strictly speaking an after-school anymore, as it used to be, we will still use these opportunities to help them, in whatever areas they need.

As part of something bigger, we really want to redirect the time and resources we have available into growing these kids toward knowing Jesus and allowing Him to change their lives. And that, we believe, will help them more than anything else!



Educational Project Newsletter

continue our programmes that will change destinies in the years to come! Your support provides the help that is essential in trying to educate children from difficult backgrounds. Thank you!

Thank you for being a supporter of the Educational Project. Your support is very important and enables us to

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Education Project Newsletter

Autumn-Winter 2020



Education and support for the children in our programmes have always been a key issue in what we do and how we do it, even since opening our first school in Tileagd in 2003. A lot has happened in the past 17 years and whilst 2020 has been one of the most challenging of years on record, it was not due to educational factors, but COVID-19. Sadly, the school was forced to close for over 6 months and the children greatly missed all school provides.

Clearly the Virus has had a devastating impact on the children's ability to attend school and the lost time in learning will also have far reaching implications generally on their future lives.

As I detailed in the mid-September web update, our decision to close the School facility at the Tileagd Complex and encourage the children to attend the State School, is allowing Smiles to approach our support of the kids in a whole new way. The 'After-School' programme is most exciting and already seeing a wonderful response from the children. We pray, with your continued support, we will quickly recover lost ground and ensure the children enjoy a far better 2021.

Kevin Hoy,
Founder and Chief Executive
The Smiles Foundation

Rapa Community was and still is affected quite significantly by the limitations of COVID. The most obvious way that is seen is in finding work for the adults, but also the access of children to education. On top of that, there is always a lack of personnel in the State school, the lack of interest from them to help and encourage the gypsy children, the lack of interest from many families to send the kids to school...

In Rapa we are looking for someone to be able and willing to take the responsibility of providing good quality service, under an after-school programme, under a revised structure. This position will not only require a well-trained worker, but also a lot of patience and commitment, as the tasks are quite difficult and complicated to achieve.

Also, we need to consider the basic needs of the community. While we would like to provide for everything they need, we still have to look at this in stages. For now, as the complicated times we live in will impose, we try to maintain the church activities and under that, we hope we will soon be able to develop even more.

We are looking forward to seeing what the future holds in all of these and we trust God that the best options will be in place before too long.





In Tileagd Community, the things were rather animated through these past months. Because of the numbers involved, we felt we needed to do something when the big lockdown was in place, during the early Summer. So many families, adults and of course their children, were suddenly unable to do much for their own basic needs, so many kids were at risk to literally starving. So, we decided to prepare food for them so that no one will go hungry. For this, Meda was of great help, as she is a great cook, as well as very well known and respected by all the beneficiaries.

Not only that, but we also endeavoured to provide a little bit of a food parcel for each one of them or their families, so that the support was available for everyone. During this we actually learnt, once again,

how important the Smiles' service was all along, despite the many times when we wondered if it was appreciated or not. It also meant that both the children and parents could see we do care for them and want to see them doing well - which was our desire since we started the work in Tileagd, nearly 20 years ago.

Of course, because of the COVID crisis, a lot of movement happened among those families who decided to leave the community. Suddenly, as their "adoptive countries" did not offer so many opportunities anymore, they had to come back, but to very little. So, there were and still are numerous children that would need attention, not only for their educational needs, but also for the every-day life necessities too.

We want to thank all of you who made this programme possible! As with the whole educational project for Tileagd, we depend very much on your support to continue providing opportunities for those in need. And you were generous to us and to them, and we want to say we appreciate it and we thank God for you. Please continue to support, as there are new things ready to happen!



As years went by, the School in Tileagd needed to go through several changes, which you learnt from our regular reports. The whole situation with the pandemic created yet another need to update the way we work with Tileagd children, as we are still concerned with their education, but also need to account for the new context.

That's why we decided to start a new after-school programme, starting this October, which will help the kids with their formal education in the State school, where they are still quite a bit behind the rest of the students. This programme is available for all of those who are serious about going to school and they are all welcome to benefit of our support, which includes a hot lunch and various school materials that are provided. We started looking a few weeks ago and will eventually employ one or two workers that will be responsible for making this into a proper extra tool for these kids to succeed in life!

We also connected this to another wonderful programme that is going to serve the children of Tileagd Community - that is a special "Church Club" which is open to anyone who attends the after-school programme, but also want to learn more about our Lord Jesus and, between us here, want to also gain some nice prizes, which we all know, are very motivating!

We started it past week and we are all very excited and happy to have this opportunity. Children above all! And hopefully, the results will be so good that we soon will be getting someone to be involved as a helper to Maria, who took the role of leading this programme. This type of offering for the children is not something new, as we've done it before in Tileagd and elsewhere, but it is now more and more of an emphasis, as we understood the best thing we can do is to lead the children to Christ and then, as He will start a beautiful work in them, the future will be better.

We really hope that by providing both education, through the after-school on week days and the "Church Club" on Sunday and Thursday, we will make a difference into these children's lives, for the long term, which will change not only them, but also generations to come!

