OUTREACH PILLAR Report

FEBRUARY - APRIL 2024

The Outreach Pillar of The Smiles Foundation is all about sharing with people God's Kingdom and the ways He can change their lives.

Here we are, the first edition of our Outreach Pillar Report is on! The initiative that our CEO launched during his presentation tour through UK and US earlier this year was very well received and several churches and even private organizations decided to become partners with The Smiles Foundation, with a very special interest in the work we do!

This is of course very nice and we are very grateful to God, first and foremost, for His provision and open doors, but then also to you all who decided to join with us in sharing God's work among people of Romania!

So, I would say welcome to our first edition of this newsletter, here you will find more detailed information on the specific programmes of our Pillar and alltough less comprehensive than our main bi-annual release, the four quarterly updates will no doubt provide you with an interesting and hopefully motivational lecture! God bless you all!



Adi Matiș, *Director of Smiles Outreach Pillar*

PILLAR's updates

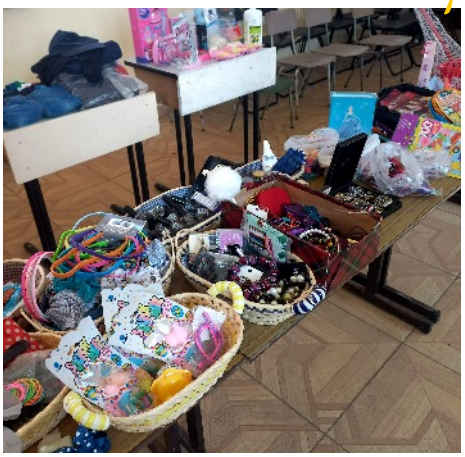
The Outreach Pillar was initiated in the late 2019, officially launched in 2020 and it asimilated a number of programmes we had run for years, as well as some new ideas and development directions.

All along these years, we were concerned with finding the right people to do the job, should we say "jobs" as there are several departments that are quite diverse to each other. From working with little children to sharing the Gospel to the elderly, providing food to running Christian camps, we have it all, and more!

So, almost as an introduction to our Staff, at the time of this writing, our team is made of **Adi** (Pillar's Director), **Sidonia** (working with Rapa children and families), **Andreea** (social worker for field work), **Corina** (the newly appointed manager for Dezna Camps) and **Pastor Vasile** (Pastoral and Church work).

These are the people who are involved with the programmes you will read about in this newsletter, and they are the ones you'll meet if or when you'll decide to join one of the Mission Trips we organize all the time. We will be very happy to take you out to see the people we work with and try to bring some joy in their lives.

COMMUNITIES updates



Among the activities we undertake, as means to apply an integration solution, for the Rapa Community, sometimes we set up a "market" for the children from the local families. They can "buy" all kinds of beautiful stuff, second-hand and new things, carefully chosen especially for their needs and preferences, as they make sure we noted!

As currency for this transactions, we use play-money, but made identical to the real banknotes, so this whole affair has some very strong impact on their social skills development! This money they earn prior such special day, during our meetings, following a score system which reward good behaviour, paying attention, getting involved and contributing to the discussions, memorizing and understading Bible verses and so on. The hard work deserves good pay!



This idea had great results so far, we could see some major changes for which we thank God! He gives us wisdom and skill to be able to fulfill His will on this Earth and helping these children we believe is part of it.

Sidonia Lupaș, *Children Work in Râpa*

FIELD VISITS updates



Some of you might know about **Melinda** and her family, whom we discovered last year in the winter, living in a small, cold and dark little room in Oradea. They were terribly dirty, unwashed, wild and very difficult to get along with. But that did not stop us!

Last August, we managed to find the resources to clear all the sun-boiling trash gathered for years in their yard, which was a terrible health hazard for the whole family. That made a huge difference in their lives. The cost was very high, but with your support, we managed to take the right action! As a result, the children are now breathing cleaner air, less risk of injury or infections, they are happier. But all this also encouraged the family to follow our advices and now they are much better off, at least in those departments they could make progress.

This is one example of how things can improve, given the right association of factors. Sidonia pursued a close observation with the family and soon, we hope more progress can be seen!



LIFE STORIES SERIES

Recently, we were contacted by someone who told us about their neighbour, a family from little village of Surduc, who are through some tough times. **Maria** and her husband, and their two teenaged daughters live in a rather derelict house, which does not hold on very well, quite the opposite.

Their only regular income source is the husband's small salary, to which some occasional jobs in the village that Maria takes might be added.

This house they currently live in was the property of an older lady whom the family carred for in her late years, with the anticipation that they will inherit the place, this is a common practice still, especially in the rural areas. The complication comes from the son of the deceased woman, who does not admit the arrangement made and he plans to send the family out the house. So, we decided to include this family in our support programme, including the juridical options they have might have. There is a whole procedure they would need to go through and there is no certainty about the result. But without our support, they could not argue their case at all.

Our immediate desire would be to get a container for them, if we could get the support needed, to accommodate the family while they will finalize the legal procedure to get the property. This would provide them with some decent housing for the time being.

DEZNA CAMPS *updates*

We are looking forward to the Summer Season of Dezna Camps! In the meanwhile, **Corina**, our new colleague, had the chance to test the procedures and doings of a camp with a group of women from one of the churches in Oradea. It was a rather unexpected inquiry, but we were happy to start the season earlier!



Our intention, as stated many times before, is to make Dezna facility into a year-round offer, so that various groups could come and enjoy a few days of relaxation, fellowship, study or what it may be. The signs are encouraging, and we will definitely promote this concept more and more. Without doubt, it comes very handy and the opportunity is much appreciated. As Vio, the leader of this groups says: *"I worked with these women for the last 20 years. We have never had a time off for ourselves only, so I wanted to offer them this gift! Thank you for making this possible for us!"* We are happy to provide a nive place for them to come to.

Dezna Camps will have many children coming this year. We expect a good number and we already have 7-8 bookings for over 200 participants - that's great news, as our purpose is to make the place known everywhere!

Volunteer's Corner

One very important way people can help us is by offering their time and energy to become part of the activities we do on daily basis. Such offer will make possible that we can cover more areas of interest than before and every one have a very unique and valuable contribution to bring!

Today we present **Anna Luehrmann**, a wonderful young girl from Great Britain, who came to Romania in February, for two months, so she can go out and visit people, see families, children, residents of our Elderly Centres, Rapa Community, all the other places we go to. This is what Anna says: *"I am so thankful to have been able to see first hand so much of the amazing work that Smiles does in transforming people's lives, I am honoured to have been able to work alongside such amazing group of people set on serving the Lord!"*



We want to say Thank You Anna for your time and commitment to see people, tell them about Christ, pray with them, helpinh them every way you could! You were truly an inspiration for our team and we value greatly the time we spent together!

Prayer Points

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Galatians 6:9

There is always something to be done and because there are so many people with so many needs, often we feel overwhelmed, as you might feel yourself, when even consider getting involved with helping.

So, please pray for:

1. Renewed focus, strenght and commitment for our team to be able to fulfil the calling and the responsibilities.
2. The results we all want to see from our efforts, that will change lives and will give everyone new hopes and confidence.

Thank You!

Please accept our thanks and appreciations for your support toward The Outreach Pillar's Programmes! Your kind generosity makes possible the work we do here in Romania. Thank you for being our partner in doing God's work among people in need!