OUTREACH PILLAR Report

FEBRUARY 2025

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

Welcome to reading our winter Outreach Pillar report! There were many things happening since last November, most notable of course was the Christmas season and the associated actions we took - it really was amazing and we had so much good fun and you can read about it here.

But even outside of what we did or do everyday, I am thinking there is still so much more to do and often I am thinking we are in such a "business" that creates more and more work for itself, as more is achieved! I guess it is just the nature of being in God's work - a large harvest, but indeed not enough workers to collect it all at once!

Doing the social and educational support for the people, accompanied of course by the spiritual assistance as we are able feels we could open hundred new programmes and they'd all still be busy every day!

Adi Matiș, *Director of Smiles Outreach Pillar*



PILLAR updates

Through the winter months, we continue to go out and visit people, after the SOS distribution being such a busy time; this provided a nice opportunity to visit all our beneficiaries though, to give them gifts.

In the first week of January, after the few days off, we all came back to work with fresh energy. Yet, with some of the beneficiaries we were on the phone over the Christmas and new Year, as they felt alone and by spending some time even only talking on the phone, meant a lot to them. But then we started visiting again and taking food parcels out.

We are still concerned with Sidonia's situation, medically she seems to be improving, but still she cannot come back to work. That means we really need to look into getting another colleague to join the team, and in fact we started looking, hopefully someone with the right spirit will be sent our way! In the meanwhile, please continue to pray for Sidonia's health, as we do, for a full recovery.

The two Andreeas, as you know them, they are dilligent and hardworking, almost every day they are out seeing people. We also continue to do our Wednesday special, which is visiting ECO and TAL for an hour's fellowship with these residents; these are great and we love seeing our friends getting involved in singing, praying and even sharing with us! It really is a very nice time spent together.

We should not forget Pastor Vasile, he is also committed to the two churches in Tileagd and Rapa, but also everytime he has the chance, he invites people to pray together and listen to the Word, even outside the church! He truly is passionate to directing people to God!

COMMUNITIES update







Last year, as part of our work, we visited several new communities from Bihor county, either when doing COPs for children or when taking food parcels to various families. We plan to go back there, to explore the opportunities and get to know the people, understand their needs and see if we can properly help them in some ways.



One of these communities we visited for Christmas, with the intention to go back there soon and might become another Smiles local involvement.

The village is Astileu, it is about 50 km away from Oradea, has many poor families and there's a lot of children whom we might be able to support. We will let you know how this goes, but for now we will leave you with these pictures taken in December, when we offered them Sacks of Smiles.

Volunteer's Corner

Many times, Smiles has promoted volunteer work as one of the ways anyone can help, should they have the inclination, calling and availability to do so. As a result, we attracted a lot of interest and indeed, we had some amazing volunteers coming over to Romania, for shorter or longer periods of time, to serve the needs here.

One of them is Luke Wathen, very well known by most of you, who really made himself available for Smiles work everywhere, be it in the UK or Romania, and on all areas as well. Luke came over as a mission-trip visitor, long time ago, but then he decided to get involved to a higher degree, becoming a full-time volunteer at Smiles.

For ten years, Luke served the Lord with exemplary dedication. He was, and still is, also involved with doing promotional presentations for Smiles in various UK regions, and he was particularly responsible for Mission Centre operation with our guests.

Here we are now, to acknowledge Luke's extraordinary commitment to Smiles to doing whatever was needed, giving a wonderful example for anyone who would like to become a volunteer with Smiles. He did everything, from giving presentations to promote Smiles work to cutting grass in Dezna, from dealing with our guests at the Mission Centre to painting in all colours of the rainbow, from playing with Rapa kids to helping in Tileagd church... Such an inspiration for any Smiles volunteer and full-time employee, equally!

Luke, you should know, you are much appreciated and your efforts remain such an important testimony for all of us!





As you know, we are always looking for new people to support and to help them overcome the difficulties they are going through. Recently, we were called by a lady that was in a complicated situation and a social work institution redirected her to us for help, so we decided to go and visit her and find out more about the situation.

LIFE STORIES SERIES

Her name is Anca, she is 35 years old and has a 9-year-old daughter, she lost her job because the project she was working on ended, so she was no longer needed and there weren't other possibilities for her to work there. Her husband left her, he moved in England in 2015 and completely lost the connection with his family, he never sent anything and she doesn't know anything about him anymore, so she had to take care of her daughter by herself. Now that she doesn't have any work, she only has the allowance of the daughter which is not much.

Luckily, she lives in her mother's apartment so she doesn't pay rent, but she has to pay for the utilities so the money isn't enough. Meanwhile she is hoping to find a job again in order to improve the situation, until then we will continue to visit the family and help them with what we can.

FIELD VISIT *updates*



This year, at Christmas, we had the joy of being accompanied by Santa Claus and his helpers, bringing special gifts to families in need. Through the "S.O.S. for Children" and "Food Parcels" for Families, we provided packages containing sweets, perishable food, and small surprises designed to bring light and hope into the homes of our beneficiaries. Particularly for Christmas, we try to make this more special, to mark the occasion, and sure enough, people are getting into it very gladly!



The joy of the children upon receiving these gifts filled our hearts with happiness, confirming that we had achieved our mission: to bring smiles to the little ones. As the name of our organization suggests, we managed to turn this holiday into an unforgettable moment for many families and even communities.



In addition, we were honored to be visited by several groups of children who benefited from these gifts and delighted us with their carols. The atmosphere created added warmth and emotion, reinforcing our belief that every gesture counts. From the youngest to the oldest, we successfully fulfilled one of our essential goals: to bring joy and hope to those in need.

This programme also gives us the opportunity to share the true meaning of Christmas. We reminded the children and families that Jesus is the true gift, the supreme gift sent by God to Earth for all of us. On this occasion, not only did we offer material gifts, but we also spread a message of love, generosity, and hope, bringing light into the lives of those we met.

Prayer Points

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord..." Colossians 3:23-24

When it comes about the work we all do, the drive we have could be determined by many factors. But there is only one which really matters, and that is to serve the Lord - every day, by everything we do!

Have that in mind when praying with us:

1. The Smiles Foundation has so many and diverse programmes, all running at the same time, so we need energy, guidance, inspiration and determination. *Please pray with us for all of these to be given to us!*
2. We should always be thankful and bring our requests to God with a positive attitude. *So, let us all be grateful and amazed by His works through us!*

Thank You!

Please accept our thanks and appreciation for your support towards 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!