



MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Celebrating God's Abundant Provision



PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2018

Harry Graham, President of Mission Without Borders

In Mark's gospel we find one of Jesus' great miracles. He takes the equivalent of one person's lunch, and feeds a whole crowd with it! "And all ate and were filled: and they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces and of fish." (Mark 6: 42-43).

Jesus took what was offered to him, blessed it and shared it abundantly. We are immensely blessed as a Mission. And it is important to keep reflecting on the amazing impact our work has been able to achieve with relatively few resources, and to become better at seeing it for ourselves and telling those who support us.

As I look around at some of the reports of our work over the past year, the impact is truly amazing. The stories that you will read in this report are just a small selection and could be told over and over again in different settings.

The impact of all of these projects goes far beyond the immediate intervention by MWB. People are given the opportunity for better health, dignity and a future, which they in turn often repay many times over to the community and their country, thanks to the God who keeps on giving so abundantly. And we must never forget the contribution to that impact made by investment over the years, and our brilliant staff and volunteers around the world.

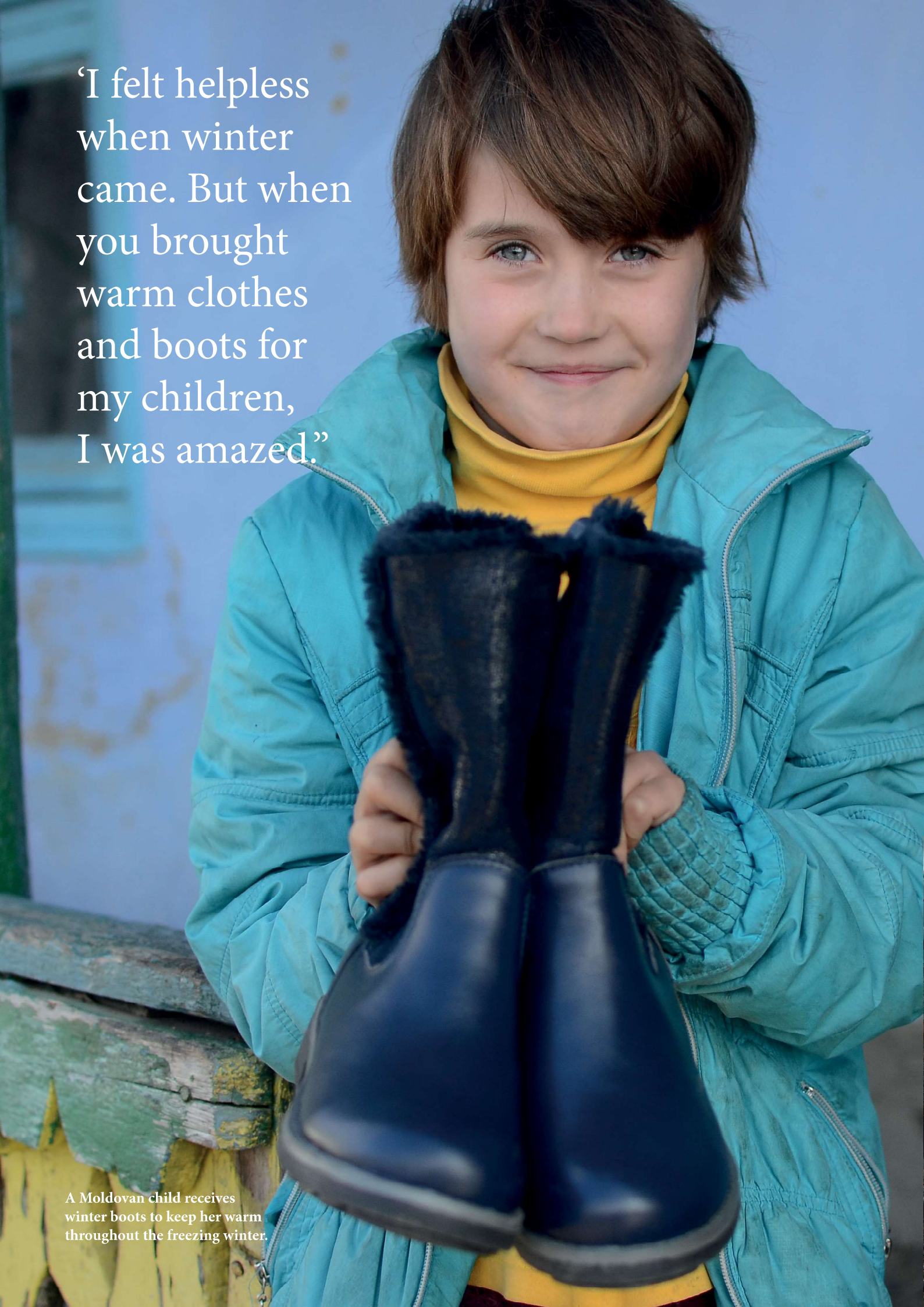
All this does not go on in isolation however. In my report last year, I spoke of how conflict and political tension has been amplified again, not just in Europe, but across the world, with borders hardening, refugees moving in large numbers, and cyber and physical terrorism a continuing threat. The deterioration in the West's relationship with Russia over the past year now adds to the uncertainty felt in many of our Field countries where persecution is on the rise again. The past year has been described as 'the deadliest' in Ukraine since the conflict began (now entering its fifth year), and for example, Ukraine Christian radio has now been banned by national channels, showing the need more than ever now for our work.

So it is important that we continue to review and evaluate our Field work – being honest about what is good and what might need to change. 2017 saw the complete transfer of the Gifts In Kind International warehouse from Rotterdam to Sibiu. This big change has presented its challenges, but has already proved a valuable step in better use of our resources.

Finally, may I return to what I said at the beginning: let's celebrate together the abundant provision of God, and remember that this is His Mission not ours. So thank you to all our board members, international colleagues, managers, staff, volunteers, professional advisers and supporters – everyone involved in Christ's Mission as we seek to reach people for Christ in Eastern Europe.

‘I felt helpless
when winter
came. But when
you brought
warm clothes
and boots for
my children,
I was amazed.’

A Moldovan child receives
winter boots to keep her warm
throughout the freezing winter.



WHAT ARE GIFTS IN KIND?

Where we can, we buy goods in the countries where we work to boost the local economy and provide employment.

Some items, including basic hygiene products, are simply not available in our field countries at an affordable price. This is where we rely on the generosity of companies and individuals to donate goods, which we call Gifts In Kind (GIK).

These gifts provide real benefits to those struggling to survive in some of Eastern Europe's toughest communities.

Here is what some of the people we reached said about the impact it had on their lives:

"The dried soup and pasta will be our food this month. It will help us save money to pay our debts. This is a huge help and we are blessed."

Prela, a blind lady in Albania after receiving urgent food supplies.

"Getting new shoes for all my children was a dream. We always get second hand shoes from other people. Now my children are excited, especially the ones who can wear their new shoes to school."

Tea, a mother with young children supported through family sponsorship

"My heart was bleeding as I had no money to buy anything for the Christmas meal. Thanks to the food you sent us, we were able to celebrate and I felt secure."

Snezhana, a mother in Bulgaria after receiving urgent food supplies at Christmas.

"I felt helpless when winter came. But when you brought warm clothes and boots for my children, I was amazed."

Maia, a mother in rural Moldova supported through family sponsorship.

KEY STATISTICS



\$10 million

worth of goods donated by companies and individuals across the world



1,643 kg

of rice, pasta, dried soup and canned food



2,505

new pairs of children's shoes



6,728

brand new backpacks full of school supplies



7,736

pieces of brand new warm winter clothing for children

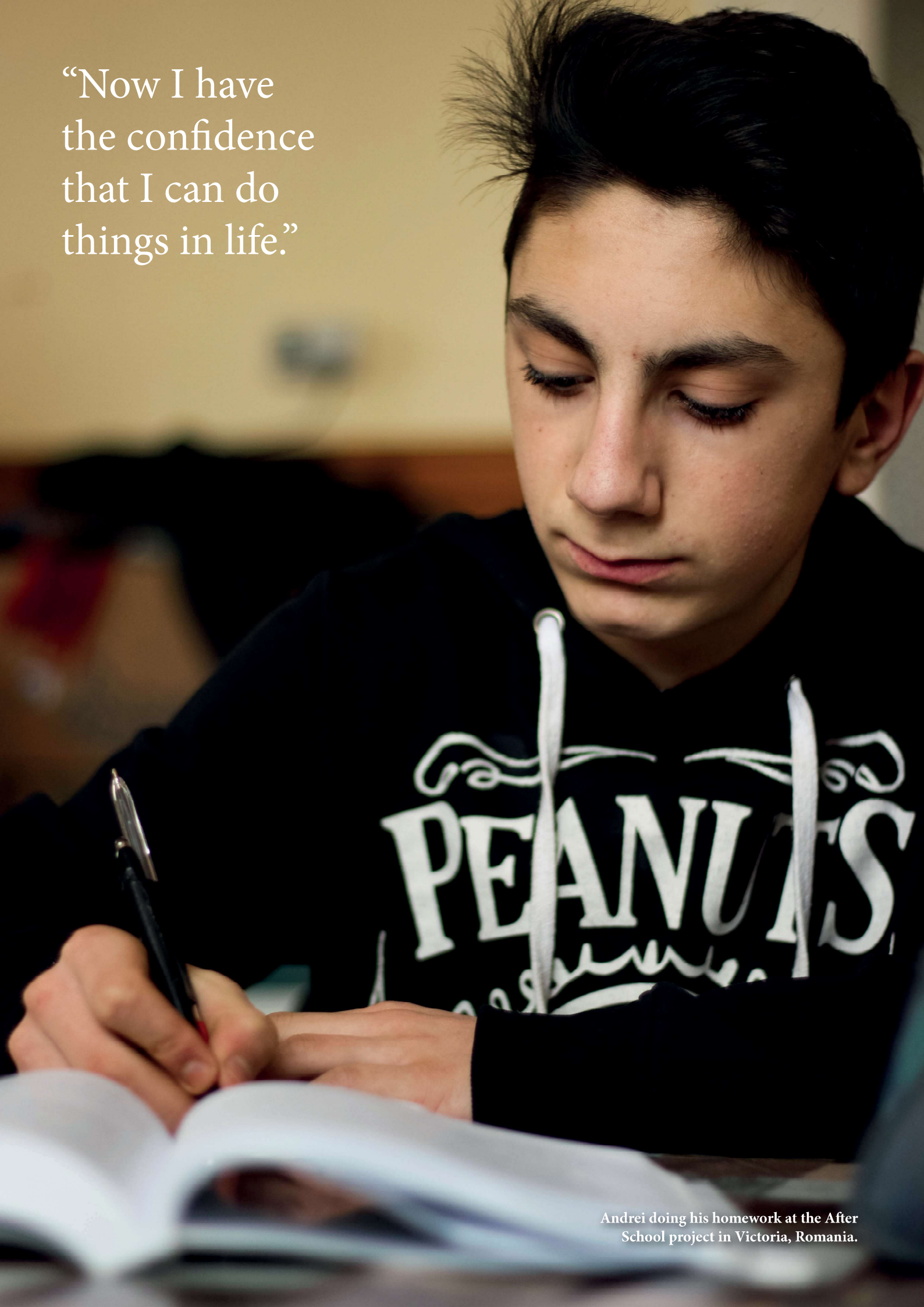


17,204

litres of shampoo



“Now I have
the confidence
that I can do
things in life.”



Andrei doing his homework at the After
School project in Victoria, Romania.



Children who attend After School with Pastor Timotei (far right) and our coordinator, Radu Aconstantinesei

ANDREI'S STORY

Andrei was abandoned by his mother as a toddler and has always been neglected by his father. He lives in Victoria, a forgotten city in the heart of Romania. With its dormant factory and high levels of unemployment, children like Andrei are brought up in poverty – and have little confidence that life will ever change.

Pastor Timotei, himself an orphan, came to Victoria determined to reach people with the gospel – and bring the knowledge of God's love to those who feel forgotten. After overcoming persecution and even death threats, today he leads a church in the city once known as 'the atheist city' because of its ban on all religion. And in partnership with MWB he supports 35 vulnerable children – including Andrei – through an After School project.


Andrei now receives a warm meal each day and has a safe place to do his homework. Instead of feeling neglected, he knows he is loved. Instead of feeling hopeless, he knows that his education and his future matter.

"I want to finish high school. Now I have the confidence that I can do things in life," he says.

Pastor Timotei says, "You help us to stand in the gap and give these children affection and love. We will never stop supporting children in this city and telling them about the Good News of Jesus Christ."

9,258
are supported through
our child sponsorship
programme



A young girl with dark hair and pink hair clips is smiling and holding a small white and black goat. She is wearing a pink shirt with 'LOVE GIRL' and stars. In the background, there are other goats and a green field.

“I thank God
for the example
you showed me
and the love
you gave me.”

Maria with one of the goats that has enabled
her family to become self-sufficient



Zeinep (left) and her daughter Maria with one of the goats that has provided the family with a livelihood

ZEINEP'S STORY

Zeinep's future looked bleak. As a child, she rarely had enough to eat and she suffered from health issues that forced her to drop out of school.


Now a single mother living in one of the poorest regions of Bulgaria, her lack of education made it very difficult to find employment. It seemed impossible that she would ever be able to provide for herself and her daughter, Maria. All that changed when the family were enrolled on our family sponsorship programme. Little Maria loves

animals and received an unusual gift from a friend on her fifth birthday: a goat. And when MWB staff saw how devoted and hard-working the family were, they decided to support them in starting up a small goat farm. Now they have eight goats and produce nutritious milk to boost their own diet and sell to others.

"As a mother I am so glad that my daughter is now getting healthy food which I didn't have. I thank God for the support I received from MWB, for the example you showed me and the love you gave me," Zeinep says.

1,947
families received
support through our
family sponsorship
programme.





“I never could have dreamed that my life would turn out the way it has.”

Victor who, after a difficult childhood, has become a Christian and volunteer at Summer Camp



Victor (far right) having fun at camp with children who experience their first ever holiday

VICTOR'S STORY

"I learned to beg from childhood," Victor says. "We had nothing to eat, and I had to go into the village and knock on people's doors and ask for bread. Some children threw stones at me and shouted: 'Beggar, beggar, don't play with him.'"

From begging on the streets, Victor and his four siblings were then sent to live in a children's institution by their desperately poor mother. On visits home, Victor's stepfather would beat him and force him to go out and steal.

The light in all the darkness was when MWB staff would visit the children's home where Victor lived. They read the Bible to the children and showed them care and affection.


"When I was 12 I got to go to Summer Camp and I gave my life to Jesus," Victor says. "Looking back, I never could have dreamed that my life would turn out how it has. The day when I was baptized became the happiest day in my life."

Today, Victor is a leader at Summer Camp – and is the perfect example to the children of how nothing is impossible for God – and how there is hope and a future for anyone who trusts Him.

"I want to show children God's love in the same way it was shown to me, and I want these children to know that there is a plan for their lives too," he says.

3,668
children went on
Summer Camp
in 2017.





Ruzhdi, who through the gift of
a professional tool set has been
able to start his own business

“Imagine how you would feel if
you had nothing in your pockets.
Now, we live with hope.”



Ruzhdi, who had been struggling in poverty, but now is able to provide for his family

RUZHDI'S STORY

"Imagine how you would feel if you had nothing in your pockets. Now, we live with hope."

For years, Ruzhdi longed to find employment and break out of poverty so that he could provide for his young family. Like many others, he and his family made their way to the city of Durres, hoping for job opportunities and a fresh start. But as they settled in a poor community in the outskirts of the city, poverty remained a daily battle and that hopeful future continued to elude them.

"I was in a lot of debt. I could not feed my children properly and I was relying on relatives," Ruzhdi says.

When Ruzhdi's family was enrolled on MWB's sponsorship programme, they began receiving support to ease their financial burdens. And noting his skills as a welder, MWB staff recognised his potential and helped him gain a professional qualification and set of tools.

Today, Ruzhdi has started his own business and you can find him in his garage working hard at making a table for a local customer. Surrounded by all the tools he needs to make anything for anyone, you can sense his restored pride and purpose in life. Now he has hope for the future – and can provide for his family.

91 families supported by MWB became self-sufficient in 2017 and no longer need our help.



Matea at her
graduation with
her mother after
receiving scholarship
funding from MWB



“My hope is to do all I can to bless future generations as you have blessed me.”



Matea dressed as a clown while volunteering for MWB at Summer Camp

MATEA'S STORY

When Matea was nine years old, life looked hopeless. Her father was an abusive alcoholic and her family lived in poverty. When her parents went on to divorce, her mother was left to bring up three children alone – and struggled to meet her family's needs.

MWB began to support the family – and seeing how bright the children were, saw the potential to especially support them in their education. Matea subsequently thrived at school and made it to university, achieving the highest grades and qualifying to become a communicologist. She has since spoken in Parliament and appeared on national TV discussing children's rights in her country.

And Matea's journey with MWB continued when, through a


scholarship, MWB enabled her to study for a Masters degree. The little girl who once lived in poverty and fear is now a well-educated, happy young woman who loves volunteering at MWB's Summer Camps.

"I know what it is like to live in poverty and to struggle," she says. "My ambition has always been to make a difference to the lives of the most vulnerable children. I wanted to study for a Masters so that I could become more qualified and build my knowledge – and you helped me.

"Through education I can contribute to my local community and do what I love doing – making children laugh. My hope is to do all I can to bless future generations as you have blessed me."

362 students were provided with scholarships and vocational training in 2017.





“It is never too late
to come to faith.
But sometimes this
journey can take a
whole lifetime.”

Olexiy who has been supported
through our mobile Soup
Kitchen project



A member of the mobile Soup Kitchen team speaks to, and comforts, Olexiy in his home

OLEXIY'S STORY

"When your health goes and the companion of your lifetime is not around anymore, you lose the meaning of life and give up."

Loneliness, poverty and declining health seemed to be all that the future held for Olexiy, 83, after his beloved wife passed away three years ago. Living alone in a damp and decaying house, it seemed his life had petered out and there was very little left for him.

But when neighbours alerted MWB to Olexiy's situation, his life began to take on meaning once again. Five days a week he receives not only a hot meal from MWB's mobile Soup Kitchen but also enjoys time spent

with staff and local volunteers who sit, listen and share their faith with him.

He is also now part of a big church family – and his life is filled with love, support and friendship.


"The boys from my street now take me to church each Sunday by car," he says. "It means a lot to me."

Throughout his life, Olexiy had no understanding of God, but now he has come to faith, asked Jesus into his life and been baptized.

"It is never too late to come to faith," Sasha, our local staff member says. "But sometimes this journey can take a whole lifetime."

734 vulnerable people benefitted from our Soup Kitchens in 2017.



A close-up portrait of a man with short dark hair and a light beard, smiling warmly at the camera. He is wearing a dark blue quilted jacket with a grey strap across his chest. The background is a bright, slightly out-of-focus outdoor setting with a clear blue sky and a light-colored wall or fence.

Kostandin Vasilini has
worked with families in
Albania for over 15 years

“Seeing the impact of our work
motivates me every day.”

At the heart of the work that MWB does supporting families and children are our local staff who work in some of the poorest communities in Europe. With a deep understanding of the complex issues and struggles faced by the people they work with, they are uniquely placed to respond to their needs and offer practical, emotional and spiritual support. Without them, our work would not be possible.

The hard work of these staff and the way they live out their faith is inspiring. Here is the story of one of our staff members, Kostandin Vasilini, who works with families in Albania.



Arjeta and her daughter who Kostandin has supported

“Building trust in Albania is very difficult, but for 15 years this has been my job every day,” Kostandin says. “There have been many stories, but I always remember the day I first met Arjeta...”

“I knocked, the door opened slightly and beyond the chain that secured it I saw a woman who looked as though she trusted no one. My first words to Arjeta were, ‘I am here just to help you.’ No one had ever shown her care or compassion before.

“A local agency told me that after 17 years of domestic abuse, Arjeta had escaped her husband with her two young children,” Kostandin says. “She was in desperate need, but her biggest worry was that her son would follow in the footsteps of his father.”

After 17 years of domestic abuse, Arjeta’s husband had often

threatened her with knives and beat her – and she had lived in constant fear and often thought of suicide.

Now she and her children had a chance to rebuild their lives – but they needed to come into a place of trust and community again.

The family was enrolled on our sponsorship programme and over time, as they received emotional, spiritual and material support, hope returned once more to their hearts – and healing began.

Arjeta never had the chance to finish school – but now her son is studying at university thanks to a scholarship from MWB. The support covers his tuition fees and school supplies and takes away the stress and financial burden from his mother.

Arjeta’s son said, “I was once hurting and had no hope, but now I am in my first year at university and – probably because of my experiences growing up – I want to be a police officer.”

“Today, I feel happy,” Arjeta said. “I am a single parent, but I am independent, and I am so proud of my son.”

“Seeing impact like this motivates me every day,” Kostandin says. “And whenever I think of stories like this I am reminded of a verse from 1 John which I often share with families when we start supporting them.”

‘Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.’ 1 John 4:7-8.

Out of my distress I called on the Lord;
the Lord answered me and set me free.
Psalm 118:5

For many children, receiving a letter as part of our Bible Correspondence Course is the first time that someone has shown an interest in them

Nemerenco is one of thousands of children and adults who MWB reaches each year through Christian Input activities. While in prison in Moldova, he took part in our Bible Correspondence Course and it has changed his life.

"Thank you for writing to me and for your care. I started to see the world through new eyes, and I discovered so many things I had not known before. I am a different person now, more patient, sensitive and I have more love for others. My life has changed, my soul is shining, my heart is rejoicing and the Holy Spirit lives in me. May God always be with you!"

We want to thank everyone who has helped us reach people for Christ in Eastern Europe this year.



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