

Moldova Trip 2015



The Team

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Name: Rachel Patel

Place(s) Visited: Dancu, Moldova

Duration of Trip: 04/07/15 - 11/07/15

Time of Year: Summer

Average Temperature: 30 °C

Team: (from left) Barry Fawcett, Caroline Fawcett, Daniel Byland, Phil Lanyon, Charlotte Johnson, Rachel Patel, Esther Kenney, Sarah Kenney

Team Leader: Barry Fawcett

Team Guide and Host: Slavic Duman



DIARY

DAY 1:

We arrived in Dancu after a long drive from the airport and were greeted by our host for the week – Slavic Duman. Slavic is the Pastor of the village church and acts as the main link between the charity Breadline and the village, helping to direct funds towards places where they can be used most beneficially. Despite our late arrival, we were still given an extremely warm Moldovan welcome, which we were all extremely humbled by. We shared a small meal with Slavic and his family, as well as some of the other members of the community who we were going to be liaising with during the following week. This was a wonderful start to the trip, we were able to get to know the local people and establish a friendly relationship with them before we started working together at the holiday club.

DAY 2:

We had an early start in the morning which consisted of a quick breakfast with Slavic and then to a Church service which was led by some of the young people in the village. It was amazing to see how talented these young people were, they had an amazing choir and it was beautiful to hear them sing. After the service we were able to meet the young people, most of whom we would be working alongside at the holiday club. There was a team meeting held in the church hall that afternoon, during which we planned extensively what we would be doing with the children at the holiday club over the course of the week. Members of our team suggested that we could provide English lessons as part of the holiday club, a suggestion which went down well with the Moldovans. They also agreed that in return they would try to improve our (highly questionable) Romanian skills – which proved very helpful when it came to communicating with the children! We spent the rest of that afternoon at church, preparing and decorating for the launch of the holiday club, which was to be held in the church hall. When everything was prepared we decided to allocate group leaders for the week, for every group there was one Moldovan and one English leader. I relished the opportunity to work alongside young members of the community whom I had never met before, it was great chance to share skills and work together. In the evening I stayed up late with some of the members of the English team to finalise the lesson plans for the following morning's lesson.

DAY THREE: The Holiday Camp Begins!!



On Monday it was the start of the holiday camp, we rose early in order to get to the church before the children arrived. After a quick team meeting for the leaders, we began the day with morning exercises with the children. The children especially loved watching us leaders make a fool of ourselves as we did our exercises alongside them! After exercises we took the children to a room below the church, here we served them breakfast and supervised them whilst they ate. After breakfast was an hour of games outside, the children were separated into teams and competed against each other to win prizes. It was lovely to watch the children laughing and playing, but hard knowing that this was a rare occasion on which they had the time and freedom to do so. Some of the other activities on Monday consisted of a short comedy drama we put on for the children and a craft session in small groups. In the evening after the club had finished, our team went out into the village to experience the harsh realities of the living conditions in Dancu. One of the visits we made was to an elderly couple who lived in a two-room shack in the middle of the village. We were shocked to find out that the elderly man living there had been bed-ridden for a number of years due to poor health. With the money that had been raised before the trip, we were able to provide the couple with a food package and some money to put towards the cost of healthcare.

DAY FOUR:



One of the highlights of day four was the afternoon English lesson. In small groups, we taught the children some basic English vocabulary; the theme for Tuesday was 'numbers'. During the lessons the Moldovan volunteers, who were running the club alongside us, proved a great help! To reinforce the children's new-found knowledge, we adapted a song that had been previously sung at holiday club to incorporate the



English numbers 1-10. The children's ability to recall what they had learnt was very impressive!



After the holiday club had finished for the day, we stayed on to practice some songs that we would sing to the children the following day. Later on that day we went on some more visits, this time concentrating on the particularly vulnerable families in the village. We delivered food packages to a number of single-parent families, all of which had at least four children each. I really felt for the single mothers we saw, many of whom lived in one bedroom shacks and shared a bed with all of their children. It was heart-breaking trying to imagine the pain of having to watch your children go hungry because you could not afford to feed them. On this day particularly I felt so grateful for the funds we had raised for Breadline, a percentage of which enabled us to provide the children at the holiday club with two good meals a day.



DAY FIVE:

On day five of the holiday club, I was particularly moved by a girl named Andrea who came to the holiday camp. Andrea lost her sight when she was very young, but amazingly she can recognise people by feeling the markings on palm of their hand. I was blown away when Andrea recognised two members of the team who had previously visited Moldova, simply by touching their hands. Slavic told us how he is trying to raise funds through Breadline to allow Andrea and her Mother to seek treatment which could restore her sight. For me, this reinforced just how much of a difference the money that Breadline raises can make to people's lives.



DAY SIX:

On day six the holiday club ran as usual, we had an especially fun time with the children teaching them English with a parachute! We found it effective to teach English through games that the children could all take part in, they certainly seemed to enjoy it too! After the club we went our daily visits in the village. We visited an elderly man named Vasilli who was incredible source of inspiration for me. Vasilli is blind and survives only on the donations of food that Breadline provide him with, each day is a struggle as he lives alone with no one to care for him. In spite of his

hardships, when we visited Vasilli's home, he welcomed us warmly and was keen to talk to each of us individually about our lives and future plans. I was struck by the intelligence of this man, Slavic told us that Vasilli used to be a history professor until his lack of sight prevented him from carrying on. On the way back from our visit, we were told that if Vasilli had been living in the UK, he would have been able to get treatment that would have prevented his blindness altogether. It was a hard evening trying to process the harsh reality of life in Dancu, all of the team were deeply moved by the afternoon's visits.

DAY SEVEN:

Today was the last day of the holiday club, so we were up extra early preparing. We spent a long morning outside playing team games that would decide which team would be the winners for the week! I was very excited when my team 'Galben'



('yellow' in Romanian) won!! It was an emotional end to the holiday club as we had to say goodbye to all the wonderful children we had got to know. It was especially hard because we had visited the homes that these children had come from, so we were very aware of the poor living conditions they had to endure. However, it was reassuring to know that through Breadline we had helped give the children time to enjoy life as they should be able to. My lasting hope is that Breadline will be able to continue to support projects like the summer camp, so that more children can experience the vital enjoyment it provides.