



IMPACT

August 2024

Dear Friend,

Loneliness can be experienced at any level of society, in any culture, at any age. Loneliness amplifies need and physical hardship.

Our coworkers in Albania bring more than just physical helps and therapies to some of Albania's neediest; they also bring something invaluable – dignity. As the teams travel to remote and emptying mountain villages in the Pogradec region, they not only deliver aid and physical helps but also cultivate and strengthen relationships. Their presence is also a gift of encouragement to the villagers.

Our teams often hear things such as “we know through your visits we are not forgotten”.

Thank you for partnering with us to bring dignity and value into the lives of those who are facing hardships that most of us find difficult to imagine. Your support and encouragement enable us to continue and grow our work, ensuring that we remember, through our actions and presence, those who might otherwise feel forgotten.

In deep gratitude,


Michelle Marin
NG USA Executive Director



When the off-road vehicle can't get any further, villagers have to fall back on their trusty mules.

Life on The Edge of Civilization

Visits to the mountains of Albania

It's like traveling back in time: hours of driving, the roads get worse and worse and eventually stop completely. We continue off-road until shabby houses appear: the half-abandoned villages in the mountains around Pogradec. The young, able-bodied people have long since moved away, leaving behind the old, the “simple-minded” and people with disabilities. The more remote, the greater the hardship and loneliness.

NG's social work team brings relief supplies and food four times a year and looks after the these villagers. The parcels are very welcome, even if they seem not much more than a drop in the ocean.

Andrea and Gian Paul Ardüser, NG staff who often take part in the distribution campaigns, report: “The biggest factors are probably the appreciation shown and the regularity. People know that they are not completely forgotten. We meet up four times a year, get to know each other, there are more and more personal conversations, hugs ... and we are made aware of new emergencies in the neighborhood, which we naturally follow up on.”

“For example, when we missed an usually very lively and hard-working man at our meeting point. A tip-off led us to his house, where we found him ill and apparently close to death. Fortunately, holistic practitioner Eberhard Brachtel was with us and he immediately took care of him. On our next visit, the man came running towards us again, beaming. It was like a miracle!”

Andrea adds: "I am moved by the fate of the mothers. How do you cope with pregnancy and birth when the journey to the hospital starts with a long walk or mule ride and the subsequent taxi journey costs a small fortune (in proportion)? A pregnant woman told me that already one of her children was born on the way to hospital in the middle of a snowstorm. The girl now bears the beautiful name Bora (snow)."

But even for those who move to the cities, the need remains. In the city, they cannot grow their own food, have to pay rent and often cannot find a job, or only very poorly paid work. They therefore remain dependent on our help.

There is no end to the need. Nikoleta, Head of Social and Medical Improvement (SMI), puts heart and soul into her work. Her biggest problem is the limited resources: "I'm constantly thinking about how we can help even better. We make the most of every dollar we receive. People keep asking me why we are traveling to the most remote villages, it's tedious, takes a lot of time and causes a lot of wear and tear on the vehicles. All this just for a few families ... but if not us, then who?"



Diturie is happy about any help and especially to receive visitors to her tiny home in Alarup.

Our SMI team in Buçimas alone visits around 230 households four times a year. They distribute food, relief supplies, firewood and much more to alleviate the greatest need.

HIDDEN HEROES AT NG

Our co-workers in the social-medical teams (SMI), in Buçimas Nikoleta, Anjeza, Anila, Ekzona and Suela, put their hearts and souls into their work. The daily work with the needy and the children with disabilities demands much from them. Whether it's arduous journeys to the village, home visits to those in need of care or therapy sessions and camps for children with special needs - the tasks seem never-ending.

Nikoleta explains: "The SMI program puts our deepest human emotions to the test. You need a "strong stomach", constant daily motivation and joy in the things you do. It is not easy to see children and parents struggling daily with health problems, poor and complicated socio-economic conditions, broken relationships and significant challenges that are hard to explain even for us."

Every experience of success is an incentive and encouragement to keep going. This summer, such highlights were, for example, the summer camps, a complete success and milestone for many of the children with disabilities. Or the distribution of

children's bicycles to happy little patients. The next day, we received incredulous, shy phone calls: "Surely that's not true ... We can keep the bike, it's our daughter's? Forever? How wonderful" Reactions like that give our team encouragement and the necessary drive and joy to master future challenges - and those challenges are sure to come!



Anila gives donated bicycles and helmets to children with special needs.



Anjeza plays with the children at summer camp.

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