



equipping churches
to reach out to children
at risk and youth

Annual Report 2014



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The context

Moldova is still considered the poorest country of Europe and it struggles to make significant economic progress. Especially in the countryside there are very little job opportunities and poverty is rife. Many parents leave abroad looking for work to be able to care for their families, leaving their children behind with relatives. Others give up hope and seek consolation in alcohol.

Children and young people from families affected by migration, alcoholism and divorce/ separation are very vulnerable, often lacking basic essentials such as sufficient food, proper shelter, education and consistent, positive family relationships. These children are also vulnerable to traffickers who are looking for children to trade through the commercial sex industry and are likely to suffer neglect or abuse.

Many children are not achieving the necessary childhood developmental stages usually derived from the consistent loving care of a stable family life. They are often marginalised at school and at risk to drop out. They will have greater difficulty making healthy decisions for their life. When they reach adulthood many of these 'children at risk' will experience difficulties establishing strong families themselves and as a result their children are likely to be confronted with the same problems with the same lack of coping mechanisms.

Challenges in 2014

One of the main challenges in 2014 was a decision of Tomorrow clubs to cease implementing children's clubs through YFC Moldova. Developing these clubs was an important part of our strategy.

Another challenge was that Marielle Turculet, founder and leader of the Come&See project, decided to move back to the Netherlands with her family. She has done a wonderful job setting up the day centre and leaves behind a great team and successor.

Our vision and focus

In the context described above, YFC Moldova has continued to work towards its vision: To see God's glory coming across Moldova by mobilizing and equipping churches to be salt and light in their communities and rescue lost kids at risk and young people for Jesus Christ.

YFC sees the need in Moldova not just as a problem, but also as an enormous opportunity for churches to shine bright in their communities, reaching out to the young generation with the Gospel, providing love and hope and instilling Godly values. YFC seeks to come alongside the churches and offer support to strengthen the witness of the church in the community.

Highlights of the ministry

One important highlight was that we were able to secure donors to cover the expenses of the day centre ministry, not only for 2014, but also for 2015. This determined us to pursue the opening of more day centres in 2015, while investing in the others at the same time to help them become financially independent in time.

Great is that we were able to employ two more people in the church ministry department, which will give us more capacity and the possibility to grow our ministry, without reducing the quality of our involvement.

Changes of the Oak House project helped us to increase the number of beneficiaries from 9 to 13 in 2014. Also in 2014, YFC Moldova took on staff one of the girls graduating the Oak House!

The projects

Working towards our vision, YFC developed the following projects:

Projects implemented with local partner churches and NGOs:

- Children at Risk
- Club ministry
- Small grants programme
- Family fund

Projects implemented by YFC staff:

- Oak house
- Come & See

The Day Centre

In 2014 YFC Moldova worked in partnership with 25 local churches and local NGOs to run day centres for children at risk from their communities. These day centres are attended by children from difficult backgrounds. They often face extreme poverty, abuse, negligence and parental irresponsibility.

The day centres aim for the children to receive love, care and hope, have their lives restored through a relationship with Jesus, be reintegrated into their families and the community (including the church) and develop towards their God-given potential.

At the day centre the kids are served a meal and are invited to take part in a range of activities, like games, homework assistance, Bible lessons, singing, crafts, life-skills and others. The activities are all designed to contribute to the aims mentioned above. We're not just seeking to meet the immediate needs, but focus on the multi-lateral development of the child towards maturity.

The day centre meetings often take place in the church building, but in some cases at schools or other public properties.

The churches meet with around 20 to 30 children. Activities are mostly planned after school and the programme usually takes about three hours. The age from the children attending is from 6 to 14.

Pastor of Glinjeni and Mateuți church/day centre

We would like to thank all that support the work of YFC Moldova. Your generosity is a blessing for our ministry in the village. First of all, it is a blessing for the children in need. Coming to the daycentre they find a place where they are loved, valued, helped and fed. Secondly, it is a blessing for the church as it provides a means to share the Lord with these little ones – they are the church of tomorrow!

We are grateful for your sacrifice, we thank you that you pray for us, and as a church we thank you and send hugs from all the children helped by you. May you be blessed thousands of times!

YFC supports the day centres by organising training for the workers, by providing materials for the work, by offering advice and direction to the centre leaders and by supporting the centres financially. The financial support covers the main expenses for food. The church covers all other costs linked to the day centre activity, like electricity, heating, additional food, transport.

Training

In 2014 we organised two training events for the workers of the day centres. On both occasions the participants came together at the campsite near Călărași for three days. At the training in spring we had 38 participants. The main focus of the training was on the methodology of Social work, to make the workers more confident when dealing with the problems they are confronted with in the children's families.

The training in autumn was attended by 75 people. They were divided in three groups. One group received basic training for people starting a new day centre. Another group received training in spiritual counselling of the children, while the third group was trained in how to recruit and work with volunteers and how to disciple young people. Part of this third group were also leaders of the Rock Solid clubs.

Focus for 2014

- Preparing to increase the number of centres
- To increase the focus on improving school results
- To build the organisational capacity of the day centres
- To encourage day centres to seek collaboration with state institutions

Results

Partners

No. of day centres involved in partnership with YFC	26
No. of centres receiving financial support	21
No. of centres receiving support from Stand by me	4

Children and families

As we put a lot of effort and resources in supporting the day centres, it is very important for us to measure the impact they have on the children and their families. For this we have set up a comprehensive system to monitor the work of the day centres and to help the day centre leaders to keep focussed on the results. The table below shows a short summary of the most important results.

Elderly

20 day centres are involved in a programme for the elderly, providing them with food at least once a week. Children from the day centre are involved in delivering the food and do different chores for the elderly on voluntary basis. On one hand this is a great help for the elderly, who live many times in very difficult circumstances, with no one looking after them. At the same time this is great for the children not only to be served, but to serve others themselves.

1	Total no. of children reached through project (incl. summer camps)	1082
2	Number of children attending regularly at the end of 2014	621
3	No. children improving school results	197
4	No. of children developing age appropriate social skills and behaviour	198
5	No. of children involved in church/Sunday school	170
6	No. of occasions of families receiving help and advice	515
7	No. of elderly receiving food weekly	100

Indicators 3, 4 and 5 tell us about the intellectual (and social) development (school results), their spiritual development and their development towards maturity and responsibility. Indicator 6 gives us some idea how seriously the church/day centre gets involved extending their services also to the children's families.



Day centre workers

The day centre ministry is great tool to involve church members in ministry. It needs stable volunteers to cook and lead the children's programme (day centre workers). These workers are often helped by others that help out every now and then (volunteers). Among these volunteers are also many youngsters that went through the day centre programme themselves. Over the year at least 79 of these volunteers were mentored in their role by the day centre workers.

No. of day centre workers	108
No. of volunteers	79

Teams

Over the summer we were visited by 7 teams of foreigners. Five of them came through the organisation Livingstone, Netherlands. The teams went to 7 different locations with day centres. There they contributed to building and/or renovation activities and were involved in social outreach in the community or in the organisation of day camp activities for the children.

Rotterdam — Mateuți

In the summer the church in Mateuți was visited by a team from Rotterdam, Netherlands. The team served together with the locals to the needy from the community. They cleaned houses, repaired woodstoves, installed a toilet, washed feet and clothes of elderly people. They also organised a day-camp for about 120 the children from the village with lots of fun activities. Both children and elderly were touched by the love and attention of these unknown foreigners.

At the same time the team went back home deeply impressed by the people of the church of Mateuți, who continue to serve the needy, while facing a lot of hardship themselves.

Through this ministry YFC Moldova supports churches to run clubs to reach out to the young generation in the community. The goal of these clubs is to present teens with the Gospel and provide them with the opportunity to invite Jesus in their lives and become active in the local church.

YFC Moldova supports the clubs with materials, training, opportunities for exchange of experience and consultancy. For teenagers we use the Rock Solid materials developed by YFC International. These offer a very interactive programme with a lot of games, a presentation and discussion about a theme and leisure time to build relationships.

During the year our cooperation with Tomorrow clubs stopped and we decided to stop offering help to churches running clubs for younger children, referring them to the Tomorrow club ministry. We focus now solely on supporting Rock Solid clubs for teenagers and young people. During 2014, 17 clubs were running, reaching about 300 young people.



The small grants programme was designed to encourage and mobilise individual Christians and churches from all denominations to become more involved in the lives of the needy in their communities. This will make churches more visible in the community and a more powerful witness of the Gospel.

Criteria for selection of grant winning proposals:

- The social impact in the lives of the socially vulnerable, like children, elderly, sick and disabled people
- Originality and innovative character of the project
- Degree in which the church is mobilised in the implementation
- Possibility of the church or group of initiative to continue the project with own resources
- Financial contribution to the project from other sources.

Training

Before launching, representatives of the selected projects came together and received training in how to report and were helped to write an activity plan. In autumn, after implementing the projects, the people came together again to share experience of challenges and results and to discuss how to continue their projects without the support of YFC.

Counselling to cancer patients – Saint Parascheva Church, Chişinău

With support from the small grants project this church started a counselling ministry to cancer patients. The church is ideally located right opposite the oncological hospital. The church formed a multi-disciplinary team of a doctor, a priest and a cancer survivor and set up a room to receive the patients. Like this they were able to provide comfort and advice to a lot of beneficiaries with all kinds of needs: from spiritual counselling and social psychological support to medical advice regarding treatment, from advice how to raise funds for treatment (abroad or in Moldova) to advice regarding simple, but often pressing needs, like obtaining a prosthesis free of charge or finding a good wig for a decent price.

Like this the church has become a real place of comfort and hope for many needy, frightened, distressed and not well informed patients.

Results

- Over 600 churches were made aware of the needs in society and were encouraged to get involved
- 23 churches thought seriously about involvement in the community and wrote a project proposal.
- Proposals from 14 churches were selected to receive support.
- 54 volunteers from local churches were involved in the implementation of the projects.

The projects

The selected projects were very diverse and from churches from various denominations:

Project name	Partner	Locality	Description	Number of beneficiaries
Day camps in 2 localities	NGO "Speranta vietii"	s. Ion Voda, r-l Floresti s. Cioc Maidan, r. Gagauzia	Organization of day camps for children	200 children



Small grants programme

Give and you will be given	Baptist church, NGO "Ekklesia"	s. Palanca, r-l Stefan Voda	Seed potatoes for vulnerable families	10-15 families
Give joy to the children	Mayor's office	s. Rascaietii Noi, r-l Stefan Voda	Renovating the playground	All kids from kindergarten
Spiritual counselling for cancer patients	Ortodox church "Sf. Cuv. Parascheva"	Or. Chisinau	Furnishing the kitchen	
A hot lunch for the elderly	Baptist church Bucovati, Baptist Union	s. Bucovati, r-l Straseni	Offering a hot lunch for poor elderly people	10 elderly
Well cared for fields yield fruit	Baptist church Budăi	s. Budai, r-l Orhei	Providing new handles of shovels and hoes	Whole village
From soul to soul	Orthodox church Bahrinesti	s. Bahrinesti, r-l Floresti	Organizing an art club for children	20 children
Creating job opportunities for parents from at risk families	Baptist church Caplani	s. Caplani, r-l Stefan Voda	Materials to build a greenhouse for growing vegetables	15 families



Clean clothes smell well	Baptist church, NGO "EDIT"	s. Recea, r-l Straseni	Buying a washing machine for children at risk	43 children
Giving you will receive	NGO "Oastea Domnului"	Or. Chisinau	Distributing food parcels to and inviting elderly and families at risk to different event around Christmas.	10 elderly 15 families
A good deed from a good heart	NGO "Oastea Domnului"	s. Cobani, r-l Glodeni	Distributing food parcels to elderly and families at risk. Building a team of volunteers from the local church.	10 elderly 15 families
Clean in the heart, clean around	Baptist church, NGO "Dăruiește bucuria"	s. Baurci Moldoveni, r-l Cahul	Setting up a social laundry service.	
Jesus – friend of children	Baptist church "Speranța", Cahul	Or. Cahul	Organizing day activities for children at risk	20 children
Better conditions, better results	Baptist church, Corjova	s. Corjova	Improving sanitary condition at the day centre	30 children



The programme

The family fund was created to offer support to families at risk to solve acute and serious problems. Most of the requests for help come in through the day centres. The fund is a very effective tool to provide extra help for those children from the day centre (and their families) that run into trouble. Support can be offered for medical help, food and clothing, school expenses, etc.

Results

In 2014 seven requests for support were honoured. Families received help to pay for kindergarten, to obtain necessary documents for employment, for medical treatment and for food.

We would have had the possibility to help more families, but it has proved to be difficult to motivate our partner churches to hand in requests on behalf of the families they work with.

Pavel (8) and his 3 little brothers (5 yrs, 2 yrs and 4 months old) are growing up in a family with an alcoholic, irresponsible father and a loving, but unexperienced and underdeveloped mother. The family doesn't have a stable place to live and because of that Pavel dropped out of school. The father is aggressive and both children and the mother are often beaten. The family has virtually no income as the father doesn't work and the mother has to take care of the little children.

After combined intervention of the day centre staff and the village social worker the situation in the family has improved. The family received clothes and food and because of the support the mother became more responsible, keeping the house and clothes clean. Pavel was integrated back into school. He and his 5 years old brother enjoy coming to the day centre. With a contribution of the Family Fund two of Pavel's brothers are now attending kindergarten, which means that they are fed during the day and in a safe environment! Sometimes a small amount of money can make a huge difference in the life of a child!

The house

The objective of the Oak house is to create opportunities for teenage girls from at risk backgrounds to receive further education towards their maximum potential and to be prepared to be integrated in society and church.

The house offers accommodation, care and moral-spiritual education towards maturity.

The girls are from either very poor or problematic families, mostly from rural settings. Some come in through our day centre programme. When finishing school in the village, the girls have no possibility to continue their studies and no job opportunities in the neighbourhood. These girls might end up marrying early (and not always happily) or be tempted to seek work abroad with the risk to be exploited or end up in the sex industry.

Providing girls, with desire and potential, with the opportunity to continue their studies in a safe and nurturing environment, will enable them to grow their God-given potential.



The programme

The programme in the house concentrates on the following:

- Encouraging the girls to obtain great school results
- Developing a whole set of life-skills, touching themes as: relationships, family life, communication, problem solving and practical things, like cooking, cleaning and gardening.
- Spiritual input: Bible studies, discussion of certain themes, outings to church and youth groups, counselling, etc.
- Preparation for the girls to be able to find work and to become economically independent.

A change of approach

In 2014 we decided to change the way the Oak house operates. While before girls could stay at the house till they finished their studies, now they can stay for only one year. During this year we make sure that they learn everything they need to live independently. After this year the girls move out to a student's dorm or a rented room. They remain part of the project and continue to receive support, financial and consultative, from the oak house staff and are invited to a whole range of activities at the house.

In this way we create less dependency with the girls and help them to be better prepared to confront society. It also gives us opportunity to work with more girls at the same time.



The girls

In June, 8 girls left the house. Two of them finished their education and managed to get employment. One of them is working now as bookkeeper for YFC Moldova! Two of them left the project, but continued their education. The other four continue to be supported by the project, but live outside of the house.

In August, 8 new girls came to the house and were integrated at different schools and universities. We are now working with 13 girls in total, 9 of them live at the house.

From the 13 girls, 1 goes to high-school, 7 to professional school or college and 5 to university.



My name is Nastea. I grew up in difficult circumstances in a family with 4 children, in a small remote village in Moldova. In my village I attended a day centre run by local Christians with support of YFC. When I was 15 my mum heard about the Oak House project at a Christian conference and she was encouraged to send in an application on my behalf. I was blessed and by a miracle in September 2010 I became a member of the YFC family at Oak House. I spent there a very special and wonderful 4 years of my life. During this time I was able to observe God's goodness and mercy through the people that surrounded me there. I had the possibility to continue my studies and to shape my personality, to grow morally as well as spiritually. Now, with joy in my heart, I can say that I continue to be part of YFC – not as a beneficiary though, but as an employee! I'm enormously pleased to be part of such a team!

Nastea Porubin, day centre graduate, Oak House graduate and YFC bookkeeper.

Description

Come & See is a day centre for children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs in the town of Orhei. "Come & See" started in January 2011. 20 children and young people at the age of 3-20 years make use of the services that the day centre offers. Come & See seeks to ensure the children are well cared for, receive love and affirmation and are helped to develop towards their potential.

The parents of these children and young people are supported by the provision of information and training.

The children at the centre are split into three groups according to their level. These groups are led by educators. They involve the children in activities that draw on their creativity and improve their social skills, while providing them with education fit to their level. Children with a higher level are made familiar with Bible stories and are told about God's love for them. Our specialists are working individually with the children, providing physiotherapy, speech therapy, sensorial therapy and psychotherapy.



Come  See!

Results

Come&See was open for ten months, providing day care services for children with disabilities in Orhei.

- There were 20 regular beneficiaries in 2014
- The programme of the day centre consists of the educational activities, occupational therapy, speech therapy, psycho-educational therapy, physiotherapeutic treatment, spiritual counselling and life skills.
- An agreement was signed with the local primary school and as a result Come&See contributed to the integration of 7 children with disabilities at the regular primary school.
- Monthly outings to the centre of town were organised for the children to participate actively in society and for the society to get familiar to this kind of children. Also a presentation was organised in the Baptist church to make the church aware of Come&See and increase the acceptance of the children.
- In October 2014 a parent committee was established to represent the parents and involve them in the activities of the day centre. The committee contributed to the organisation of the Open Day.

Amanda

Amanda and her twin sister Mihaela grew up in an environment of neglect and abandonment. They are very much affected by this emotionally. At the age of 15 they were accepted in a foster family and Amanda started to attend Come&See.

Being adolescents and very sensitive, the girls often had conflicts with their foster parents and wanted to leave the family. The centre staff went to meet with the family, discussed with them and managed to improve the situation. The girls were also taken on a visit to the institution for mature people with disabilities, the only alternative for leaving their foster family. After this visit they changed their attitude and showed gratefulness to their foster parents.

YFC Moldova is governed by the Board of Trustees. This means that this group provides the overall direction for the organization and establishes the boundaries within which the staff will function.

The Board of Reference was as a legal requirement to review the activity of the Board of Trustees. By being on this board, members offer credibility to YFC Moldova. The members of both boards are volunteers.

The leadership team is responsible for the day to day management of the staff and the projects.

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