



Salutare Moldova

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTERS OF PROJECTS ABROAD MOLDOVA



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Condrița Monastery

Condrița Monastery is an orthodox monastery of monks from Moldova Republic. The monastery is situated in the Condrița village, which is located on the river Catargul 15 km from the Strășeni train station and 26 km from Chișinău city.

The monastery was first founded as a hermitage, in 1783 by the monk Joseph who came from Căpriana Monastery. In 1918 the Condrița monastery monks were separated from Căpriana monastery becoming an independent monastery. In 1895-1897 a church with the Assumption patron was built.

A legend says that in the forest from Condrița an outlaw named Condrea had his cache, from which it derives its current name. Nobody knows with certainty the date of the first monastic settlement.

In the yard of the monastery is an old stone, with the sign of the cross carved on it and an illegible inscription. The monks' opinion is that this stone shows the location of the old wooden church, from the XVII th century. The summer church has the following sizes: length of 34 meters and 16 meters wide.



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Project Update

Appleby Group College working in Moldavian orphanages

In March a group of volunteers from Appleby Group College, Canada, represented by 14 people will visit Moldova. During 2 weeks, they will work in the Orphanage School near Grenoble street, and the "Fantastic" Community Centre for children from Chişinău city. Appleby College Group collaborates with Projects Abroad for helping those who are in need; this will be the third year of a collaboration. The group leader will be Ms Alison Yelland, who will be helped by Mr Evan Fleming, the group assistant leader. The



programme of Appleby College Group consists of helping the orphans and poor children from Moldova. This year they have chosen to make repairs in the library of the Orphanage School, which has 140m². They will repair the furniture, book shelves and the chairs and continue with painting benches from the yard. If they have time they will paint the outside 3 benches from the "Motivația" Association for young people in wheelchairs, this organization is near the Orphanage School.

The Appleby College Group will also work in the "Fantastic" Community Centre for children. The walls of the center need restoration, so the volunteers will repair the walls of the washing room and the hall, children's room and multifunctional room. They will put ceramic tiles/terracotta on the walls of the washing room and in the hall; they will paint the walls and the pipes. The Canadian volunteers will organize some creative activities and games with the children.

The staff and children from the Orphanage School, and "Fantastic" Community Centre for children are looking forward to meeting the Canadian volunteers.

We hope this collaboration will be as successful and productive as in the past.



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Volunteer Update

By Mark VonGyer, United Kingdom

Moldova - the small country where big things happen.

My name is Mark VonGyer, a 2010 University of Leeds law graduate who has recently completed a three month business internship in Moldova. The area of business I concentrated on was marketing, the location Chişinău.

When I arrived in Moldova I was shocked by the condition of the roads and the appearance of the buildings. I knew Moldova was a poor country, but I didn't know what to expect, or perhaps I had never given it any thought. When I woke up the next day, I thought to myself, what am I doing here in Moldova?

Of course, I had not simply decided to go to Moldova on impulse. This was a long planned decision, which required three months of working at a coffee shop to pay for. So what was I doing there? Well, I was there to gain work experience in business and develop my skills in marketing along with the adventure of being in a different country surrounded by a different language. Now, after completion, I can say that I achieved this and much, much more.

Let me divide this review into two sections; one regarding the tasks I dealt with in my placement (business) and the other regarding the overall experience. So if business is not in your interest, please feel free to skip the business section.



Business:

As I was staying for three months, it was arranged for me to work half of my time at *Mesageria d&d*, which is an international press distributor and the other half at *Invictus*, a law firm. My role in *Mesageria d&d* was as a subscription manager. I negotiated prices with distributors, obtained new publications; ensured deliveries were made on time, created promotional materials, developed a client base, held sales meetings and dealt with disputes. The most interesting part of this placement was when I organised and held a sales meeting with the chief director of the Club Royal Hotel, one of the three 5 star hotels in Chişinău. It was the first time I had ever stepped foot inside a five star hotel and I was overwhelmed by its magnificence. I felt a little out of place, but dressed smartly in my suit with my briefcase and documents in one hand, I put on a smile and the appearance that this was where I belonged. The staff at *Mesageria d&d* were great to work with, and although sometimes I struggled to communicate with the boss with my French, my supervisor was fluent in English, French, Russian and Romanian, so help was always on hand.

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In *Invictus* my role was as a marketing director, developing new products, analysing methods to increase client satisfaction, enhance online marketing methods, translate some texts into English, create promotional materials and generally market *Invictus* to foreign clients. My greatest success at *Invictus* was to develop a new method of paying for legal services, by requiring client companies to pay upfront (for a year) and then receive services at a discounted price, as well as offering legal services on credit. I created all promotional materials, the specification, the contract, the fixed price list, an excel sheet to track client's funds and also an analysis of the product. Unfortunately this might not make much sense to you unless you are aware of the firm's position. All that I can say is that it was very interesting and helped develop the marketing skills I came to Moldova for.



The experience in general:

Well, I can safely say I have had many experiences in Moldova. Firstly, I met many new people, from all around the globe, many of these being volunteers. Most of the other volunteers were from America, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia and Sweden. I gave a speech on Britain to two universities, a television interview on 'Christmas in England' which was broadcast twice on national television and assisted a friend in some English lessons teaching students English as a second language. I visited many places, including; Saharna monastery, the zoo, where I got a photo holding a monkey with a hawk on my shoulder (not an everyday occurrence), the museums and art galleries. I also got to see the ballet Swan Lake, a night of opera along with traditional Moldavian music and a classical concert. I went to Kiev to meet the friends I made in America whilst working at a camp in New Jersey and went to see Toni Braxton in an audience of millionaires. How we got to this concert with such expensive tickets is a long story, in short, the tickets were a gift from one of the English pupils. As I was in Moldova for three months, I spent Christmas and New Year there. Of course, it was not as good as Christmas at home, however it was still interesting, cooking duck with other volunteers and celebrating both the Catholic Christmas and the Orthodox Christmas (7th January). Being in another country also allowed me to develop my foreign language skills, building on my German, French and of course Russian. I learnt a few words in Romanian too, however, as with everyone else going to Moldova you can choose either Romanian or Russian to learn as both are wide-spread in Chişinău.

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I wouldn't say I know enough Russian to hold a long conversation, however introductions, and basics such as directions, prices, and ordering drinks etc. are all easy tasks for me now. One great thing about Moldova is that going out to places is cheap. The taxi back home will cost you £1.50, a drink costs £1.00 and food is also slightly cheaper. The Opera hall costs you £1.50 and classical concerts can be free.

One downside is the corruption in the country. At one point in my stay I had to pay the police £3.00 for crossing the road on a red light, however they were asking for £12. If you keep your wits about you, you should be able to avoid paying anything at all (we made the mistake of speaking English near the police), and if you are stopped, you can reduce the payment by saying you don't have enough money on you (as I did).

Oh, and I almost forgot to mention. I met Geta Burlacu, a past Eurovision song contest singer for Moldova and also the British Ambassador. There are lots of people in Chişinău who want to get to know you, firstly, other foreigners and fellow countrymen, and also Moldavians who want to improve their foreign language skills. Many of the people I met in Moldova have had a positive influence on me.

So, the question you want to know the answer to; given the choice, would I go back and do it again? Yes, I most certainly would. If you are heading to Moldova, feel free to contact me with any questions you have! When you get to Moldova, try and locate the other volunteers as soon as you can!

Take care, till next time.



Mark, Igor and the host family.

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Events

14 February: Valentine's Day

On 14 February in Moldova we will celebrate Valentine's Day. The name "Valentine", derived from *valens* (worthy, strong, powerful), was popular in Late Antiquity. Today people in love will give each other gifts; most of them will give valentine hearts, cupids, candy, flowers and lacy hearts. Valentine's Day started in the time of the Roman Empire, in Rome when February 14th was a holiday to honour Juno, the Queen of the Roman Gods and Goddesses. The Romans also knew her as the Goddess of women and marriage.



1 March: Marțișor;

Moldovans have a beautiful ancient tradition on the first day of March: Marțișor (The Amulet), which is composed of red and white braid. Its name is a diminutive from the name of *Martie* - the Romanian word for March.

In Moldova this Amulet is a symbol of coming spring and joy. Exchanging them is a gesture of love, friendship, respect and appreciation. You can buy silky red-white threads (tied into a bow) and small plastic objects: flowers, horse shoes, leaves, bumblebees, animals, birds, tiny suns or stars, red hearts, and many others. People wear their amulets on the left side of their chests for the first nine days of March.



8 March: International Women's Day

On 8 March Moldovans celebrate International Women's Day or Mother's day. All women should receive flowers on this day, this simply an occasion for men and children to express their love for their wives and mothers.

In Moldova, this day is a national holiday.



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Volunteer Corner

By Samantha Patterson USA, Care Project

Moldova Warmed My Heart

I have always dreamed of travelling to different countries, living with host families and volunteering with children. I wanted a challenge, something that would push me out of my comfort zone, something that would challenge me physically, spiritually, and emotionally. My dream became a reality when I discovered Projects Abroad. For one month, I chose Moldova as my destination, and working with children at an orphanage as my project. When I stepped off the plane, I was never going to be the same person as I was going in.



The children of Casa Așchiuța were absolutely amazing! Even though they did not speak English, and I very little Moldovan, we were still able to communicate- the language of eyes, giggles and smiles overcomes any language barrier. Words can't describe what I felt being able to provide personal attention to each of the children. It's the hardest thing I have ever done in my life and the most wonderful. I feel I was able to make a small difference in the children's lives, and they in turn made a major difference in mine!

One of my favorite parts was the relationships I made with the community, the in-country staff, the care programme I worked at, and other volunteers. When you travel abroad and live with a host family, you get more immersed with the community where as when you travel as a tourist, you only get to see things from the outside. I couldn't have asked for a better host family, Nina, my host mother was my rock while I was in Moldova. She was so sweet, so optimistic and provided so much comfort in my time away from home I can't possibly thank her enough for her wonderful hospitality. The Projects Abroad team did an amazing job in answering all questions I had, they provided me with important and informative information, and showed me many fascinating attractions Chișinău has to offer. Thank you again Igor, Elena and Tatiana!



I've found what I miss most about Moldova is the simplicity of my lifestyle there. The simplicity made me feel in the moment. At first the quietness I experienced in my room at the end of the day annoyed me, as I've never really been able to experience such peacefulness. It only took a few days for me to appreciate and really enjoy these quiet times. I was able to realize that some of the things that I worry about at home aren't really worries.

Samantha and Nina (the host)

www.projects-abroad.net

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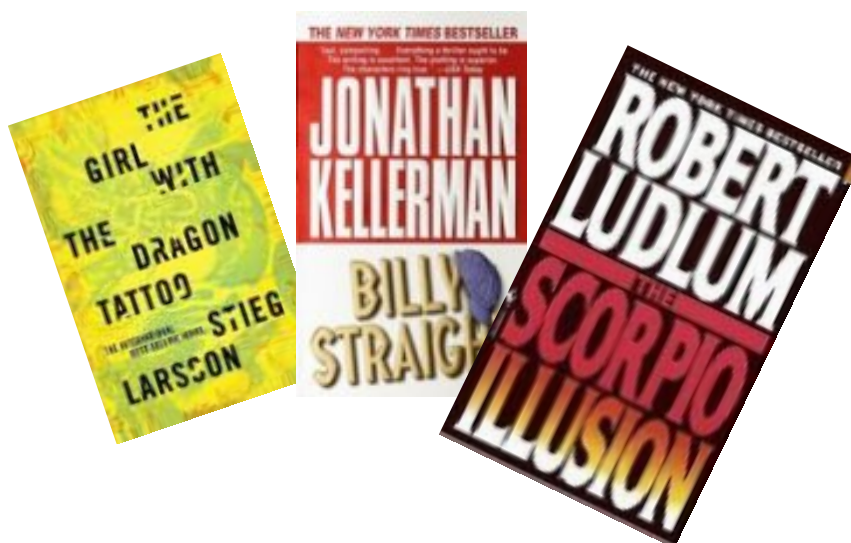
One of the most valuable experiences that I had while in Moldova, is I have discovered parts of me I didn't know were there: the part that can embrace strangers and enrich my life through knowing them, the part that seeks adventure, and the part that enjoys making independent decisions. You have the opportunity for this experience to be transformational but you have to have the right attitude. You can't change the world, but you can be changed. You have to go in with an open mind, to be open to every experience and embrace every challenge. This experience has deepened my life. I feel that volunteer work is very important and I also think that having a broad global view is critical, especially in today's society.

The time I spent in Moldova was one of the best experiences of my life. I want to keep travelling and volunteering. I want to stay connected with the people and the culture of Moldova and I hope to go back there in the future. I recommend this experience to anyone that is willing to go in with an open mind and be flexible. Why limit yourself to just your community? Be ready to give yourself, and know that by doing so, you will receive a lot in return. I feel everyone will take away something different from their experience, but I know that it will change everyone's life in a very positive way.

Donations

February Donation

Projects Abroad staff and volunteers gratefully thank Ms Margaret Bedolla, Care Volunteer, who has made a donation for our library which consists of interesting books and magazines. Margaret's generosity is very much appreciated.



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Photos page

Volunteers' Happy Moments

1. Mark and Igor



2. Mark - Business Project



3. Sören and Nina (the host mother)



4. Samantha at the Ethnography and Nature Museum (a Moldovan kitchen)

Miscellaneous page

Type of Moldovan clothes

Moldavian traditional clothes comprises many colourful designs and patterns. Various pieces of costume have become less used during the 20th century however traditional clothing is worn by performers for concerts and festivals. The basic garment for both men and women is a shirt or chemise, which is made from hemp, linen or woollen fabric which is tied round the waist using a fabric belt, narrow for women and wider for men.

Women always wear an apron over the chemise, this was initially a single piece of cloth wrapped round the lower part of the bodies and secured by a belt at the waist. The specific type of clothes for Moldova: picture 1. clothes from the North of Moldova (from left to right side), clothes from the centre of the country and traditional clothes from the South of Moldova.



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Men usually wear trousers (white or black) and a local shirt, and local shaped hat, although unfortunately the universal trilby is fast replacing these. Certain items of costume, specific to occupations are still worn, for example men working in the forestry industry wear the wide leather belts (*chimir*). Men's traditional fur hats (*caciulă*) are still worn in winter in rural areas, and women usually wear a printed woollen scarf, and often a traditional straw hat over this when working in the fields in the summer. Traditional winter garments were similar for men and women, they were made either from woollen cloth or animal skin, and were intended as protective garments against the weather.

The men also wore a *Cojoc*, this is a sleeved sheepskin coat and *pieptar* a sleeveless waistcoat. These are worn throughout Moldova by men and women, sheepskin is readily available and a smaller *pieptari* can be made of lambskin, and larger *cojoci* are made of fleecy sheepskin. Usually they are worn with fur on the inside and are decorated according to local fashions with handmade embroidery, appliquéd leather strips, tassels and buttons.

The oldest type of footwear is peasant sandals (*opinci*) worn with woollen or felt foot wraps (*obiele*) or woollen socks (*caltuni*). The first type of *opincă* is cut out of one rectangular piece of leather with front edges uniformly pleated. The other is cut out of a rectangle of leather with angled edges. The head of the rectangle is then folded in half and the two sides are sewn together to make the '*gurguiu*' or peak of the *opincă*. The sides of the rectangle are folded along the edge to enclose the heel and fit to the shape of the foot. *Opinci* worn in mountain regions usually had higher *gurguiu* while those worn in the plain were lower. *Opinci* were tied to the feet using one or more *nojită* (narrow strips of leather or strings made of goats or horsetail hair which is usually dyed black although white is used in Moldavia).



Chicken soup with peas

This is a very light chicken soup; I would say that it's a diet soup.

The ingredients are:

- chicken
- potatoes
- carrot
- onions
- frozen green peas (see picture)



The Method of preparing:

As usual boil the chicken, and when it is ready add in the water the potatoes. During this time fry the onions and the carrot, which should be chopped into small pieces and add to the soup. Take 150g of green peas and add to the soup and after 10 min add spices and it's done.

Bone Appetite!



Social Media



We invite all of you to join our Facebook Group: **Projects Abroad Moldova-The Official Group**

You will find here useful information, photos, and news about the projects, and information about Chi events. <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=71172725834> .

A monthly update with Projects Abroad Moldova Newsletters:

<http://www.projects-abroad.co.uk/volunteer-destinations/moldova/newsletters-from-moldova/>

and information about Projects Abroad Country Blog:

http://www.mytripblog.org/mod/blog/group_blogs.php?gl=true&group_guid=2943