

BREADLINE

Empowerment through Partnership

MOLDOVA SUPPORTING INFORMATION AND VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT



Contents

OUTLINE PROGRAMME (TBC nearer the time) **FLAG A**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON MOLDOVA.....**FLAG B**

SOME CULTURAL OBSERVATIONS.....**FLAG C**

THE LOCAL CHURCH.....**FLAG D**

BREADLINE’S PARTNER PROFILES.....**FLAG E**

FURTHER INFORMATION AND CODE OF CONDUCT.....**FLAG F**



Moldova – Background

If you get the chance to do some general reading on Moldova, you might find it helpful. For those without the time, here is a brief summary.

History and Politics

Moldova has a relatively complicated history, with its boundaries being repeatedly redefined in recent centuries. Historically, much of present-day Moldova was part of Romania, where there remains to this day a region called Moldavia. In 1940, the area that is today known as Moldova (but was then known as Bessarabia) was occupied by the Russian army and became part of the Soviet Union. Between 1940 and 1952, 600,000 Romanians were deported as the area was Sovietised, and many Russians moved into Moldova.

Moldova continued as a Soviet Republic until after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and gained its independence in August 1991. The easternmost part of Moldova, Transnistria, remained staunchly committed to both Russia and to communism, and tried to split from Moldova, resulting in a 4-month civil war in 1992. An uneasy ceasefire was brokered, and to this day tensions – and an unofficial border – remain, with Transnistrians dissatisfied with devolved power only.

As a result of its geography, and its recent history, Moldova finds itself torn between two paths or, for the optimist, it is strategically located between Russian/Slavic culture and European culture. In practical terms, this means that some Moldovans desire EU membership and closer ties with Romania and Western Europe, but that others (often ethnically Russian) want to continue Moldova's close relationship with Russia and other former Soviet states such as neighbouring Ukraine. In both 2001 and 2005, Moldovans elected a communist president. In April 2009 there was rioting in Chişinău following allegations of electoral fraud when the communists gained the most votes. No party had enough seats to elect a President, so the election was re-run in July 2009. Again, no party had a large enough majority to elect a President, though now the communists were outnumbered by a coalition of four liberal opposition parties. In 2012, after nearly three years of political deadlock, Moldova elected the veteran judge, Nicolae Timofti, as president. For the first time in 917 days the country had a leader and remains so today.

Economy

Officially, Moldova is Europe's poorest country. But there are really two sides to this story: like almost any capital city, Chişinău has a considerable degree of wealth and there has been a building boom there for some years. Living standards and incomes are much higher in Chişinău than elsewhere in the country, which therefore attracts aspiring workers from across the country and has led to rural depopulation. Roughly speaking, one-quarter of Moldova's 4 million inhabitants now live and/or work in Chişinău.

For people in the countryside, incomes are typically extremely low – and frequently they are below the international poverty line. Moldova's economy was hit hard when the country gained independence, and for people in rural villages their incomes and standard of living are no higher today (and sometimes lower) than they were 20 years ago. During that same period real incomes in Britain have doubled. To give just one illustration, a teacher in the countryside may earn just £70 or £80 per month. Average income per capita was £1,900 in 2015.

At the moment, about 1.4 million Moldovans are living in other European countries in search of work. Many of those are there illegally or "in the black," but there is a different attitude here to visa and work restrictions, which are widely regarded as unjust. 35% of Moldova's GDP comes from money sent back into the country by those working abroad – typical destinations are Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Italy and Germany. Today, Moldovans who can afford the application process (£600) are legally acquiring Romanian passports which provide work opportunities in the E.U.

Recent statistics reveal that Moldova is the least visited country in Europe. Only 94,000 foreigners visited the country in 2015. On a global scale only Bangladesh and Guinea are less popular destinations!

Language

Moldova's official language is Romanian, which is a Latin-based language with similarities to French, Spanish and especially Italian. It is sometimes called Moldovan, but in practice there is

very little difference between this and the language of Romania. During the Soviet regime, Moldovan was written using the Cyrillic alphabet but this practice ended in 1989. As a Soviet Republic, all children in Moldova were taught Russian, and in Chişinău this remains the language of politics and business. In the countryside, people's vocabulary is a blend of Russian and Romanian, and some people cannot read the Latin alphabet.

Social Problems

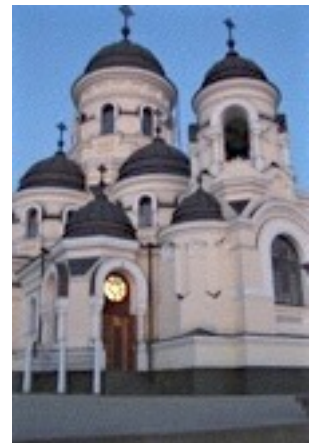
Like any country, Moldova has its share of social problems, and most of these have economic roots. Because of rural poverty and unemployment, many people have a deep-rooted sense of hopelessness or despair. This in turn leads to high rates of depression, suicide and, in particular, alcoholism (be aware that Baptist Christians in Moldova do not consume alcohol or smoke). Preaching a gospel of hope is obviously extremely relevant in this context.

In order to find employment, many Moldovan men go abroad (legally or illegally) – perhaps as many as one in three Moldovan men works abroad in a typical year. Consequently, although divorce is still relatively rare, it is not uncommon for children to be brought up by just one parent, or by grandparents, other family members or even neighbours. The churches we work with are especially aware of the social implications of absent parents. Other social problems in Moldova include people trafficking which remains a social evil to be confronted, especially in Chişinău; high levels of corruption

FACTS ABOUT MOLDOVA

- ✿ Europe's poorest country - GDP £1,395 (UK £31,208, Bulgaria - poorest EU country £5,163)
- ✿ Population 3.75 million - 1.4 million migrated in search of work
- ✿ Life expectancy 68 years
- ✿ State religion Orthodox - language Russian and Romanian
- ✿ Over 3,500 villages. 900 have no church at all
- ✿ 70-80% unemployment in rural areas
- ✿ 250,000 children have one or more parents abroad
- ✿ 5,000 children are in state orphanages
- ✿ 429,000 children are suffering from various pathologies
- ✿ 300,000 people have varying degrees of disability of which 44,000 are children
- ✿ 9,000 people are officially registered as blind
- ✿ Disabled people can be exploited by criminal gangs for the organ trade and begging rings
- ✿ An estimated 140,000 young women have been trafficked for the sex trade in recent years
- ✿ According to the W.H.O. with the exception of Belarus, Moldova has one of the highest alcohol consumptions on earth.
- ✿ Technically Moldova is landlocked, but through an agreement with Ukraine it has access to a 600m stretch of the River Danube, which flows into the Black Sea.

and bribery; and, sometimes, neglect of children even where both parents are present.



The village of Dancu in western Moldova - right Orthodox monastery in village of Capriani

Some Cultural Observations

Within quite a short space of time, you will gain your own understanding and insights into Moldovan culture. Below are some preliminary reflections of our own – but please make your own reflections and don't just take our word for it. Likewise, be aware of any generalisations, which may be true on some level but certainly not in all circumstances and with all people.

Religion

Most Moldovans (over 95%) are, nominally at least, Orthodox believers, although only a fraction of these regularly attend an Orthodox church. Protestant believers, such as Baptists, constitute less than 2% of the population. Whilst the situation varies from village to village, in general there are not good relations between Orthodox Christians and Baptist Christians. Orthodox believers may not differentiate between Baptists, Jehovah's Witness or Mormons (!), all of which may be considered cults or sects. In the countryside, people's beliefs can be very superstitious. Almost all forms of religious expression are more conservative than Brits may be accustomed to.

Age

In Moldova – as in many countries around the world – age is an important factor in social relations. Whilst in Britain, adults of different ages are generally treated equally, in Moldova there is something of an age-related hierarchy. What this means in practice is that older people are respected because of their accumulated wisdom and life experience; younger people use specific, polite forms of address when speaking to older people; family decisions are made by family heads; and older people may be accorded certain privileges because of their age. Likewise, older children (especially boys) will be expected to exert authority over younger ones.

Gender

Moldovan society is much more traditional when it comes to gender roles, with male and female spheres of activity (at home, at work and in the church) that don't often overlap. This is an area that may be difficult for some visitors but it is important to work within the cultural norms of the country one is serving. Examples include women being responsible for all aspects of housework and childcare; and segregation of men and women in most churches.

Other Factors

- You might notice that Moldovan children do not satisfy our British insistence on "please" and "thank you" – this isn't being rude, it just shows less reliance on formal expressions of gratitude.
- Moldovans may not speak very openly about their feelings and emotions (although this is less true of the younger generation). This does not mean that they don't want to be friends, just that it is normal for them to keep such things private.
- There is some general resistance to change and an inherent conservatism. There is also a certain nostalgia (amongst the old, at least) for the more stable era of Soviet rule. You should probably avoid talking about politics whilst here unless you know sufficient background.
- Family is much more important within Moldovan culture, compared to British culture. It is also a much broader concept, and in villages like Dancu, many families are connected through (sometimes quite distant) relationships.
- Children are raised partly by the whole society, and nearly everyone takes an interest in them. Many old people will give sweets to children and babies, even if they don't know them well.
- There is much less emphasis on time-keeping and being punctual. Be prepared for plans to change – if something comes up at short notice it may well 'trump' whatever had been planned.

Food & Hospitality

Moldovans love bread and soup based dishes. Also love mamaliga (right - stodgy maize flour dish). Food is delicious and seasonal. Not very spicy. Hospitality marvellous. Good to have a few chocs in reserve to take as gifts in case invited to village homes for a meal.



The Local Church

It is good to experience and participate in worship in a different culture. Whilst visiting Moldova you will have the opportunity to attend a service at a local Baptist Church so this section is intended to give you an idea of what to expect. Most services on Sunday morning are two hours long and include 2 or 3 sermons, singing from different groups within the church (children, teenagers, women), prayer and congregational worship. Adults who receive communion in their home church may also receive it in Moldova.

Some church culture tips

- Christians greet each other saying “pace” (meaning “peace” and pronounced *pah-chay*).
- The less jewellery and make-up you wear the better (and please remove any facial piercings).
- Please dress reasonably smartly (‘smart casual’). In Moldovan churches women always wear knee length skirts or dresses, modest tops and married women also wear a head covering (e.g. bandana or wide headband). For men, it wouldn’t be appropriate to wear shorts in church, even at the height of summer. Chinos or smart jeans with a smart T-shirt or a shirt would be fine.
- The church in Moldova is more conservative than most British churches. Please respect this fact and try to act sensibly and respectfully.
- Typically, women sit on one side of the church and men sit on the other, though young families or visitors may sit together on the men’s side.
- Male visitors from overseas may be invited to give a short greeting, Bible message or word of encouragement (up to 10 minutes long). Consider preparing one before you come.
- The Bible is respected as God’s Word, please don’t place it on the floor or be discourteous to it.
- Worship in Moldovan Baptist churches is dignified and somewhat restrained, so they are not used to clapping or dancing in services.
- Moldovans stand to pray, and stand when the Bible is being read at the start of a sermon.
- It’s OK for you to (sensitively) take photos in a Baptist church in Moldova.
- Please do try to join in the worship as much as possible and enjoy fellowship with our Moldovan brothers and sisters in Christ



Dancu Baptist Church

When Bunica (left) was a young women she would walk 15 miles to church on Sunday and when she passed through villages on route was often stoned and mocked for her faith. There are many inspirational testimonies in Moldova

BREADLINE

FLAG E

Empowerment through Partnership

BREADLINE'S PARTNERS in MOLDOVA



Malcoci

Pastor Igor Ganda & wife Veronica



Dancu

Pastor Slavic Duman & wife Ana and children



Poganesti

Pastor Victor Cirjin and wife Nina



Tintareni

(right) Pastor Illie Coad and Sam and Rodica Zwagerman



Straseni

Pastor Petru Chirica and wife Antonina



Chisinau

Lord's Army leader Ionel Samoila (left)
Elder Victor Zama (right)



Chisinau

Vitalie Mester (CCLPD Leader) & team - Tanya (left) & Marianne (right)



Chisinau
(left) Emanuel
Clinic

MOLDOVA PARTNER PROFILES

★ Chisinau (Population 750,000):

✿ **Church: Lord's Army** (60 members). Partner since 1997. Evangelical with orthodox origins. Leaders Ionel Samoila and Victor Zama. Ministries: family welfare, youth summer camps and evening clubs, reach-out to students, day respite children at risk.

✿ **Christian Centre for Legal Assistance for People with Disabilities (CCLPD)**. Founded in 2006. Partner since 2006. Staffed by a team of Christians from the Lord's Army. Leader Lawyer Vitalie Mester. He is visually impaired. Mission includes the provision of free legal assistance and advice each year for several hundred disabled people and their carers. In 2010 CCLPD played a central role in persuading the Moldovan government to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

✿ **Emanuel Clinic (EC)**. Our partner since 2011. Founded in 1992 by 15 Christian doctors from a variety of denominational backgrounds with a vision to provide the poor and needy with reliable and corruption free medical treatment. Provides 18,000 consultations a year. The UK Charity Medical Missionary News and Breadline are working together to help EC to develop its Mobile Clinic which provides free treatment for over 1,000 people a year who live in remote, impoverished rural communities.

★ **Straseni** (Population 7,000): Charity Mission Moldova. Partner since 2008. Leaders Pastor Petru and Antonina Chirica. Ministries: Day Centre for 50 mothers and their disabled children. Free physio and speech therapy. Advice and counselling for carers. Welfare support for families and the elderly ie. food and clothes.

★ **Tintareni** (Population 2,500): Bethania Christian Relief Association. Partner since 2000. Leader Pastor IILie Coad. Ministries: Orphan family placement project which finds homes for 300-400 children annually. After school centre for 60 children at risk. Provides free lunch, special learning needs support and children's library. Also day centre for 30 elderly people plus meals on wheels. 'Shelter House' project for orphan young women at risk from trafficking - House parents Sam and Rodica Zwagerman.

★ **Dancu** (Population 1850): Baptist Church (75 members). Partner since 2001. Leader Pastor Slavic Duman Ministries: Many evangelical activities, 4 church plants, prison outreach, support for orphanages, meals on wheels and luncheon club for elderly, youth and children's clubs, summer camps. Church also supports Tabita Agricultural Association which includes: income generation projects for community and church ie, dairy, community barn, cheese making, mechanisation (combine harvester and tractor), the latter used to help poor farmers become self sufficient. Pastor, Dumitru Cravenco runs Tabita. He is also a member of a Mobile Training Team which supports 33 churches these churches in the Hincesti Region.

★ **Poganesti** (Population 1500) Baptist Church (30 members). Partner since 2007. Leader Victor Cirjin. Ministries: children, youth, evangelism, summer camps.

★ **Malcoci** (Population 1700) Baptist Church 40 members. Partner since 2000. Leader Pastor Igor Ganda. Ministries have included day respite centre for children with special needs.

GUIDANCE NOTES / CODE OF CONDUCT

TRANSLATION - When speaking through a translator please keep sentences short and don't over-complicate your language with British idioms.

GIFTS - Tea bags. After Eights. Smarties for kids. Peanut butter (Slavic's favourite!). Hand/body creams. Talc. Kids love Snickers! If you wish feel you wish to give a monetary gift to someone please do so through local leaders.

ACCOMMODATION - We normally give £20 per day for our stay, and any other ministry gifts you wish to give.

CURRENCY - Can change sterling at local banks. ATM in Straseni and near Dancu. If you bring sterling make sure all notes are as new as possible and unblemished.

WARM CLOTHING - Can be bitterly cold. Use layer principle. Houses can be very warm! Shoes off on entering homes. Dancu might be very muddy. Especially sticky! Vibram soles are not the best because mud is very difficult to remove from them. Some find slip on shoes easiest to use. Definitely bring warm hats!

TORCH - Wind up torch very useful. If you bring one and leave for someone here, especially the elderly. Great gift.

ENCOURAGEMENT - In Christ the best gift of the lot. Our brothers and sisters in Moldova and those we meet need our love and encouragement.

SANITARY - All places you are staying have indoor loos - thank God! But there are few sewerage facilities in Moldova so most work on cess pit principle, so be careful what you put down the loo. Normally there is a receptacle beside the loo for paper etc. Don't worry if you can't see or find this. Do as you would back home. Don't drink water from taps! Bottled drinking water will be provided. OK to wash teeth in tap water. Very rare we experience tummy problems in Moldova. Our partners have high standards of hygiene. For washing hands useful to have a small bottle of antibacterial hand gel. Shops available for any basics you need to buy.

PHOTOS - No problems, but do ask before taking photos in home situations. If you want to use photos for specific purposes, get verbal permission first.

MEDICAL - We thank God that we have a Christian Clinic as a partner in Moldova, so if there was a problem we have lots of help on hand.

MOSQUITOES - Mossy's are out in June, July and August especially in the evenings, so please do take repellent and cover up when necessary.

VACCINATIONS - The NHS website (www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk) suggests immunisation against hepatitis A, diphtheria and tetanus. Anyone staying long-term should also consider immunising against tuberculosis, hepatitis B, rabies and tick-borne encephalitis. The decision to be vaccinated or not and the checking of latest NHS recommendations rests with the individual visitor.

Be aware when visiting people's homes that many people have dogs that are kept in the yard. These are not pets, and the advice is not to touch and to keep away as rabies is found in Moldova.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN / VULNERABLE ADULTS - Enhanced DBS checks are required for all volunteers from sending churches if they are specifically working with this client group.

A standard DBS check will also be required from consultants or visitors who are being hosted in homes in Moldova where there are children or vulnerable adults.

Moldova does not have the same safeguarding laws in place for children and vulnerable adults as we have in the UK. If you were to see any safeguarding issues that concern you whilst over there, please report it to your leader who will report it to your host leader, or report directly to your host leader. They will know the best way to take the concern forward.

As would be expected in the UK, try to avoid any situation where you might be left on your own with a child or vulnerable adult. Ask politely for someone else to be with you, or move yourself and the child/vulnerable adult to a more public place if you realise you are on your own.

PROMISES - If you feel you wish to help a beneficiary, partner or individual in some way please think and pray carefully before you make any commitments. Rather than identifying needs your selves spend time in asking questions which facilitate people to see needs for themselves. Listen to the voice from the heart behind the words of the mouth.

CONTINENTAL ADAPTORS - Don't forget!

TRAVEL INSURANCE - We recommend that you are covered with single trip travel insurance. When flying, you should have baggage labels on each item, as well as putting contact details *inside* your luggage. Luggage is sometimes delayed on its way to Chişinău – especially if you have a connecting flight – but is seldom actually lost! Keep your valuables in your hand luggage on the plane.

COMPUTERS - Good wireless connection in Dancu and Straseni.

SOCIAL MEDIA - Facebook (and other forms of social media) is currently seen as the way young people can be contacted easily and quickly throughout the world. However, this type of media can pose particular problems for staff and volunteers in Moldova using their own personal profile page, as personal information can be unwittingly shared. This method can compromise the boundaries between the personal life of staff and volunteers and those of young people, and any use of it must be carefully thought out. The Breadline policy is that staff and volunteers must not use their own Facebook page to become a personal friend of any young person supported by Breadline below the minimum age of 16 years of age, and a friend request should only be accepted if a personal relationship exists. On rare occasions in the past, approaches for money have been made through social media, which could prove embarrassing or awkward for all parties. Therefore, as with all kinds of social media, it is prudent to be aware of your privacy settings.

Volunteers are personally responsible for what they post on social media. Remember that what you post might be available to be read by a wider audience. Consent must be obtained prior to posting images or text. Further guidance is available from Breadline.

CONTACT NUMBERS - relevant contact numbers will be provided prior to your visit.

PLEASE SIGN AND DATE THE FORM BELOW AND RETURN EITHER TO YOUR GROUP LEADER OR DIRECT TO BREADLINE.

.....

I have read and understood the above guidance notes and code of conduct. I accept it is my responsibility to comply with them.

Signature:

Print name:

Date: