

Memorandum for: International Mission Committee

From: Moldova Group, Europe-Eurasia Team

Subject: November 2016 Mission Trip

Date: January 2017

The team of David Wallace, Phyllis Wolfe, Mary Lou Lyon, and Howard Frost traveled to Moldova from October 31 to November 7, 2016. The main purposes of the trip were to consult with UDG faculty and students about the Master of Social Work program and developments at UDG and to talk with leaders of the Moldova Baptist Union (MBU) about developments with the Marriage Ministry.

### **Basic program development**

Much of the first two days was spent in discussions with Mihai Malancea and other faculty members involved with the social work program. The main topics were course development and implementation, faculty and student perceptions of the program to date, accreditation, program budget, and the use of outside faculty. The visiting team also discussed how the school attracted students to the program, how the program was preparing students for their career, and how the program could be sustainable at the school after the Shaw Grant support concluded.

Additionally, the group covered the support of doctoral students who would eventually teach at the program, the portion of the program that was related to orphan care, and the nature of the orphanage problem in Moldova. In recent years, the group learned, Moldova has increasingly faced challenges caring for a growing population of children who are identified as social orphans - children and teens who do not receive adequate care from their families or are abandoned. Mihai and other faculty members whom the NPC team met there indicated that approximately 250,000 children in Moldova are considered social orphans. The complexity of addressing the needs of this orphan population was clearly one of the benefits of the advanced social work expertise the UDG program provides.

Mihai provided the visitors a summary of the program development thus far. This information is included as Appendix 1. Faculty and students are listed in Appendix 2. The NPC group agreed that much of the information Mihai and his colleagues offered about the program's development would be included in a report for the second-year evaluation of the program by the Shaw Grant review committee at National Presbyterian.

Another topic the group discussed with Mihai was accreditation. The school and the team have as a key objective of the program obtaining accreditation before the first class graduates. UDG has initiated activities seeking accreditation for the MSW program through the Euro-Asian Accreditation Association (EAAA). The school is also in the process of meeting requirements for university accreditation by the Moldovan Ministry of Education. University leaders are finding it sometimes challenging to help the Moldovan government how their school as a religious higher education institution operates.

### **Discussions with students**

The visiting team was interested in surveying the students for their views about the program, so an important period was spent talking with students about how the program addressed their professional needs and how it fit into the work they were engaged with currently or would be engaged with in the future. These responses are in Appendix 3.

The Moldovan hosts provided the team a tour of the nearly completed Intercultural Center for Research and Promotion of Christian Values. This is the new building of classrooms and offices that would include a center for research on Islam and the cultures from which UDG's Central Asian students came. The new building also houses the school's library, which has room not only for the existing 25,000 volumes but also for as many as 120,000. The building was built with donations from the Association of Baptists in World Evangelism (<http://www.abwe.org/>), Keys Ministries ([www.keyscolleges.com](http://www.keyscolleges.com)), Friends in Action (<http://www.fiintl.org/>), Native Missions ([www.mnnonline.org](http://www.mnnonline.org)), Christliche Ost Mission in Switzerland (<http://www.ostmission.ch/de/home.html>), Barnabas Fund (<https://barnabasfund.org/>), and Charles Zigger).

The team talked with Mihai and Vadim Bulgac, a key social work faculty member, about the PhD studies the Shaw Grant supports. We learned that UDG professors with master's degrees are currently teaching in the university's undergraduate program in social work, but for purposes of graduate school leadership and accreditation, the university needs full-time professors with social work doctorates. The Shaw Grant funds also help support the doctoral studies of two UDG faculty members --Vadim Bulgac and Yuriy Malancea, who are currently assisting course professors in teaching MSW graduate classes. Mr. Bulgac also coordinates the practicum activities of the program in his role as Dean of the Social Work Department.

### **Involving visiting faculty**

During the last day of the trip, the team together with Mihai Malancea had Skype conferences with Patricia Runcan, a sociology and counseling professor at West University in Timisoara, Romania and co-developer of the curriculum, and with Ruslan Nadyuk, professor of Social Work Psychology at the Russian Orthodox University in Moscow. With Patricia the group discussed course development and how the MSW program could best benefit and be geared to the professional interests of students seeking careers in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The group also talked with Patricia about possible academic conferences that could be pursued near the end of the academic program for the first graduating class. The idea is that scholars in the field of social work and students completing research theses at UDG might share research papers at an International Conference held at UDG's new conference center. Patricia and the group also discussed the role of visiting professors and how the program could benefit from the input of professors who were not part of the program's faculty.

This topic was also the principal one the group discussed with Ruslan. Ruslan had been involved in the leadership of the social work and counseling faculty of the Russia-American Christian University before he moved to the Russian Orthodox University. Ruslan had interesting insights to offer on social orphans, family counseling, and treatment for substance abuse. The group told Ruslan it would be pleased to consider how best to make use of the expertise of Ruslan and other faculty like him in the UDG program.

### **Meetings with MBU and Marriage Ministry leadership**

Another important portion of the team's time was spent in consultation with the leadership of the Moldova Baptist Union and of the Marriage Ministry. The group discussed development of the program in the past couple of years and how these activities would be a base for further development. The group talked about funding, how the Marriage Program fit into the MBU's Family Ministry, what sorts of additional activities were part of the Family Ministry and how these were developed. The group also talked about the promotion of the Marriage Course in both Russian- and Romanian-speaking parts of

the country and how this could be pursued by the team of regional leaders the program's main leaders were developing.

During the early days of the Moldova visit, David and Phyllis traveled with Slavic to Ribnitsa, Transdnester to attend a TMC course session there. The team was encouraged to hear David's and Phyllis' report of the progress the regional leaders had made in that area of Moldova.

On Friday, November 4, the team met with leadership couples of the nine regions into which the MBU has divided Moldova. Slavic and Ala explained that they had recently completed identifying couple for the nine regions, but that the couple responsible for Chisinau had decided to emigrate, and the couple responsible for the Cahul area had determined their other commitments would preclude further service. Slavic and Ala indicated they would continue searching to identify the additional two couples.

The couples at the meeting enthusiastically discussed their plans for Family Ministry activities, which included The Marriage Course. They discussed a large evangelization project scheduled for the weekend of 25 November, which would include a Saturday morning program focusing on the parents and a Saturday afternoon program focusing more on children. There would be Sunday programs focusing on couples, which would provide also time for men's and women's groups separately. The couple said they would like to do four of these events each year, as usually these events would lead to 70%-80% of the attendees' going to a church the following Sunday. Having a good speaker for the event, the couples noted, was always important. The group noted that TMC was usually publicized extensively at these conferences. The couples noted that they were praying for leaders for TMC courses in their regions, noting that Jesus regularly prayed for disciples.

Some couples commented about changes in graphics in the guest manual that they thought would be useful in making the guest manuals more culturally appealing, both to Romanian- and Russia-speaking attendees. Several leadership couples said they lacked small tables for TMC presentations, as well as projectors. The couples also noted that essentially all their work was volunteer effort and that although the cost to hold the regional conferences they would like to put on were low (\$7-\$8 per person), there was little funding the MBU could provide to hold such events.

On Saturday, November 5, the group visited a family conference at a Gagauz church in Čeadir Lunga, near Cahul (the Gagauz are an ethnic Turkic people from Russia). Conference presentations consisted of talks about faithfulness, forgiveness, and various family topics, and there were games where couples competed on Bible trivia to win prizes. About 80-100 people attended, including young people. The attendees then adjourned for a mid-afternoon dinner put on by the church.

### **Follow-up activities**

The team appreciated Mihai's, Vadim's, and Patricia's input on the directions of the MSW program and planned to use this information as part of report on the Shaw Grant prior to the next disbursement of funds to UDG for the program. The team also discussed providing a fuller program study for the Grant to include both student and faculty evaluations of the program. The team also noted they would talk with NPC members about their participation as visiting faculty and about the conference ideas Patricia and Mihai presented for 2019.

During the Transdnester trip, David and Phyllis commented on a woman there who wanted to learn more about a certain element of marriage relations. Slavic explained to them how with his resources, he'd be able to address the need. This conversation led later to a broader discussion about follow-up. Slavic said that nearly every church had Bible study opportunities for those who wanted them. One main reason for this is that he and the Family Ministry regional leaders continue to make extensive use of "Walk Through the Bible" (WTTB) courses and materials.

For TMC participants who want to learn more about marriage, Slavic said there are resources he, Valeriu, Mihai, and others have available to answer particular questions or to help start small groups on marriage if people ask for these. Slavic noted that one of the tasks of the regional leaders is to encourage such activities. Often, he said, larger churches have departments and teams for family ministry studies and activities. For small churches, the regional leaders try to organize small group activities or courses involving several churches. The regional leaders for the family ministry are all volunteers, so they are very much in the business of encouraging and organizing family ministry-related activities--they do this as a labor of love.

Slavic noted the awareness among regional leader that TMC has an evangelistic component, and the regional leaders actively seek non-believers to attend. For example, to go to family camps organized by the Family Ministry, a rule is that if a family wants to go, it needs to bring at least one unchurched family with it.

When asked how he and Ala had time to pursue this follow-up study question, Slavic said that doing this was his calling--that he felt like he was really in his element with family ministry, doing what he wanted to do the most. In the area of follow-up activities, Slavic and Ala seemed to be doing pretty much all they can. The materials Slavic buys from a WTTB distributor in Kiyev, then resells to event participants. Neither Slavic nor the regional Family Ministry leaders are paid by the MBU for their time, and there is basically no budget for special events. The team said it would consider how it may be able to help with these needs.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Tucker-Frost



MBU guest house where team members stayed



NPC team and UDG faculty discuss MSW program.



Team discusses MSW program with Mihai.



MSW students talk with the NPC team.



MSW students respond to team questions.



MSW students pose with the team.



NPC Team in the new library



Auditorium in the new Intercultural Center



David and Phyllis stand outside the new building.



NPC Team meets with MBU officials to plan marriage ministry activities.



NPC Team meets with regional Marriage Program leaders.



David speaks with Aliona at MBU office.



Marriage Ministry session in Ribnitsa, Transdnester



A couple attending the Ribnitsa session



Marina and Valeriu Ghiletchi (at left) and NPC team at dinner



Attending church with Slavic's family



Golgotha Church at Čeadir Lunga



Family Ministry symposium at Golgotha Church



Lunch after Family Ministry program at Čeadir Lunga



Slavic and Ala Verenciuć and sons

## **Appendix 1: Curriculum Developed by Team Planning the UDG Masters in Social Work**

### **MASTER IN SOCIAL WORK AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY (AS-PCF))**

#### **NAME OF THE MASTER PROGRAM**

**Master in Social Work and Protection of Children and Family,**

#### **ACRONYM**

**AS-PCF**

#### **TO WHOM THIS MASTER PROGRAM IS ADDRESSED**

To the specialists and professionals in the social domain of the Republic of Moldova, as well to those from abroad, who work and interact with the human factor in difficulty. To this master program everyone having a bachelor degree in social and human sciences can apply (social workers, pedagogues, psychologists, professional parental assistants, pastors, counselors, lawyers, police workers, managers, directors, etc).

#### **PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM**

Professional formation and development, as well personal, of the specialists and professionalisms in the social and human sciences, so that they would become more equipped and prepared both emotionally and academically, in the work with the person in difficulty (child, teenager, parent, geriatric), having the main purpose to efficiently and significantly help the person in need, so that the person would overcome the state of crisis and vulnerability and to better integrate/reintegrate in the professional and personal domain. Also, we intend to help and challenge the specialists and professionals in the social-human domain, to make their profession a vocation, by referring to it as to a ministry, as to the Lord, making an impact not only for this life but for eternity!

#### **WHO IS ORGANIZING THIS MASTER PROGRAM:**

Divitia Gratiae University from Chisinau (Republic of Moldova) through the Social Work Faculty, together with specialists from the Timisoara West University and the University from Bucharest (Romania).

#### **MASTER PROGRAM – RESPONSIBLE Faculty:**

Dr. Habil. Patricia RUNCAN, Timisoara West University & Divitia Gratiae University from Chişinău, Social Work Faculty

Drd. Vadim BULGAC, Divitia Gratiae University from Chişinău, Dean of the Social Work Faculty

#### **TUITION TERM AND ADMISSION:**

The AS-PCF master program tuition period will be of 2 years, having 4 university semesters. The courses will be taught in a modular system, by professors and associates. The program includes 16 specialized

courses and the semester practicum, each having 3 credits. The student participating in the program, at the end of the program must have 48 theoretical credits and 12 practical credits, which in total will make up 60 credits.

**COURSES TO BE STUDIED IN THIS MASTER PROGRAM & THE PROFESSORS TEACHING THESE COURSES:**

Semester I:

1. ***Introduction in the Social Work system, child and family protection in Republic of Moldova***  
Dr. Habil. Patricia RUNCAN
2. ***Efficient Communication***  
Dr. Remus RUNCAN
3. ***Worldviews***  
Dr. Mihail MALANCEA
4. ***Social Skills***  
*Dr. Alexandru VLAȘIN*  
  
*M.A.,M.hist. Vadim BULGAC*
5. ***Practicum in the social field***  
*M.A.,M.hist. Vadim BULGAC*

Semester II:

6. ***Social Work Counseling***  
Dr. Habil. Patricia RUNCAN
7. ***Childhood and Adolescence. Risks and opportunities***  
Dr. Remus RUNCAN
8. ***Intervention and Prevention measures in suicide and depression***  
Dr. Emanuel-Adrian SÂRBU
9. ***Christian Ethics***  
**Dr. Univ. Otniel BUNACIU**
10. ***Practicum in the social field***  
*M.A.,M.hist. Vadim BULGAC*

Semester III:

11. ***Parenting. Developing parenting skills***  
Dr. Habil. Patricia RUNCAN
12. ***Qualitative research in social Work. Analysis and presentation of data.***  
Dr. Remus RUNCAN
13. ***Quantitative research in Social Work. Analysis and presentation of data.***  
Dr. Emanuel-Adrian SÂRBU

14. **The Missional impact of the Church in Social Work**

Dr. Dumitru SEVASTIAN

15. ***Practicum in the social field***

*M.A.,M.hist. Vadim BULGAC*

16. ***Master Thesis / Dissertation***

Semester IV:

17. ***Case management and professional supervision***

Dr. Habil. Patricia RUNCAN.

18. ***Solving Conflicts and relationship skill formation***

Dr. Remus RUNCAN.

19. ***Social Reconciliation***

Dr. Corneliu CONSTANTINEANU

20. ***Leadership***

M.A. Serghei NAMESNIC

21. ***Practicum in the social field***

*M.A.,M.hist. Vadim BULGAC*

22. ***Master Thesis / Dissertation***

**Items needed for applying:**

- A copy of high school graduation Diploma
- The bachelor's degree diploma
- Medical certificate, 086 form
- 2 passport-type photographs

**Costs**

- Tuition fee – 200 USD per year
- UDG does not cover the accommodation and food fees, each student must pay separately for these benefits

**CONTACT:**

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## Appendix 2: Faculty and Students

Professors teaching the courses are from UDG and universities in Romania. Professors engaged in the initial two-year program implementation (2016-2018) are listed below:

### MSW Faculty

Dr. Runcan, Program Development  
Dr. Otniel Bunachu  
Dr. Corneliu Constantineanu  
Dr. Mihai Malancea, UDG President  
Dr. Remus Runcan  
Dr. Emanuel-Adrian Sarbu  
Dr. Dumitru Sevastian  
Dr. Alexandru Partricia Vlasin

### MSW Students (2016-2018)

1. Babalau, Stefan
2. Besarab, Julia
3. Caragia, Ludmila
4. Druzca, Oxana
5. Florea, Natalia
6. Granici, Galina
7. Gromada, Nicoleta
8. Jomiru, Cristina
9. Malancea, Mariana
10. Marian, Cristina
11. Melaenti, Tatiana
12. Neghiua, Diana
13. Nicu, Vera
14. Tapkova, Marina
15. Toma, Doina
16. Vinokurova, Irina
17. Yilihovski, Dusica

### Appendix 3: Student Comments About MSW Program

In November 2016, the students met with NPC and UDG representatives to discuss the program. The following are the main questions and a sample of student responses to them

#### **Question: How would you describe the needs in Moldovan society that require social workers with graduate degrees?**

“Many families in Moldova are destroyed. There is a great need to help children.

“Migration to other countries is great because of the poor economy in Moldova. Families are destroyed. Children have no parents. The mother goes to Europe to work and father goes to Russia. Children are left on their own.”

“When husbands go to work in other countries, wives and children are left alone. Women suffer great depression, especially in the small rural villages. Women do not know where to go to get help.”

“Poverty is a condition; we have had 30 years of poverty. People’s health is poor. There are few healthy families. Young girls get pregnant and don’t know where to get medical help.”

“Human trafficking is a great problem. Young girls are not informed, even girls in churches with families are sometimes taken into trafficking.”

“Another problem is children are not use to talking to parents, many children do not have good relationships in homes.”

“Women and children don’t have good education, especially in villages; they need more teachers in villages.”

#### **Question: How do you think this program will help you address the needs?**

“I just finished a course that helped me see problems from my childhood. As I reflect on them, the program helps me to be spiritually healthy and mentally healthy so I can work with others.”

“I was too much criticizing others. This program helps me look at things in a different way.”

“We need to be aware of laws about orphan care. The first course in the program helped me understand the laws. We studied each of the legal domains in a specific way.”

“This program will help us opening counseling centers giving us a better relationship with the government. It (the government) will accept us as professional social workers.”

“We are learning about the best methods and procedures in profession to work with children who are social orphans. The last exam was (more) difficult than I was used to.”

“This program helps us work in efficient ways with people in need.”

“God has called us for a special purpose and we have to be very good to do it in a professional way.”

“We learn about ways to implement activities to help others.”

**Question: How are qualities of this program from a Christian perspective different than other perspectives?**

“The program here at UDG has a different worldview than secular universities. God is creator of all things. We are part of His world. We act according to God’s will.”

“Here we combine secular knowledge with Biblical knowledge.”

“In public schools students do not have good development. There is a need to distinguish public psychologists from Christian psychologists.”

“It is easy to get personally involved in problems. In this program we develop a Christian perspective and let God help us so we don’t get personally involved. We can give the burden to God.”

“We can be disciples and minister as Jesus did, share the Gospel with people we help, put focus on spiritual care.”

“I observed a few non-Christian social workers. They take it up to a point. No focus on spiritual needs. The advantage this program provides in giving us Christian training in social work is very clear to me, and I appreciate it very much.”

“We are to be what God wants us to be.”

“There is no perfect family. Mine was not. Through these courses God helps me to be healed and it helps me in my work with teenagers.”

**Question: How can we pray for you?**

Pray for God to give us wisdom.

Pray for help to be an example; the program helps us to be examples serving others.

Pray for those families that are vulnerable.

Pray for the government to see the social problems, the problems are so great.

Pray for strength because social work is very consuming.

Pray for us to work and serve when it is difficult.