



# MOLDOVA 2025 Feasibility Study

**Conducted by:**  
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# Purpose of the Study

New Harbor Community Church sent a small team to Moldova; one of the three, potential long term mission destinations, in order to conduct a feasibility study. The Vision Team included Pastor Kelly Patchin, Aric Lucas, & Isabel Patchin.

The Vision Team was tasked with interacting with and observing the people and ministries of Moldova in order to gain a realistic understanding of their physical, cultural, and spiritual environment. This information will help our church decide if we are equipped to engage in charitable works or missionary activity within Moldova, and to what degree. Please use this study to pray over whether New Harbor Community Church should dedicate up to a decade to have a lasting impact in Moldova. You will be asked to respond after earnest prayer, and seeking the Spirits leading with either a green, yellow, or red response, green representing the Spirits leading the church to go, yellow meaning you have no opinion either way, or red meaning we should not go. After collecting all of your responses we will let you know the decision. Please realize there may be conflicting outcomes that may not be what you answered, but feel assured God is in it.

The details of this report are presented further below.



## About The Republic of Moldova



The following conclusions are drawn from the Vision Team’s conversations with our hosts, residents, local protestant church members & pastors, and some conversations with Priests of the Orthodox Church. We have also included some publicly available information. For detailed factual information about Moldova, a reliable resource is the CIA World Factbook at <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/moldova/>, upon which this report also relies.

## Brief Recent History & Description of Moldova

Prior to the dramatic escalation of the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022, Moldova was the poorest country in Europe, having the lowest Per-Capita GDP of every European nation. That title has now been given to Ukraine. Moldova is not a member of the EU, however the population of Moldova has had a close affiliation with Romania. The majority of Moldova’s population can trace their familial heritage to modern day Romania which is an EU member. Additionally, Romania will, & routinely does issue Romanian Passports to Moldovan citizens that can demonstrate their familial connection to modern Romania.

Moldova was the smallest of the former Soviet Republics and was de-facto granted independence from the Soviet Union by the collapse of the latter on August 27, 1991. The country adopted their constitution when their current parliamentary republic system of government became effective, on August 27, 1995.

Moldova is approximately the size of the US State of Maryland, & smaller than San Bernardino County, CA. It has a population of approximately 3.6 million as of late 2024 and is estimated to include approximately 400,000 Ukrainian refugees beginning in 2022. Hundreds of thousands more Ukrainian refugees passed through the country. Only those with the most financial need, and a large portion of the wealthiest as well, have remained in Moldova. The poor from necessity & the wealthy by convenience.



The official language of Moldova is Romanian. It is a romance language more directly related to Latin than modern Italian, French, or Spanish, but with an accent that sounds similar to other Slavic languages like Russian or Ukrainian. While the official language is Romanian, much of the populace is bi or tri-lingual. The

second most common language is Russian, & the third varying from English, Ukrainian, or a Turkish dialect depending on which part of the country the person originated from.

## Physical Realities & Challenges in Moldova

The official unemployment rate is >6%. However, this only includes those individuals who are actively seeking employment. The real unemployment rate (of all working age individuals that do not regularly earn a paid wage) is approximately 75%, with those unemployed individuals primarily residing in rural areas & effectively living as subsistence farmers in small villages of >5,000. Many rely on foreign remittances from family working abroad.

While the country has a developed road network, the majority of the population does not have a motorized means of transport. Public transit is limited to a commuter bus type system, bringing the rural population to/from the three cities and other regional urban areas daily for work or to engage government agencies for various types of business. This may include document updates, medical care, & educational opportunities.

The population is reported as being over 90% Eastern Orthodox Christians, plus approximately 2.6% other Christian denominations (primarily protestant ones). The remainder are either unspecified (6.9%), with the remaining being Agnostic (0.1%), Atheist (0.2%), or Other (0.1%). Based on our interactions & observations, the vast majority of the country does not regularly engage in worship services or other active spiritual pursuits as they are simply struggling to meet their physical/worldly needs.

**Here are some examples of the protestant churches in the village communities:**



A Baptist church & the village Pastor (Pavel) in Leuseni - District of Telenesti. Of traditional construction.





Newly built church in Balatina village. Of modern framing construction, built via materials delivered from the West Coast of the US as a charitable donation.

## Moldova's Demographics

Of the approximately 3.6 million residents, 53% of the population is female. Overall, the population of the country is declining because of a low birth rate & high rates of working age residents traveling abroad for work. They are primarily travelling within the European Union, which is facilitated by the ready availability of Romanian passports to Moldovan citizens. Low birthrate, plus export of the workforce, is a negative feedback loop that the government is actively working to reverse with social programs & economic incentives. These ongoing issues have led to a high percentage of Moldova's children living as "social orphans", roughly 60%. A "social orphan" is a child who lives with neither of their parents, but rather extended family or other members of the community. This leads to their biological parents playing a far less active role in their lives. The crisis of "social orphans" in Moldova is a direct result of sustainable and profitable work not being available. Therefore, parents are forced to leave in order to provide for their family. Unfortunately, a non-trivial number & percentage of young women & girls are also being entrapped by/sold into the international sex trade. The median age of the entire populace (39.9 years old) is one year older than the US (38.9), but much of their capable & competent working age population is effectively exported internationally.





A meeting with a village pastor (Alex and his wife Doina) in the back yard of his home, where the village church also meets. Village of Fedoreuca – District of Telenesti



Home based church sanctuary, the pastor, his wife, & their children. (Alex, Doina and their three girls; Sara, Emmanuala, and Miriam)





Two village pastors (**Vadim-left & Elijah-right**), their wives, & the Vison Team enjoying family lunch near Balatina village

The interior of a home-based church in Bujor village



Entryway with charitable goods & literature Sanctuary with the Pastor (young man in stripes) & his father (seated)



The entire nation is electrified, mobile phone & internet service are widely available, and they are generally accepted to be of higher quality service than we are used to here in the US. There are several additional challenges the people of Moldova face.

Access to safe drinking water is limited. Many homes rely on unfiltered well water, often being drawn by hand, which non-native missionaries cannot safely consume without boiling or otherwise sanitizing.

Lack of mechanization in the agricultural enterprises. Much of the population are functionally subsistence farmers, lacking any mechanization to improve the efficiency of their small & local farms. This, plus a lack of supplemental irrigation available to the poorest, limits their ability to produce surplus crops for the commercial market. As an example, our primary guide & translator indicated that several years ago there was an especially rainy summer growing season which caused an 8%, one-time increase in national GDP due to the crop surplus of every producer, both independent & corporate.

An abandoned village home that has been purchased to convert into a community church facility (Cuhnesti)



Rural Pastor (Pavel) & his Walking Tractor.



Community well near Balatina





Representative road conditions (including local traffic) between villages in much of Rural Moldova



A representative rural setting in Moldova, specifically the village of Bujor





A residence in Bujor where the family receives material support in the form of food & clothes from the local protestant church



Backyard



Front yard/property entry

## Vision Team's Daily Activity

While the detail of the Vision Team's activity is included in appendix A below, this report here is a general description of the days of the vision trip.

- Meet to discuss outstanding questions for the feasibility study at 8:00am.
- Depart with guide/translator (Pavel C.) & the Regional Coordinator for whichever area we were traveling to. Our guide and regional coordinators are a part of the organization that was hosting us, Operation Mobilization (OM).
- Visit 1-2 villages via a 45 minute to 3-hour drive.
- We would then visit the village protestant church and pastor, often at their home. They shared their testimony with the team & freely answered our questions about their church planting experience, challenges, and what it looks like to serve their communities.

These daily trips & visits would occupy the day from 8:00am – 8:00pm. The regions & villages are described in detail in appendix A, but varied from the moderate north of the country to the moderate south, plus the far western border region. The two regions that were not visited were the extreme south, which is primarily Turkish dialect, & Transnistria, which is the independent Russian affiliated breakaway region in the far east.



# Final Recommendation

The feasibility team's final recommendation was agreed upon to be just favorable, or "GREEN light", but only falling within 1 point of Green. The average score was 32 with the following analysis in mind:

Scoring ranges:

32-50 – Green Light – This is considered a favorable location.

25-31 – Yellow Light – Proceed with Caution – Risks would need to be mitigated.

10-24 – Red Light – This location is **not recommended** at this time.

With this in mind, and based on our teams assessment, the following points would need further prayer and consideration for a successful work within the region.

- The brittle nature of the organization of the leadership and need for development.
- The future relations of those countries around them may change.
- A very transient population.
- The ease of obtaining work is low, but not impossible.
- They are at a turning point. Can we as a church help be a catalyst for healthy change for them?

This said, we experienced an indigenous movement of believers that want to turn the switch on the church in Moldova and become an established sending church. Overall, the Vision Team sees many challenges in working in Moldova in a Missionary or Charitable enterprise capacity. However, these challenges are not considered insurmountable by any of the individual team members. Additionally, many of the challenges can also be seen as areas of great opportunity, not only for members that may serve & contribute, but also for Moldovan nationals & the ways they could benefit. As a developing nation (that is not a part of the EU), they are still in need of systems, sabbaticals (from the work they did with 1.4 million refugees), training, and practical help such as equipment, food development, children's needs, and medical development.

These are the things we are asking you to pray for.

**After prayer and seeking the Spirits leading, with either a green, yellow, or red response; green** representing the Spirit leading the church to go, **yellow** meaning you have no opinion either way, or **red** meaning we should not go. **Please respond with your decision on the church website, [newharborchurch.com](http://newharborchurch.com). After collecting all of your responses, we will let you know the decision.**

If you have further questions, please feel free to discuss them with any of the team members.

**After prayer and seeking God's direction, please respond on the website.**

## Appendix A:

# Daily Activity Report: Compiled by Isabel Patchin

## Day 1

### Morning Meeting with OM leaders (listed below)

Mobilization + Equipping + Vibrant Communities (Church Planting)

### OM mission statement

**“Our goal is to see vibrant communities of Jesus followers established in the least reached places”**

### Eugen

Director of OM Moldova team

### Vlad

Leads “Mobilization” efforts of OM team

- 4th generation evangelist
- “Love Moldova” mobilizes foreigners (2 weeks) - they come as teams in the summer to share the gospel, physical service, and build love for the communities (rafting, trekking, biking, etc...)
- Mobilize local believers to reach the world
- A focus on sending out local Moldovans to aid and share the gospel with the countries around them

### Igor

Leads “Vibrant Communities” (church planting) efforts

- Day Centers = after school programs that provide food, activities and the gospel (11 center - 220 kids)
- Freedom Network (women/youth girl ministry) - 3 day camp, 1 week camp in the summer, past attendance of 100-200 kids, expanded to boys and girls.  
Focus on teaching the youth about their identity in Christ, their value, and what it means to be a woman/man of God. Preventative and sometimes interventionary for young girls to keep them out of the slave trade.
- Elderly Centers - 12 centers, 120 elderly served, food ministry, sharing the gospel

### Pavel

Our guide and translator for the Vision trip

- His wife, Becky, leads the “Equipping” ministries
- Local ministry teams - coming alongside church planters
- Lopusna - South African couple who is planting a church
- Sometimes serves as a translator

### Slava



## What We Learned: extra notes from the meeting

- 4% population increase from refugees who remained
- Average income = \$270 a month
- Pension = \$2000 (\$100-\$120 monthly)
- **Unemployment** = 80% nationally - 85% in the villages
- OM works with 80+ church planters and 100+ church plants
- OM goal is to see a Christian/Evangelical (might not be proper phrasing) church in each village
- What would you have Parliament change?
- Corruption, businessmen becoming politicians seeking profit
- Support the evangelical churches and teaching
- Care for people
- Orthodoxy = 95% of church presence
- Orthodox priests receive financial support from government
- 70% of Moldova has no Evangelical presence
- Moldova = 1.12% Evangelical
- REACH/"Challenge to Mission"(Equipping) - like YWAM, 3-5 month training program that includes biblical training and local outreach
- 40%-50% conservative evangelical - closed to orthodoxy
- 1/3 of kids are considered "social orphans" = do not live with either parent because they are working/moved for work
- Goal: trying to help communities be sustainable and meeting immediate needs. These are some of the sustainable resources they have supplied to local families and pastors.
  - Goats
  - Chickens
  - Beehives
  - Cows
  - Greenhouses

## Region Coordinators: 5

Region Coordinators oversee the districts in their region, making visits out to various pastors at least once a week. They work on building relationships and looking for ways to support the local pastors/ministries.

- **Slavic** - Northern Region
- **Slava** - Southern Region (42-ish villages)
- **Costel** - Central North (15 villages)
- **Pasha (Pavel)** - Southeast (45+ villages - new position started in January)
- **Missing information on #5**

## **Bujor Village - District of Hincesti**

### **Pastor Sergiu**

### **Guides: Pavel & Slava (S RC)**

#### **History:**

Sergiu grew up in and lives in the village of Bujor. He used to be a police officer with the dog squad. He struggled with alcoholism and was subsequently fired. He went to Romania to find work and became connected with the Protestant church there and came to Christ. Someone there told him that “all the doors are closed to you here. You need to go home”. Sergiu continued to try and stay in Romania, but eventually returned to Bujor. He works on the roads, maintaining them and spreading salt in the winter. He opened a church in his father’s house and his father helps him with ministry. Sergiu has been a pastor for 2.5 years now.

#### **Prayers/Needs:**

- Open hearts in his community
- To find a new job that will afford him more time to focus on being a pastor
- Food parcels for the elderly
- A new building for the church that can include a cantina
- Building for sale nearby for 100,000 euros

**Bujor Population:** 4,000

**Church Population:** 7 members, 3 people due to be baptized soon, 30 regular attendee’s

#### **Ministries:**

- Food parcels for the elderly
- Church on Sundays
- Has worked with “Missions without Borders”

#### **Finances:**

Sergiu makes \$450 a month. He has a mortgage so the monthly income he needs is larger than most.



## Day 2

### Villages of Balatina and Cuhnesti - District of Glodeni

#### Vadim and Elijah

#### Guides: Pavel and Slavic (N RC)

#### History:

- Vadim is the Pastor of “House of Prayer” (Pentecostal) in Balatina
- They purchased a house 3 years ago for 2,500 euros in Cuhnesti
- Vadim is helping Elijah fix up the Cuhnesti church. Once it is completed, Elijah will be the pastor of the Cuhnesti church
- Currently, Vadim chauffeurs’ people from Cuhnesti to the Balatina church on Sundays
- A Pentecostal Church in Washington sent all the supplies for “House of Prayer” in crates

#### Challenge:

People in Cuhnesti are not open to hosting small groups or church meetings in their homes. The prioritization of appearance is hindering spiritual growth. There seems to be a greater uncomfotability with showing hospitality to their own communities than to strangers.

#### Prayers/Needs:

- Prayer for the communities of Balatina and Cuhnesti, that they would be seeking God and coming to know him
- Many people living in their sin and without hope
- Prayer for someone to open their home for a small group in Cuhnesti
- Money to fix up church in Cuhnesti

#### Extra Notes From The Day:

- Youth For Christ - active in Moldova, works with youth and helps them go to university
- Missions Without Borders - active in Moldova, primary ministries with poor, kids, and food
- Directors of all active missions groups in Moldova meet once a month
- OM Goal = to follow church planting process from start to finish
- Start church from scratch, self led, self sustaining, sending out
- OM seems to be the primarily involved in church planting
- One of the evangelical churches in a northern village has had their church burned 3 times by the local Orthodox church

# Day 3

## Villages of Leuseni and Fedoreuca - District of Telenesti Pavel and Alex Guides: Pavel and Costel/Constantine (Central N RC)

### History: Pavel & Maria - Leuseni

Evangelical Baptist church was built and established in 2006 with the help of a Baptist church in Cummings, Georgia. Previous pastor left because he divorced his wife and moved to the UK with his mistress. The church previously had a congregation of 100+. After the scandal, 100 members left/moved. Pavel (26/27 years old) is now the pastor of this church. There is also a new priest in town at the Orthodox church, similar in age to Pavel. They have a good relationship and speak regularly with each other.

Pavel is married to Maria and has 3 kids, 2 girls and 1 boy. Him and Maria met through Bible school. He has been the pastor in Leuseni for 7 years. Working on transitioning ministry to focus on the youth. Did a kids/youth camp last year and would like to do another one this summer. Pavel is employed part-time with a pastor in Radus to help him with his church and ministries 3 days a week. In addition, Pavel works side jobs doing manual labor for those in his community.

### Prayers/Needs:

- Finances for the church - moisture in the ground is disrupting the foundation
- Finances for renovating home
- Prayer that adults will open their hearts and commit their lives to Christ
- Pavel needs a team and partners to come alongside him in ministry. He has a desire to be support and work with someone, not necessarily to be the primary leader/pastor.
- Strengthen Pavel in courage and joy as he does ministry
- Protect Maria's heart in the tough seasons of ministry and give her perseverance

### Challenges:

Adults are open to hearing about Jesus but don't want to commit their lives.

### Ministries:

- Kids program on Saturdays and Sundays - food, games, Bible study
- Kids camp in the summer
- 2024 camp = 70 kids, 3 days, \$1000

### Population:

- 2000 people in Leuseni
- Church population of 5

## History: Alex & Doina - Fedoreuca

Alex and Doina met in Bible school and they have 3 girls, Sara, Emmanuela, and Miriam. They are a young family similar in age to Pavel and Maria. Moved to Fedoreuca 8 years ago and started a church in their home. Because Alex is not ordained, there are certain things he can't do within the Baptist union, such as perform baptisms or lead communion. For these things, they travel to their home church a couple of villages over. They have story after story of how God has provided for their physical and spiritual needs. They have built strong bonds with their neighbors and community.

### Prayers/Needs:

- Prayer for continued growth in their ministry
- Prayer for Alex as he seeks spiritual education in questionable areas
- Prayer that God would bring Alex a solid mentor that can invest in him

### Ministries:

- Saturday morning kids ministry
- Saturday afternoon youth ministry
- Wednesday small group
- Had a women's event on March 23rd
- Sunday church service in home
- Thursday women's small group
- Maria leads small group for youth girls
- Last event had 35 young girls from across the district attend
- Did a camp last year

### Extra Notes From The Day:

- Costel (guide for the day) - Region Coordinator for the Central North
- Leads worship ministry
- Literature ministry - Bibles
- 15 villages in his region
- Hosts a parenting class/small group every 2 weeks, 8 couples, video, discussion, journals



## Day 4

### Village of Cainari (Pervomaisc + Constantina) - District of Causeni

Michael + Alexander & 1 more

Guides: Pavel and Pasha (SE RC)

#### Pasha

Region Coordinator of the South East (45 churches, way more than 45 villages) - new position started in January, still getting to know the communities

#### History:

Michael has been the pastor in Cainari for 10 years. He was sent out by their mother church and originally started by meeting in their home. It took a long time for the community to open their hearts to their ministry. Michael used to stand out on the road on Sundays inviting people to come in. Growth remained stagnant until one winter, when Michael decided to buy an axe and chop and collect firewood for the community. He started giving firewood for free to whoever needed it and this became a turning point for relational growth with their community.

Their church building was built with the financial and physical support of many, both local and internationally. It was a miraculous process. In addition to ministry in Cainari, Michael also invests in three smaller villages that surround Cainari. He has been praying for 3 ministry partners who could invest in those 3 villages. So far, he has 2 ministry partners who are joining him and will be focusing on the villages of Pervomaisc and Constantina. Alexander and his family are in the process of moving to Cainari and will be focusing on ministry in Pervomaisc.

Relationship with the local priest has been tense. "He is a man that works but does not serve" (Michael). He views them as competition and as "taking his bread away". Michael has had a conversation with the priest and felt like he (Michael) was rebuking him (priest). Michael treats him with kindness and respect and desires to have relationship with him. The priest seems very skeptical of him and his ministry. When they have events, the priest will come and watch, kind of stare down people. It creates a lot of fear and uncomfotability for those who attend.

#### Prayers/Needs:

- People are coming and being touched by the Lord and ministry, but they are not committing to a relationship with Christ
- People have a fear of what their relatives, community, and orthodox church will think
- Those who accept Christ are fearful and resistant to getting baptized
- Pastor Michael and his leaders are committed to praying at 5:00am every morning for these needs
- Would like to have consistent ministry happening every week in Constantina, a home to host a Bible study or somewhere to meet

**Challenges:**

The fear of commitment, baptism, and appearance

**Ministries:**

- Women's small group
- Church service on Sundays
- Children's ministry on Sundays
- Various local outreach events
- House visits to the elderly in the community
- Meeting physical needs of the community - firewood, food, etc.

## Day 5

### Village of Marculesti - District of Floresti Marin and Marika Guides: Pavel and Colea (Nikolai)

#### History:

Marculesti used to have 99.9% Jewish population. During WW2, Romania invaded and killed nearly all of them (I think some fled). There is a Jewish cemetery in town and a memorial as well. Marin and Marika's church is called "Adonai Church" in honor of the Jewish history of the village.

Marin was married previously and had a child. They got divorced and he came to Christ later in life at 37. He met Marika in the Baptist church when she was 25 and they got married a year later. There was a lot of push back from their church and those around them. They have 3 kids now, 2 boys and 1 girl. Because the Baptist union does not allow those who are divorced to be pastor's, Marin does not call himself a pastor. His goal is to find someone to be an official pastor for this town, and then possibly do ministry in another area. However, they are open to being wherever God has them and are dedicated to following His will above all else. It was 10 years until their mother church sent them out, and they have been in Marculesti for 4+ years now.

In addition to Marculesti, Marin and Marika do ministry in 4 of the surrounding villages: Bahrinesti, Prajila, Lunga, and Gura Cainarului. Marculesti is in a strategic location that allows them to reach a broader audience. The town is also looking at developing an airport which would bring more people into the area. Adonai Church is the only evangelical church within any of these 5 villages. Marculesti was very open and welcoming to their ministries. Now that they have been established in Marculesti and the community has seen the positive impact of their work, they are being requested to come to the nearby communities and put on similar outreach events.

They have 10+ people in their leadership team, but are looking for those who can be more dedicated.

#### Big Vision:

To reach more young people. They would like to be the center of ministry for the district and have their church be a "living place" that is open 7 days a week, not just Sundays.

#### Prayers/Needs:

- To have a dedicated leadership team
- Financial needs
- For the adults and parents in their communities.



### **Challenges:**

Most of their challenges came from within the church. They faced a lot of backlash over their relationship, Marin's past, and their calling to be ministry leaders. While it did take time to build relationship in their communities, they were never openly antagonistic.

### **Ministries:**

- Kids ministry on Saturdays
- Day camps
- Winter camp
- Summer camp
- Family Activities = every 3-4 months
- Holiday outreaches
- School visits for Easter and Christmas
- Social Projects = OM collaboration, food parcels, clothes, firewood, etc.
- June 1st = Kids Day

### **Finances:**

Their Baptist mother church that sent them out is currently helping to financially support them more. Marin still works, but as he chooses to spend more time in ministry, he misses out on work opportunities. He primarily does construction, working job to job.