



St Nicholas World Development Group PROJECT UPDATE

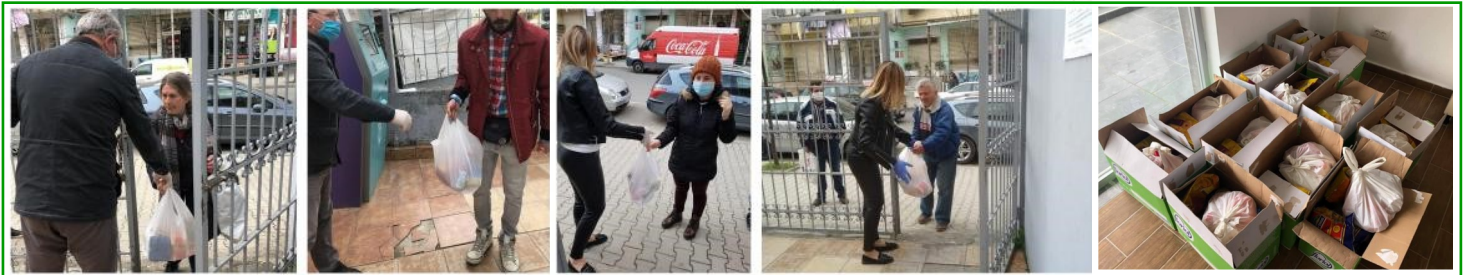
ALBANIA/ROMANIA

February 2021

In Albania Sister Imelda continues her well documented work with the most vulnerable in society, especially with trafficked women and their families. The structures she has set up at the Mary Ward Loreto Foundation [MWL] are widespread and robust. Despite the present restrictions there are still opportunities for online support and training.

When COVID 19 hit Albania in March, Sr Imelda commented that it was, as always, the most vulnerable groups in society that were most at risk and in danger of losing the most. The pandemic came so soon after the earthquake in November 2019, that left many people homeless. The poverty is intense in these vulnerable regions. Poor families with little or no income, elderly individuals without family and living alone, and those falling into unemployment as a result of the economic shutdown, all need assistance now more than ever.

Since March, the MWL Foundation has teamed up with local churches, food banks and others to give emergency assistance in the form of food, hygiene and other basic goods. They have assisted hundreds of families in the seven regions of the country to help them maintain their health and safety, whilst continuing their online counselling of emergency psychological support for victims of abuse and trafficking.



Previous money we sent was to pay for a doctor to treat and support Roma children and their families. These children are now all registered, housed and in school. While MWL still continue to do backup education work with some of these children, the greatest need is in the periphery of the towns and isolated villages, where girls are trafficked and there is terrible poverty and hardship. This will now be the focus of our support.

From Romania Father Petru and Sister Kathleen have reported that in the two main areas where they provide employment for the victims of trafficking – the sewing and restaurant projects – the implications of Covid have been catastrophic. Throughout much of the year they have been closed down and it has been extremely difficult to find the 75% of the salaries required by each person and although the Government promised some help, that had still to materialise. Prices in Europe are high in contrast to Romanian salaries, so people are living hand to mouth on a daily basis. As in many places, their priorities are keeping safe and well. They appeal to us for funding to relieve their desperate situation.

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Online using: **Acc no: 00086644 Sort code: 30-98-37**

In the WDG box in the wall at back of St Nicholas church

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