

Trip Report for UDG Visit and Graduation, May-June 2018

June 5, 2018

TO: John Bernbaum and Jane Gore

FROM: David Wallace and Phyllis Wolfe

RE: Trip report for UDG visit, 28 May- 4 June 2018 (excerpted from "Update Regarding UDG Shaw Grant Report," 5 June 2018)

May 28 to June 4 - Visit to UDG in Moldova

Phyllis and I visited UDG May 28 - June 4 to review the status of the MSW program and attend graduation. The purpose of the visit was to meet with UDG leaders, faculty, and students to gather program and financial information for purposes of writing the Shaw report. The preparation of the report is in collaboration with UDG administrators involved in the Shaw grant including Mihai Malancea (Academic Dean), Serghei Namesnic (Provost), Dumitru Sevastian (Dean of Theology and Missions) and Vadim Bulgac (Dean of Social Work). The target date to complete the report is July 15, 2018. Hopefully, we can have it completed before then.

Following is a brief summary of the UDG site-visit. Our schedule included: (1) meeting with UDG administrators and faculty; (2) joining MSW faculty to hear student presentations of their MSW research theses; (3) interviewing MSW students to hear about their views of the program and their participation in courses and practicum activities; and, (4) visiting 2-3 organizations where MSW students are employed so that we could learn about their work with children who are orphaned, abandoned, disabled, or in crisis from alcohol or drug abuse. We were able to complete all of these activities. In addition, we met with Paul Beach from Keys Ministry, Patricia and Remus Runcan from University of West Timisoara in Romania, and also talked with a small number of UDG Board members who were at the University for graduation and UDG's annual board meeting.

1. We arrived in Chisinau Monday night May 28. Our lodging was in the newly completed campus guest residence which was specifically built for visiting guests, missionaries, and participants in conferences and seminars. UDG recently hosted a conference for over 80 missions' leaders from Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa. Tuesday (May 29) we held informal meetings with university leaders and faculty and rested from the travel to Moldova.
2. Meetings with UDG Leaders: Wednesday (May 30) we met with Provost Namesnic, Dean Sevastian, and Dean Bulgac. Thursday afternoon (May 31) we met with Mihai Malancea, Academic Dean. The meetings gave us a chance to review program accomplishments and discuss how Shaw funds were used for MSW program development and implementation during the two and one-half years of the Shaw grant. We discussed the progress toward accreditation which is moving forward with the aim to complete accreditation within the next year.

3. MSW Student Theses Presentations: Thursday (May 31) morning and early afternoon we were invited to sit with the MSW faculty panel to hear students' masters theses and discuss their research. We were pleased to be invited to join the panel. Ten of the seventeen students who started the two-year program in 2016 presented their master theses research. Each student received high grades. The quality of their research, including findings and recommendations, was impressive. The cumulative results of their studies provide a body of knowledge and insight into practical applications for social work professionals who serve poor children and families, especially orphans and at-risk children and youth. The faculty anticipates that the remaining students will finish their respective MSW degrees in the months ahead. These students had to take "leaves of absence" from their studies for various reasons – family care, illness, etc.
4. MSW Student Interviews: Thursday afternoon (May 31) we met with MSW students to discuss their views of the program and hear about the impact of the program on both their professional and spiritual development. Their responses and comments about the MSW program were highly positive. The depth of the impact they experienced was perceived by them as life changing and significant in their development. We will provide detailed comments and feedback in the full program report.
5. Visits to Social Service Organizations Where MSW Students Work: Friday (June 1) we visited two organizations where MSW students work and will continue to work following graduation. We visited CERI and DORCUS. Both are international NGOs with offices in Chisinau. In the Shaw program report we will provide information about these organizations and their ministry work in Moldova. We will include interview results from the two MSW students describing how the MSW program directly helped them in their work and responsibilities.
6. Graduation Ceremony: UDG conducted its graduation ceremony for undergraduate and graduate students Saturday (June 2) during late morning and early afternoon (approximately 3 hours). Both of us were invited to sit with the faculty and administration during the ceremony. Along with several other speakers, David was asked to share comments and encouragement to the graduating class.
7. Additional Meetings and Conversations: In addition to the activities discussed above, we participated in the following:
 - We met with Dr. Patricia Runcan, University of West Timisoara, Romania. Patricia is a recognized expert in the field of Social Work in Romania. She provided leadership along with Mihai Malancea in developing the MSW at UDG. Both she and Remus, her husband, taught courses in the program.
 - Paul Beach (Keys Ministries) and the two of us met Saturday, June 2, to discuss our plans for writing the Shaw grant report.
 - We met and had informal discussions with three members of the UDG Board of Trustees at events during the weekend, June 2-3.
 - We visited prior to graduation June 2 with Ion Miron, General Secretary of the Moldova Baptist Union.
 - Thursday night (May 31) we invited and enjoyed dinner with Slavic and Ala Verenchuc, the national leaders of the family ministry (marriage ministry) that NPC supported for several years.
 - Saturday night (June 2) we enjoyed dinner with Valeriu and Marina Gheletchi,

whom we have known for many years, and who were our long-time liaisons in Moldova dating back to when Peg Cantwell and NPC teams went to Moldova in the 1990s.

- Sunday (June 3) we attended church services at Esperanza Baptist Church where Mihai Malancea is the senior pastor. We enjoyed Sunday dinner with Mihai, Lidia, and their grown children and spouses.

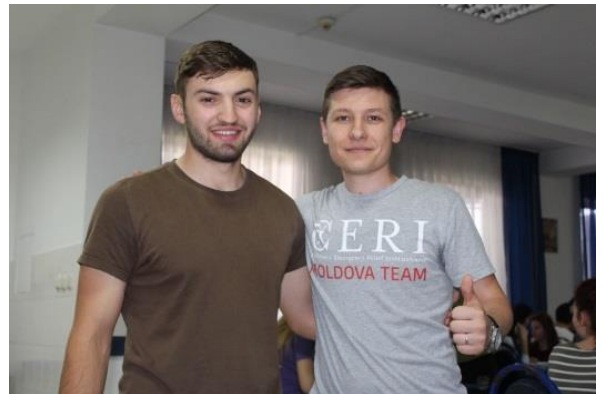
We departed Moldova, Monday June 4. The visit was exceptionally meaningful and provided information and documentation which will be very helpful for the report of the Shaw grant to UDG. We, along with Mihai Malancea and other UDG leaders, look forward to sharing the full report in July of the MSW program, including its development, implementation, and impact.

Warm regards in His service,

David Wallace and Phyllis Wolfe
NPC Representatives to UDG
Building Up the Global Church Sub-Committee



Master of Social Work graduates at the UDG graduation ceremony on June 2, 2018. These students represent about half of the students in the program. All of the students are part-time and come to the school for two-week class periods. Most of these students take time from their jobs in the field of social work to develop their skills through UDG's Master's program. The program has received strongly positive feedback from the students.



Stefan Babalau, is a MSW graduate and currently a case worker at CERI. CERI is an international NGO that provides Christian social work and counseling services to children and teenagers. Stefan is seen in photo with Ardur Platon. Stefan worked with Ardur, using skills from his UDG undergrad degree in theology and emerging social work skills, to help him move away from a potentially destructive life. Ardur is now a Christian and a student at UDG.



UDG senior administration and program leaders. From left to right: Serghei Namesnic (Provost), Dumitru Sevastian (Dean of Theology and Missions Dept.), Vadim Bulgac (Dean of Social Work Dept), and Mihai Malancea (Academic Dean).



Tatianna Melaenti is a MSW graduate, and lecturer in the UDG undergraduate program in Social Work. In this photo, Tatianna is presenting her thesis research and recommendations.