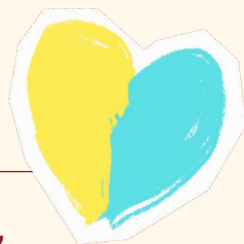




KAVOD

A holistic approach to helping victims of sexual exploitation

■ 6th Ukraine outreach



After a journey of two days, we arrived in Kyiv on Monday 6th March. On this two week trip our plan was to visit three different regions.

The very next day we were on the road again heading towards the Belarusian border and Kozelets. There we met some people who had just started coming to the church. After the meeting a woman came up to us and told us the story of her son who had been killed when he was wounded in the head by shrapnel from a grenade. Since his death she herself had been suffering from terrible headaches. We spoke a blessing on her head and her brain and straight away she said she felt some relief. We then travelled on to two villages where new churches are being planted. There is a drug rehab center there and to them we donated four bicycles and a large screen tv.

Back in Kyiv the following day we had a meeting with around 50 refugees, most of whom we had already met. On Thursday, together with our interpreter Alla, we drove 500 km south to Tschornomorsk in Odessa region. It was around 10°C warmer! That evening we had a meeting in the church. On Friday we travelled to Mikolaev where the first person we spent time with was the grandmother of Tanja, a young Ukrainian in our church here in Vienna. The old lady gave us some presents for her granddaughter. After that we carried on to Blahodadne, which is a pleasant name for any town because it means “Blessed”! We left a generator with the folks there.

After spending the night in Mikolaev, on Saturday morning we travelled to the Kherson region. Krvitneve is an out-of-the-way village which can only be reached



Krvitneve

via some pretty bad roads. It saw considerable damage in the fighting and because of its geographical situation has not received too much help so far. They have had no electricity or water supply for several months and so we left them the biggest generator we had brought from Austria. At least now they can power the pump for the well. This visit had some poignant moments, for example when Svetlana pointed out with a smile how snowdrops were pushing through the ruins of her home.

We were also able to bring a little happiness to two of the women by giving them the sewing machines Andreas had brought along.



In another village we had a meeting in a school. When we went to a snackbar in the middle of the day we had a good time with the lady who ran it and some soldiers. Sabine asked one young soldier how he was managing to survive the chaos of this war. His answer came right back: ***“With God’s help!”***



Kharkiv



On Sunday we returned to Kyiv and the next day we were on the move again, this time to Kharkiv with our interpreter Anton, who speaks perfect German. This was

another long drive of around 500 km. On the first day two street meetings were held with around 200 people attending. It is wonderful to see the people's reaction to what we are saying reflected in their faces. Afterwards they often come up to thank us. First thing on Tuesday we were in Kovsharovka, which is a mere 15 km from the front line, which means that the people there have to live with the constant sound of artillery. However, the church there is really alive. With her parents' help, one young woman by the name of Viki has been organising help for people. She also runs a group of about 20 teenagers who duly received the two basketballs, the net and a bunch of other games we had brought along. After our talk, Viki held a meeting with the teenagers where for the first time they began to open up about their feelings. In the neighbouring village, Bohuslavaska, after the meeting a woman came up to Sabine in floods of tears. In January her son-in-law had been killed and since then she had not been able to sleep and could do nothing but cry. What can you say in a situation like that? Sabine tried to encourage her to take a short time each day to think about all the good times they had had together. ***When she cries, all he is dead, but when she remembers him thankfully, then in her heart at least he is alive again.*** We hope this was some help to her.

That day, because of the distance involved and the terrible state of the roads, we ended up spending 13 hours in the van. On the final day of the trip we visited another



three villages, one of which was only one kilometer from the Russian border. We handed out many bibles, other literature, cuddly toys, sketch pads and coloured pencils. ***Drawing is a good way for children to express what they are feeling.*** Next time we go to Ukraine we will definitely need a lot more of that kind of material.

Altogether we had 14 meetings which were attended by a total of about 900 people. We covered 6250 km, spending seven days in our vehicle.

This war is not over yet, and at the end of May we plan to travel to Ukraine again. We have now spent a total of three months in Ukraine since the beginning of the war.



sky over Ukraine

Looking back we are tremendously grateful for the way we were kept safe. We weren't in any directly dangerous situations, although there is a palpable tension in the air all the time and you never know when the next explosion is going to go off. This tension is certainly something we feel and we always need a couple of days back here before we can physically relax again. For all we give when we are there, we receive at least as much again from the

people we meet. On our next trip we will be just as dependent as always on your donations and will be really grateful for everything you give us.

***With heartfelt thanks,
Sabine and Andreas***

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