



Summer Newsletter 2019

"For God so loved the world, that he sent his only son, that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life" John 3 v 16

From the Trustees,

There is much to celebrate this summer! A2B is 20 years old and we will hold events to mark this occasion—please join us! The summer holiday clubs are in full swing in Albania, and God continues to amaze us with his provision through his family in the UK and beyond. Thank you again for your prayers, giving and support.

Andrew, David, Nicola, Paul, Sam and Tracy (Trustees, A2B UK)

Let's Celebrate

Paul Heffer, Trustee

A2B is celebrating our twentieth anniversary! To celebrate God's faithfulness for all that time, we will hold two exciting events on Saturday 12th October at Freedom Church, Great Barton, Suffolk, IP31 2RU.



We would like to invite all sponsors, supporters and churches to come to these events. If you are traveling from a distance we invite you to join us for a meal to celebrate. We have a number of local people who have offered to host and there is a good range of hotels and B&B's available in the area. If you would like the meal and require hosting please contact Andrew Davies by 30th September at

andrewdavies@a2balbania.org telephone: 01284788190. The concert is free but there will be an opportunity to donate towards our work. See you there!!

THANKSGIVING SERVICE 4:45pm

A time to worship and to thank God for all his goodness and faithfulness to A2B both it's work and it's staff. There will be interviews with those involved in A2B's work past and present, including the directors of A2B Albania, Alketa and Elona. Our guest speaker will be Rev Nick Alexander who has visited A2B with his wife Julia and is the vicar of St Peter's church In Bury St Edmunds.

A CELEBRATION CONCERT 7:30pm - 9:00pm

Featuring: David Fitzgerald, Charity Quin and the Harvesters

David has been supporting the work of A2B for many years. He is one of the founder members of the band IONA and has toured with Graham Kendrick, Adrian Snell and many others. David has recorded four solo albums find more information at www.davidfitzgerald.co.uk

Charity is a wonderful singer/songwriter who, moved by her experiences in Albania wrote the Folk/Celtic album "Journeys of the Heart" to support A2B. From a musical family, her late husband Rob was one of the founders of the Greenbelt Festival and her son is the bass player for the band "Keane". www.charityquin.com

The Harvesters are a Suffolk based folk group passionate in their support of A2B from the very beginning. They have supported American country singer George Hamilton IV and two of the members are currently trustees of A2B.



In the Midst of Ruins there is Beauty Tracey Oakey

I have recently returned from my first trip to Albania. We travelled in May 2019 with a team from the UK, having heard much about the work A2B have been doing with the poor and vulnerable. Albania is like one of those forgotten countries; you don't hear much about it generally, yet it is nestled between Greece & Italy, close to the European countries I associate with beauty and calm. The landscape of Albania is amazing yet the buildings and the infrastructure outside the cities is like a place time has forgotten. In the rural districts you see living situations that we would never associate with Europe.

The team of A2B are reaching out to these destitute and deprived families with food and clothing and the love of Jesus. A2B are not only working in established areas, I witnessed how they travel out and love the community with whatever they have to hand. It is inspiring and humbling.

I had an opportunity to visit the day centres in Elbasan and Peqin that have been running for many years. I saw how these centres have impacted the needs of the community, both young and old with excellent care and consideration. At the Bread of Life day centre, I had the amazing opportunity to chat with the older people of the Elbasan community and to serve food to the little children who are not much older than my own granddaughters. This was really a wonderful and humbling experience for me and I know this touched other members of the UK team. It's amazing that the Bread of Life centre caters for 150+ people each day, wow!! At this centre there is a kindergarten for children ranging from the ages of 4 -12 years old. The children were so open to giving hugs and smiles that really tug at the heart strings. I enjoyed sharing with them some children's songs that went with hand claps. We also taught them other songs from well known nursery rhymes and Christian songs. One being, 'Yes! Jesus loves me'. The children were quick at picking up some English words and phrases.

The third centre I visited was the House of Opportunity, where young people can find a safe place to shelter from the cold and harsh elements of life. The building was once the Mayor's home. The local authorities allowed A2B to use this building to establish a hostel for young displaced people, for the young people to find hope, comfort and a sense of belonging and to be loved. These young people are not refugees or economic migrants, they are members of the Albanian culture and community, forgotten and disregarded by the general community.



Keta and Elona are enlarging the A2B tent pegs, influencing not just the mindset of the community but also the local authorities in Tirana by starting a fostering scheme for vulnerable children from the local area. This really breaks with traditional behaviour. A2B, by sharing Gods love with such open abandonment and with such excellence, are challenging the local and national communities in a way that many have not experienced before.

Throughout my travels in Albania I saw many buildings that not been finished or lived in. There was the rubble of old torn down buildings long forgotten. God gave me these words 'in the midst of ruins there is beauty' because with God there is always hope. It shapes the landscape with such beauty and colour.



Where does the money go?

David Ayrton, A2B Treasurer

The most recent accounts that have been filed with the Charity Commission are for the year ended 31 March 2018. Here are the key points from them. If you want more detail you can go to the Charity Commission website and look up Aid to the Balkans UK (A2B), charity number 1168468.

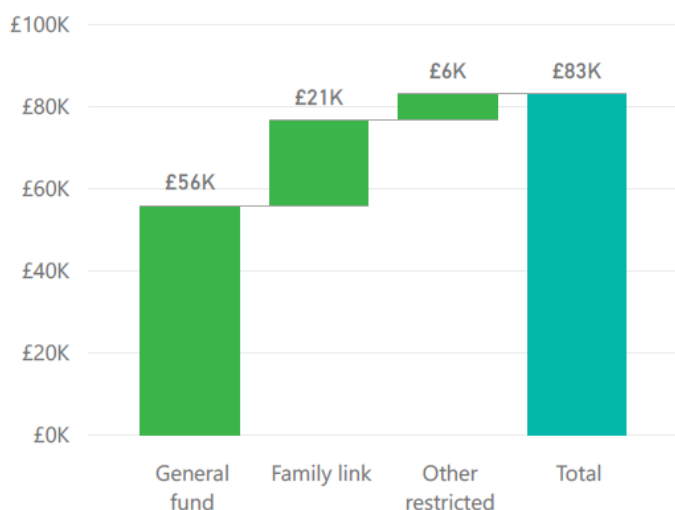
£83,276 was received in total during the year.

£73,805 in gifts and a further £9,469 through gift aid.

£55,996 was for the General fund, which was spent on running costs. This includes salaries, vehicles, admin, training, etc.

£27,280 was given for specific purposes and therefore restricted. Most of this (£20,805) was Family Link sponsorship, and in addition there was a grant given specifically for the Food Bank, and a small contribution to Another Life kindergarten in Elbasan.

A2B UK Spend



Almost all the money went directly to Albania, the only costs in the UK were £300 for Bank Charges. No Trustees or volunteers received any remuneration or expenses, and our publicity is kindly sponsored by Precision Marketing Group.

We collaborate widely with other organisations who have provided additional money:

- Hope for the future is sponsored by a German charity called Paul Ritzau Foundation.
- House of Opportunity is sponsored by The Foundation for Social Change and Inclusion (FSCI) who are based in Bulgaria.
- Another Life Peqin is a collaboration with the Evangelical Church in Peqin and FSCI.

Although our income fluctuates, especially when one-off gifts increase, we set a monthly amount at the beginning of the year that we will send to the General fund every month regardless of our income. This enables A2B Albania to take on staff and plan ahead. We believe that God will supply the need.

We started the year very concerned that at present rates of donations we would not be able to send the regular funds beyond September 2017. We finished in April 2018, as a result of generous one-off donations, with a savings buffer of around £16,000 which has enabled us to continue to fund our monthly commitment to A2B Albania even when we have not received enough in any particular month.

In the UK incomes (including pensions) are reviewed annually to reflect the increased cost of inflation in the past year. Perhaps as a regular donor you could do the same for A2B, because our costs go up each year in exactly the same way.

We are constantly amazed at the generosity of our supporters and would like to thank you all for what you do. We are blessed to experience God's hand supplying our needs, and we continually thank Him for His faithfulness over the last 20 years.



Summer Holiday Clubs

Alketa Hasani, Director A2B Albania

During the long hot summer in Albania A2B run holiday clubs at their day centres. About 90 children both regular attenders and other, have a great week. The staff and junior volunteers put lots of energy and enthusiasm into a fun-filled program of songs, dances, games, stories, dramas and delicious food! The children arrive between 9-9.30am and together they all join in their favourite action songs. They then split into their four age groups to enjoy their morning snack while checking who has attended. From approximately 10am-12noon the groups alternate around the day's four different workshops before sharing lunch together and heading home around 1pm. On Friday, having practised a dance and drama all the week, the groups end the week on a real high by performing to each other and being rewarded points for their efforts to discover the week's winning team. These clubs give the children an opportunity to have fun and to learn about God.

The majority of these children come from extremely poor families and live in poor quality housing. Please keep these families and our staff in your prayers throughout these very hot summer days, that they can maintain this great energy and all continue to have lots of fun together.



Leave A2B a Gift in your Will

Andrew Davies, A2B Trustee

Our work is funded by supporters in a range of different ways. One method can be by leaving a gift in your Will. If you have supported A2B by donating or attending one of our events, a gift in your Will allows you to continue that support when you are no longer here to assist us in person. And it's tax free – which in some circumstances may reduce the amount of inheritance tax you need to pay.

Making a legacy to us is easy. You can include us in a new Will, or you can add a Codicil to an existing one (we recommend this is done through a Solicitor). None of us lives forever here on earth, but a legacy gift ensures that your wealth can continue to help people beyond your own lifetime. So do please think of us when you are arranging your personal affairs. Legacy gifts, regardless of size, allow A2B to help someone who really needs support and will make a difference. Thank you.



Giveasyoulive

David Ayrton, A2B Treasurer

Now you can treat us when you treat your loved ones or when you buy groceries with the GiveasyouLive gift card. It can be spent in-store and online at over 100 high-street stores and you will raise ££ for us when you buy. Get more information from: <https://instore.giveasyoulive.com/buy-gift-cards/give-as-you-live-card>



Lifting Dignity,
Restoring Hope

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A2B is a registered charity in the UK (1168468) and a registered Foundation in Albania