



Winter 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

As we draw to the end of another year, we would like to take the opportunity to thank you all again for so faithfully supporting A2B. It's been a year of thanksgiving as we celebrated our twentieth anniversary and you can read more about this inside. Alketa and Elona and all of the A2B team continue to do amazing things, loving the community and speaking up for those who don't have a voice.

As we enter another year we ask for your prayers for health, wisdom and continued funding.

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

Albania Visit Mark Appleby, Bagley Baptist Church Elder

Our church has been involved in supporting A2B for a number of years, but until I visited Albania for 5 days in October, I had no idea what an incredible charity A2B is! During my visit, Keta, Elona and Ardjan showed Sam and I around the Kindergarten projects, the different day centres and house of opportunity and shared stories from the lives of the people we met. I was able to get involved in small ways by doing some heavy duty gardening (see photo), speaking at church and helping at staff meetings. I was so incredibly impressed by the professional approach to everything they did and the impact they are making. I have never seen such an organised office and strong governance. What impressed me most was the love the whole team have for the people they care for. They really do love the people, and it was so moving and exciting to see such obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I was also struck by the beauty of Albania, it is wild, mountainous and unspoilt. This however, is in sharp contrast to the poverty I saw. Albania is a poor country and suffers from corruption at the highest levels. In spite of this, there is so much hope as A2B goes into the darkness, carrying the good news of the Gospel. The staff who work for A2B are inspirational, self-sacrificing and obedient to God. I was truly humbled and I have been left with a deep love for the team, the country and the people.

I saw God at work in the servant hearts of the staff and volunteers, it was such a privilege to spend even a short time with them. I am looking forward to seeing everyone again and drinking more 'coffee' and sharing what God has done in our lives. I made many new friends who made me feel so welcome. I've found a new love for A2B and I pray God will bless A2B and all those who faithfully serve Him in Albania.



Gardening! Sam W, Mark Appleby, Ardjan Z and Ladi M

Christmas Cards and Christian Gifts Paul Heffer, A2B Trustee

Once again this year we shall benefit from the sale of Christmas cards and the other cards and gifts available from Gospel Cards. 20% of their Christmas card sales and 5% of the sale of other items go to 22 Christian missions including A2B.

Please see the enclosed catalogue for details, and please remember to mention our name if you place an order - thank you.

For more details see their website www.GospelCardsEtc.com or Tel. 01656 647551, or write to Gospel Cards, 15 Brackla Street Centre, Bridgend, CF31 1DD.



A2B Tailoring Course

Alketa Hassani, Director, A2B Albania



It's been five months since the tailoring course began. Eleven women from different A2B Albania projects are being trained how to make and repair clothes - all for free! Two groups of students come each weekday for 4-5 hours —this is a comprehensive course! The warm and welcoming atmosphere have made the course even more special. We start each lesson with a short bible study and prayer and we encourage the women to share experiences with each other and offer support. 2 of the women, Aida and Etleva (below) have already decided to follow Jesus during their training which is amazing news.

The project is a collaboration with Sewing for Hope USA. We are really grateful for the financial support and extraordinary opportunity it has given to these women who have all become passionate and skilled seamstresses. Each participant will receive a sewing machine at the end of the course. Flutura (right) plans to start her own

business soon. Teuta says "I hope that in the future I can start to work in a private tailoring company and so I provide a steady income for my family". This sort of training and gift of equipment provides a long lasting opportunity for employment and could provide a sustainable income for a whole family for years - all through some training, a sewing machine and a lot of love.



A visit from the Mayor

Alketa Hassani, Director, A2B Albania

On the 5th September Mother Teresa day is celebrated in Albania. It is a public holiday and people are encouraged to do something good for their friends and neighbours. The Mayor of Elbasan was newly elected this year, and we have been praying for a long time for the political situation in Albania. We were very pleased that of all the N.G.O.'s working in in the Elbasan region the Mayor chose to visit the A2B "Bread Of Life Centre" where he spent a lot of time chatting to the elderly and assisting with distributing the meal that A2B provides five days a week. We are so grateful to God that our organisation is highly regarded by the local council and they provide free of charge the two day centre buildings in Elbasan, we could not operate without this gift.



A2B 20th Anniversary Celebrations

Paul Heffer, A2B Trustee

On the 12th October, A2B celebrated our twentieth anniversary with friends and supporters. In the afternoon we held a thanksgiving service to give God the glory for all the He has done. Andrew Davies interviewed people instrumental to A2B operations over the years. This included Christine and Roy Debenham who started the work in response to the Kosovan refugee crisis; three of the original trustees, Andy Rollett, Tim Elliot, and Mike Bevan who set up the original charity in 1999. I shared memories of the Charity concert I organized at Bury St Edmunds Cathedral which was also covered in a recent Bury Free press article. Kim Marshall spoke about her experience working for two years as a missionary in a kindergarten project. Alketa and Elona then talked about the current work and how they saw the future.

In the evening we held a concert performed by my good friends David Fitzgerald ad Charity Quin. My folk group The Harvesters also took part and to everyone's delight Alketa and Elona performed a song in Albanian. It was a wonderful day and great to see some of the people that make A2B the fantastic organisation that it is come together to celebrate.

I would like to say a huge thankyou to everyone who made the evening possible and to those who donated - together we raised £624. I can't wait to see what God does with A2B over the next 20 years!



Food Bank

Sam Whitmarsh, A2B Chairperson

A2B run a food bank to support those struggling to provide for their families, this can become even more important during the winter months. We typically distribute food parcels to around seventy families in and around Elbasan. All the food we are able to donate comes from the local community with amazing support from local schools, businesses and more recently churches in Germany.

Some people are not able to come to the centre to collect food and we take provisions to them. One example is Emine, an elderly lady, who lives on her own in extremely poor housing. It's such a privilege to help her— the joy and gratitude she shared on receipt of the food was wonderful. What we saw made many of us reflect on the many riches we take for granted!



Autumn Fair

Sam Whitmarsh, A2B Chairperson

Poverty isn't only a lack of money or material possessions. Poverty affects choices and restricts opportunities - it takes away space to dream. The autumn fair brought the community together, to have some fun, meet people and provide, in a small way - choices. With amazing support from churches in Germany, A2B were able to provide a large choice of shoes, clothes and foodstuffs and provide our clients with a choice - What is your preference? What would you like?



Winter is Coming

David Ayrton, A2B Treasurer



Rest assured that someone, somewhere in a government department is already planning how to distribute Winter Fuel Payments to everyone in the UK who was born on or before 5 November 1953. You could get between £100 and £300 depending on your age and who you live with.

Although it is called the Winter Fuel Payment, there are no conditions attached to what you can spend it on. If you should decide that you already have your fuel bills budgeted for, then the money you receive will release an equivalent amount of your own money which you are free to give to any cause, and even to claim Gift Aid on your giving.

A number of our supporters last year decided to give the equivalent of their Fuel Payment to A2B, which enabled us to help people in Albania with their fuel costs. This is a wonderful way of using the money in the way it was intended, but at the same time blessing and helping others much less fortunate than yourself.

If you would like to put your Winter Fuel Payment to good use and you don't really need it yourself, why not send it to us and we will make sure it goes to help those who can't afford to keep warm? Any money not used for fuel will be used for other essential costs such as food, medicines or clothing.

You can make a transfer direct to our bank account or send a cheque to the Treasurer, who can also supply Gift Aid Forms. Please contact me at the number below if you need any other help. Thank you.

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Funding Update

Sam Whitmarsh, A2B Chairperson

As A2B has expanded, we've needed two larger cars to transport people and goods between the day centres and family link villages. The appeal earlier this year raised £1794 towards the total and with matched funding we purchased a Opel 7. Thanks so much to all those who have donated, your gifts are bringing hope and love to people all over Elbasan.

The Another Life day centre in Peqin is funded until next March. We receive regular donations of £531 per month that are helping to keep it going, thank you again to those who pray for and this project supporting some of the most needy communities in Albania. Further funding is still required, so please prayerfully consider if you are able to give.



Giveasyoulive

David Ayrton, A2B Treasurer

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A2B Lifting Dignity,
Restoring Hope

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