

## From The Trustees

Christmas is coming! At the end of this year we would like to thank you all again for so faithfully supporting the work in Albania through your giving and prayers. A2B continues to be a powerful blessing in a country still reeling from earthquake, pandemic and now economic crisis. A2B is completely dependent on your generosity. Without you and our partner organisations none of what you read in these pages would be possible. We are so thankful to God for His provision weaving together all that we need. We wish you all a peaceful and blessed Christmas and a happy new year.

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

## Family Link, Cleaning, Stationery

Sam Whitmarsh, A2B Chair

Up in the mountains near Elbasan lives a family who A2B have been helping. This family of six are part of the family link program supporting them with food and in their schooling. Both parents and many of the children have significant mental health problems. We were introduced through the local social services because of their mental health situation and very poor living conditions. A2B agreed to help them if the government helped to improve the quality of the building and improve the dangerous electrics. The local government plastered and tiled most of the house – removing the clay and mud floors. A2B then purchased furniture beds, chairs, table, cupboards for the kitchen etc, installed them and showed the family how to use them. A few visits from the A2B team and the linked church showed the family how to clean, put things away and explained the importance of cleaning and hygiene.



When we visited 2 months later, it was clear that further training was required with food left out and surfaces and floors uncleaned. The chickens roaming around the house were leaving a mess. For many people who struggle, these things, which many take for granted, are not fully appreciated. A2B will come back to this family for further training and support. In our visit we were able to bring some cuddly toys and treats which the children loved. We were also able to give away new school bags containing supplies of books, pens and other stationery to last the whole year. These things are really needed for families who cannot afford to purchase these basic

supplies for themselves. It was beautiful to watch one of the girls appreciate the things we had brought. She took out each thing carefully from the bag and studied it, spellbound by the fact that these were now her things. There were six notebooks which she took out one by one, opened the blank pages and stroked them. It was a humbling thing to see. In these pages and pens I felt this young girl saw potential and a future. A2B has always been committed to supporting young people in education, it's a primary way to break the cycle of poverty which can plague families for generations. Thank you to all the family link supporters and our collaborators who provide the school materials – you are making such a difference in the lives of young people and on through generations



# When a Visit to the Dentist is a luxury!

Alketa Hassani, A2B Albania Director and Paul Heffer, A2B Trustee

A2B have provided healthcare advice to the poor in Albania since its conception. Courses on Family planning, Hygiene and Self-care are regularly organised at our three care centres. For the majority of our beneficiaries, healthcare is very much on the back burner due to the high cost with dental care pushed back until it becomes too painful to ignore. With the support of The Presbyterian Humanitarian Mission "Joyful Health Balkan" which is led by a dentist couple from Brazil: Vera & Ricardo Guttierrez - we were able to offer dental services to our beneficiaries using their mobile dental clinic.

The couple have seen for themselves the need for dental services across the A2B projects, especially family link, kindergarten and elderly communities and that this is an unattainable luxury for them. Dentistry is typically put off until a tooth is damaged or the pain becomes too great. They are not able to obtain services like tooth filling because it's too expensive, and resort to self or family administered tooth extraction because it's the lowest cost. The mission team visit twice per year and on the latest visit they treated forty beneficiaries as well as some of the staff and their families.



## Marjeta & Kristaq:

Marjeta is forty-seven years old and Kristaqi is fifty years old. They have been married for twenty-five years and have four children. Their youngest daughter Geralda and their granddaughter Ajla are beneficiaries of the H4F Day center. They live in very poor conditions; in a house with one bedroom and one living room. Two couples live together with their children. A total of seven people live all together and Kristaqi hasn't visited a dentist in his entire life. Prior to this visit, over the years they have pulled out 4-5 teeth each when things became too painful. They both appear much older than they are, both because of their difficult lifestyle, but also as they have lost their front teeth. During the dentist mission visit, the couple received excellent dental services; each of them had four molars filled and four tooth roots removed. Marjeta also received dentures and when the mission returns, Vera will prepare dentures for Kristaq too. If we were to translate the services given to this couple into a monetary value, it would be around £1400 – and these are Albanian prices. Both Marjeta and Kristaq could not believe that this service was free, painless, with highly professional care and loving prayers. They both just smiled continuously expressing their heartfelt attitude many, many times!





## Foodbank and Feeding Albania Sam Whitmarsh, A2B Chair



One of the strengths of A2B is our ability to collaborate. We connect in with a community of amazing charities and organisations who are trying to support people in Albania. One of these charities is 'Feeding Albania' who operate with a network of food wholesalers and producers to collect and distribute food which may have gone to waste, or has been donated – just like foodbanks in the UK. A2B take this food and are able to share it across the projects that we operate. A2B also run a foodbank

where people in need can come and request food, some of the food donations come from 'Feeding Albania'.

Through this collaboration A2B are able to grow and develop our relationships with people in need. It helps A2B to support many more people than our own resources alone could achieve. It also allows the 'Feeding Albania' project to concentrate on what they do best – building connections with the food producers and companies and distributing the produce to centres like A2B. What a privilege to share the blessings of seasonal fruit donated by loyal partners who share the same values and purpose for the community who needs us the most. Thank you 'Feeding Albania'!



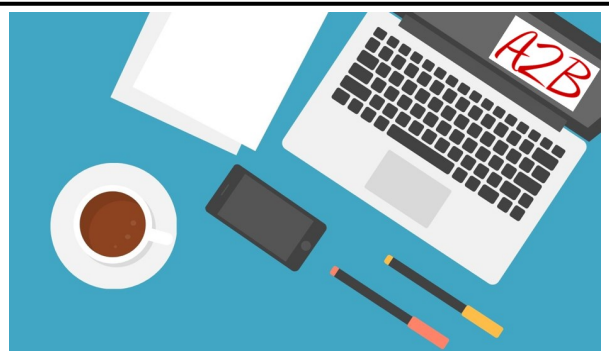
## Warm spaces at our Day Centres Sam Whitmarsh, A2B Chair

The cost-of-living crisis is affecting millions across the UK, and millions more in Albania. Elbasan and the surrounding areas can get very cold and many people will be unable to switch on the heating during the winter. This problem is felt very strongly in the elderly community we serve. A2B believe everyone should have a warm and welcoming space to go to this winter. We make sure to keep in touch with the whole community, keeping all of our three day centres open. Each is set up to keep bodies warm with warm fires and warm food, and to keep hearts warm with time to chat, build relationships, take part in fun activities and learn new things.



## Zoom Prayer!

Join us to pray together on Zoom for A2B and Albania on **Thursday 8th of December 2022 7.30 –8.30 pm**. We will join together with A2B Albania directors: Keta and Elona and partner churches from all over the UK and Albania. Keep an eye out for further meeting details that will be shared in separate emails.



# Could you share your Winter Fuel payment with a family in Albania?

David Ayrton, A2B Treasurer



Our current economic crisis has driven costs through the roof. Inflation rates are similar in Albania to those in the UK — but with significantly less government support. This inflation rate means the A2B income buys 10% less goods and services than last year. The UK government provides support such as the winter fuel allowance and energy price cap payments. For many of us this support is essential to make ends meet as prices rise. For others of us perhaps this government payment is less essential. Maybe you are locked into a low rate for gas and electricity that means you won't be affected by the

price rises till your contract ends? Perhaps your good fortune could be turned into a blessing for a family in Albania that is struggling to manage. Send it to us, because we know which families need help to stay warm, and we will channel your gift to where it's needed most. You can send it by bank transfer, make a 'Wonderful' payment, or write a cheque, and we will do the rest.

## It's Wonderful!

David Ayrton A2B Treasurer



We continue to partner with [Wonderful.org](https://wonderful.org) to enable you to donate to us and our website has been updated to show their logo. You may not have heard of them, but they have been chosen by some big organisations such as Cancer Research UK, The Church of England and Amnesty International. Transfers are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and all the key banks have signed up to participate.

The big advantage for us is that there are no fees, so every penny you give will come to us. And, if appropriate, we can collect Gift Aid as well. In addition to this new way of making payments, you can still transfer money online from your bank account to ours, or you can send a cheque to the Treasurer. We like online payments best because we don't have to go to the bank to process them, but whatever way suits you best is OK with us!

## 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 <https://gospelcardsetc.com> or Tel. 01656 647551, or write to Gospel Cards, 15 Brackla Street Centre, Bridgend,



Lifting Dignity,  
Restoring Hope

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