



Restoring Dignity Together!



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Please Pray...

» **Praise** the Lord that His timing is perfect, though we don't always understand His purposes. **Praise** Him that our RWN conference finally happened and that He is enriching the relationships between workers across Romania.

» **Pray** for our family's health, and particularly as we travel so much between now and October. **Pray** for stamina and a good balance between rest and responsibilities.

» **Pray** for the RWN to grow in the coming years, and for the website to become more valued by workers as we expand the available resources.

» **Pray** for our time of debrief in Wales to be a helpful time of processing our first term in Romania, and as we think about our next term. **Pray** that God will also provide for any unbudgeted HA costs, and our financial shortfall for our next term in Romania.

Being made more precious!...

"Fourth time lucky" some might say! Without Covid this conference would most likely have happened two years ago, and yet here we are reflecting on God's goodness in allowing our Third Rroma-Workers Network conference to happen in His timing (16-20 May), and with exactly who He wanted there. You could say, "For such a time as this! (Esther 4:14)"

With relatively few Covid cases here in Romania, many people are now jumping at every face-to-face opportunity. This conference couldn't have come at a more poignant time, to allow workers to breathe and think about how they are truly going in their own souls and faith, as well as thinking through what their ministries currently look like, and praying about where they are headed over the coming few years.

At the start of conference, I (Manda) included a quote in my presentation, of the Japanese artwork 'Kintsugi', as an analogy which highlights the theme of the conference, 'Restoring Dignity Together'. I think the quote may also be an encouragement for you, our prayer warriors and supporters, about how we choose to encapsulate our ministry among Rroma-Workers, as they reach out to Rroma communities with the love and hope of the Gospel.

Kintsugi "Is the practice of repairing porcelain fractures with varnish or powder resin with gold. It follows that breaks and repairs are part of the history of an object and must be shown

and not hidden, manifesting its transformation, the scars embellishing the object.

Kintsugi embellishes the break and treats it as an important part of the history of the object and the broken object not as something disposable, but as something more precious than it was before. Now you have a work of art." (Kanela Suri)

God uses every part of our lives to shape us and make us more beautiful and precious than before, including the very hard times. But praise God, He holds our hand through it all, and He knows and understands our pain because His story also includes such suffering and grief.

For many Christian workers who do life alongside Rroma, they find it difficult to overcome commonly perceived challenges, including trust, generational mindsets, dependency, challenges to do with orality and illiteracy, and many other aspects. These were some of the workshop topics that we explored together this conference. And for Josh and I, one thing that we came away with was the reassurance that what we are doing in Romania is still needed! The struggle for workers to constantly minister is draining, and the attrition rate among workers is high, but what they need is to support each other, to pray for one another and to share with each other to realise that they are not alone!

While it would have been lovely to have more than the 28 adults who attended conference this time around, our time together was sweet and allowed conversations to go deeper than with a



Rroma-Workers Network, Romania...
Encouraging, Equipping and Empowering Rroma-workers
to reach Rroma people and communities with the gospel.



larger crowd. Of course, we missed those who couldn't join us, whether because of their health or that of loved ones; due to visa issues, or for one worker due to being stuck in Ukraine with mechanical issues. Every conference we feel the spiritual oppression before and during the conference, sometimes in subtle ways, and sometimes overtly, but we continue to be reassured that we are just where God wants us for this season of our lives, and we let Him take care of the details and the spiritual battles. We are so thankful also for those who came alongside us to serve at conference, including our speakers coming from the USA, Bulgaria, Romania or through Zoom from The Netherlands; our friend Anca who was an amazing help with our girls and the other young kids, allowing us to be present in our roles; our translators who stepped up, sometimes spontaneously; our worship leader, tech and film guys; and all those who work behind the scenes at the conference centre in Harghita. We really treasure the team God gave us!

"Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you." 2 Corinthians 13:11

Sharing life together with other workers is always such an encouragement, regardless of whether these workers are Roma, Romanian or foreigners who work across the country in many and various ministries. To come together and spend time in worship, being

refreshed by our morning devotions around the topic of Dignity; hearing workers share their passions and struggles during their ministry reports; sharing experiences, and asking the tough questions which many of us can relate to during our Q&A time, and praying for every one of our workers; time together in person is just so much of a blessing, often taken for granted but now treasured more than ever!

Home Assignment...

While this first term of ministry in Romania as a family has also had its many joys and challenges, from tedious visa processes, to settling into our local church and developing healthy rhythms and routines as best we can, especially considering Covid19; changing organisations part way through; having a baby in Romania and navigating a vastly different medical system, and numerous other parts of serving overseas. We feel ready to begin our already delayed Home Assignment. With much still to do, we certainly value your prayers for the time ahead, especially for the girls who are leaving where for them is home, and all our local friends. We also pray that it will be a balanced time of rest and rekindling relationships. And, as much as we look forward to sharing our story and how God's been working in our lives, we very much look forward to mutually sharing in the lives of those we are able to see. We know it's been a tough few years for all of us in various ways, and we'd love to sit and hear your story too.

With our HA being anything but a four month holiday, our time will begin with a bit of downtime and then a time of debrief in Wales with a couple we know from our previous organisation. We ask for your prayers as we process this past term and also think about what this all means for the future. There is much to think through and it certainly won't all be covered in one week, but we pray it will help us get some of our thoughts in order as it's easy to overlook what could actually be a vital part of transitioning into our second term of service.

We are very much looking forward to seeing many of you in person soon! We give thanks for you all as you continue to partner with us in this ministry. God is certainly faithful and generous. And, we look forward to writing our next newsletter from Australia!

In His Hands, Josh, Manda, Isla and Tilly

Upcoming Events

*Home Assignment
Mid June - Mid October*



Kintsugi

87% **Current Support**

We are forever grateful to all who partner with us through your prayers, financial support and encouragement. Please continue to pray that God will provide for our spiritual, mental, physical and ministry needs, and let us know if you'd like to join our partnership team.

www.pioneers.org.au/give

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Photos: Some conference highlights!