

# IMPACT

June 2025

Dear Friends,

Every once in a while, we get to step back and truly see the difference your support makes - and this Impact provides one of those moments. For 34 years, Nehemiah Gateway has steadfastly walked alongside the people of Pogradec, Albania. Because of caring partners like you, children once at risk are now thriving adults, leading, learning, and inspiring others.

In this issue, you'll meet two remarkable women who've been part of that journey from the beginning. Their words - and the lives they've touched - are proof that long-term investment and faithfulness brings tangible, lasting change.

Thank you for being part of this legacy of transformation and hope. Your generosity has opened doors for so many - and I invite you to continue walking alongside as we change the course of a society for generations to come.

In gratitude,

Your Impact team



He was lucky to swap the street for a school desk - a young boy in the Amaro Tan project.

## Where Hope Took Root: 34 Years of Change

### How Has Nehemiah Gateway Changed the City of Pogradec?

For 34 years, Nehemiah Gateway has been at work along the shores of Lake Ohrid in the southeastern Albanian town of Pogradec. But what does long-term impact really look like? To find out, we spoke with two inspiring women who have been part of this journey from nearly the beginning and are now leading NG Albania. At a time when many of their peers sought better prospects abroad, they chose the harder path: staying to help rebuild and transform their homeland.

#### REAL LIVES, REAL CHANGE

**Manjola Kamolli**, Deputy Director of NG Albania and current Chairwoman of the Pogradec City Council, sees the fruits of this work every day. She points to four former students from Nehemiah High School (Shkolla Nehemia) now working in the city administration, and two young women from the Amaro Tan School (K-9)—once at risk—who now hold undergraduate degrees and work in management positions in a supermarket and a bank, respectively.

One striking sign of progress, she shares, is what you don't see anymore: *"Unlike many Albanian cities, children are no longer begging in the streets of Pogradec."*

This change is the result of years of dedicated, consistent outreach by Amaro Tan School

staff, who have compassionately worked with marginalized local families to ensure that their children get to attend school—often overcoming deep-rooted self-destructive traditions and daily survival struggles.

Manjola speaks from personal experience about the K-12 Nehemiah School (Shkolla Nehemia), where her daughter went to school. *“There is a different spirit here,” she says. “The teachers care deeply—not just about academics but about shaping the whole person through elective after-school values implementing programs. Mentally, spiritually, practically—children are supported in every way.”* Importantly, her daughter has never been given special treatment, which is unfortunately still rare in Albanian schools.

**Herolinda Shkullaku**, Executive Director of NG Albania, echoes this sentiment. Many former graduates, now parents, go to great lengths to enroll their own children at Nehemiah School—a testament to its reputation and results.

One local entrepreneur faced a tough choice: move his family abroad for better education or remain in Pogradec. Thanks to Nehemiah School, he stayed. Today, his thriving business benefits the local economy, and his children are on promising career paths—proof of what accessible and quality education can inspire.

**Transforming Lives Through Amaro Tan** - Herolinda also shared praise from a vocational schoolteacher who enjoys working with former Amaro Tan students: “They have a different attitude toward learning. They value their education, work

hard, and know how to conduct themselves.”

That’s not by chance. Amaro Tan is a refuge for children from difficult backgrounds—where discrimination, domestic violence, and hardship are common. Here, they learn their rights, discover positive role models, and build the strength to stand tall in the face of adversity. The city’s Child and Youth Protection Office regularly turns to Amaro Tan when a child is in crisis, a strong endorsement of the program’s reputation and effectiveness.

These are just a few stories told by Herolinda and Manjola. While not every life can be transformed, and challenges remain, the message is clear:

**Investing in children and their education works. It changes lives. It sets families on a different trajectory from earlier generations. And it transforms communities. Even the city is changing.**



Herolinda and Manjola at the NG Campus in Buçimas

## ONE CHILD - ONE FUTURE

Your Gift Makes a Lasting Difference

It costs just **\$2,600** to support one child at Amaro Tan for a full school year. This includes:

- Quality education
- Daily meals
- Social services
- A robust afternoon program that prepares students for real life

Graduates can then attend **Nehemiah High School** (Shkolla Nehemia), one of the top schools in the region, for just **\$2,100 per year**.



Afternoon cooking class at Amaro Tan – practical skills, confidence, and joy in action

Whether you fund one month or a full year, **your support helps a vulnerable child stay in school, stay safe, and build a future.** You’ll be part of a long-term transformation to this lakeside community and city—a transformation is bringing dignity, opportunity, and hope.

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