



IMPACT



December 2025

Dear Friend,

As the year comes to a close, we feel deep gratitude for you, our friends and supporters who make this work possible. Every Christmas season brings a powerful reminder of how compassion resonates far beyond the initial moment of expression. For many in Albania, it's a time of joy and celebration; for others, it's a time of struggle. Yet time and again, we see how your generosity and involvement works to turn hardship into hope.

In this issue, you'll read of our elderly friends who find warmth and care, children from Amaro Tan whose dreams are being fanned into flames.

Each story shows the difference that love in action can make. Thank you for joining us and bringing light and warmth to those who need it most.

Your Impact Team



Nehemia School students (right) bring lovingly prepared food parcels to the home of an elderly lady in need.

A Time of Great Celebration, And of Great Need

At Christmas and New Year, poverty reveals its harshest face

In Albania, as in many places, the year ends in a spirit of festivity. During the communist years, when all religion was banned, Christmas celebrations disappeared completely. Only New Year's Eve remained as the great family feast of the year. Today both holidays are celebrated once again. Weeks beforehand, homes are scrubbed clean, treats and special foods are prepped, and kitchens hums with joyful anticipation. It's a cherished time of togetherness. Yet for a growing number of Albanian families, these days are not marked by joy but rather by anxiety. Many cannot afford even life's most basic essentials, let alone festive meals or gifts.

This season gives us a powerful chance to warm hearts and bring hope! We devote special care to the elderly at our soup kitchens. Increasingly, seniors are found alone and without family, formerly unheard of within the culture. We provide hearty meals, meaningful fellowship, Christmas presents and even firewood for their humble homes. They also share in the joyful celebrations with the children of Amaro Tan in Pogradec and at our Gjirokastër location in the south of the country.

Students at Nehemia School gather food supplies and, on "Poverty Eradication Day" in November, join our Social & Medical Initiative (SMI) team to distribute parcels in nearby villages. Firewood has been stacked and dried for months at our campus, ready to warm poor families as winter deepens. Tearfully, SMI director Nikoleta says: **"If needed, we will work day and night to reach these people in distress. The more we receive, the more we can give. We are deeply grateful for every donation and every act of kindness."**



Kendi, Elona Rira (Director of Nehemia School), Kjara and Orkela

THREE STORIES FULL OF HOPE

Integration is one of the greatest challenges for the children in our Amaro Tan project. They come from marginalized communities facing deep-rooted prejudice and must fight hard for their place in society. We are there to help them on that journey.

From grade 7 onward, Amaro Tan students now attend public schools in the mornings, where they can build friendships and learn to integrate more fully into the broader local culture. Six of them have even made the leap to our Nehemia High School, where high academic standards and caring mentorship give them the best chance to pursue their dreams.

Here are a few glimpses into those dreams, shared by three of the students in grade 7:

KENDI: "My passion is to help people and express myself freely. I learn quickly and understand things easily. At Nehemia School I feel very comfortable, though at first I missed my old friends and felt a little lonely. I want to become a surgeon. This dream started four years ago when I had a head injury. The doctors encouraged me to be strong, and I realized then how strong I truly was. I didn't even shed a tear. I want to heal others and never give up."

KJARA: "My hobbies are reading and writing poetry, and I dream of studying at university. I love being at Nehemia School, though sometimes the long hours of study make me tired. Still, I want to continue my education all the way to university so that I can become someone who makes a difference. My dream is to be a lawyer. This is something I've wished for since I was very young."

ORKELA: "One of my biggest wishes is to change something in this world. I chose Nehemia School because its top priority is education. Since I was little, I've faced bullying and even physical violence. What changed me, in a positive way, was realizing that I could stand up for myself, set boundaries, and know my worth. Everything changes when you try hard."



Anna Riabchenko is a student teacher at the renowned LMU University in Munich. During her seven-week internship at Nehemia Gateway, she naturally also got to know Amaro Tan School: "A place that impressed me deeply."

She explains: „Amaro Tan means ‘our place,’ and that’s exactly what best describes it. Here, children who come from very difficult circumstances find security, support, and education. The education here is comprehensive, nurturing the mind, heart, and hands. Thanks to generous scholarships, some of these children are now able to continue their education at Nehemia Gymnasium. When I think of these children, I see joy, courage, and curiosity. At NG, I have seen how much can be achieved when people work together and children are supported, not only through knowledge, but also through experience, creativity, care, and appreciation."

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR A BETTER FUTURE

The children in the Amaro Tan program need support through sponsorships. For **€220 per month**, a child can attend the Amaro Tan school. This even covers hot meals, family support, afternoon activities, and transportation.

Children can transfer to Nehemia School from 7th grade onwards. This costs us between €200 and €250 per month, depending on the grade level.

We estimate that costs will increase by around 10% per year in the future. Some of the six children at Nehemia Gymnasium do not yet have sponsors.

How about a sponsorship as a Christmas gift?

Whether a full sponsorship or only a small contribution - every donation counts!

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NG Advent
Calendar 2025!

