

IMPACT

February 2026

Dear Friend,

Today, we would like to take you on another journey to the beautiful but harsh mountains of Albania and to the people who live there.

Above all, you will learn about the challenges our co-workers face doing this important work. This time, friends from Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe in Weilheim helped out and brought us thousands of parcels that we just had to distribute!

We are committed to improving the lives of the poorest people in Albania. That is why our schools are so important. We invest in the personal development of our students so that they will later be able to develop their communities in a positive way.

Thank you for participating in this important work!

Your Impact Team



WHILE MANY FEASTED, OTHERS WENT WITHOUT **Food parcels gave nearly 400 families a hopeful start to the New Year**

Between Christmas and New Year, life at NG in Albania was especially full. Thanks to the generous donation and delivery of 1,500 food parcels from Johanniter Unfallhilfe in Bavaria, Germany, nearly 400 vulnerable families received practical help at a critical moment. More than half of the parcels were distributed immediately, two per family, just in time for New Year's Eve. The timing was not without concern. In Albania, nearly everything slows to a halt during the holidays. Would the import and customs process run smoothly? Would winter weather allow access to remote villages? And would it be possible to reach all 393 families before New Year celebrations began?

To everyone's relief, the import formalities were completed swiftly. When the semi-truck arrived in Pogradec, NG staff from across departments stepped in to help unload, some even bringing family members along. Over the following two days, parcels were distributed in an intense logistical effort. This happened while much of the country was celebrating the holidays. Colleagues from Johanniter Unfallhilfe stood shoulder to shoulder with NG teams, serving with fortitude and compassion.

Nikoleta, head of Social and Medical Work (SMI), reflects: *"We worked non-stop from day-break to nightfall, without even a coffee break. By the end of three days, I could hardly lift my arms. But we were so grateful to see it through."*

Moments like these often reach beyond physical exhaustion.

Traveling into remote villages brings teams face to face with deep isolation and vulnerability. Nikoleta recalls checking on an elderly woman who had not been seen for days. After nearly half an hour of knocking, calling and fearing the worst, relief came when the woman finally responded from the back of her small home. *"Thank God she was alive,"* Nikoleta says.

She was also moved by the sight of elderly men with their horses and mules, having waited in the cold for the team's arrived. Before beginning the long journey home, they warmed themselves by a small fire, such an effort all for a few groceries. *"It breaks your heart,"* she shares, *"but it also shows how essential this support truly is."*

Not every encounter is easy. *"Sometimes people ask, 'Why so late?' or 'Why so little?'"* Nikoleta explains. *"When daily life is a struggle to survive, it's hard to see the wider picture of how donations and volunteer efforts work. That's why our teams respond with patience, kindness, and gratitude. We are thankful that we are able to stand alongside those facing such hardship."*



At the foot of the iconic "Guri i Kamjes" rock formation: a warming fire can still be seen smoking.

In the coming weeks, the remaining food parcels will be distributed, followed by the careful work of sourcing groceries and preparing new packages. While each food parcel costs only \$25, transportation and labor add significantly to cost of the effort. **Every donation makes a tangible difference.** Through faithful partnership, donors help ensure that families are not forgotten and that hope reaches even the most remote places.



Nikoleta carefully records each distribution while building relationships rooted in trust.



WHAT MAKES A "GOOD SCHOOL"?

A child's school years shape far more than academic results. They shape life. In Albania's highly competitive environment, success is often narrowly defined. NG believes education should prepare students not only to succeed, but to flourish and become a blessing to others.

Alongside a demanding, theory-heavy national curriculum, NG schools intentionally invest in students' personal development. The WEISE Concept, developed by the German

organization Schulexpert, helps unite students, parents, and teachers around a shared vision: **equipping young people for lives they experience as meaningful, lives that positively impact their communities.** At the heart of this approach is a **culture of trust**, essential for both academic excellence and social-emotional growth. One practical expression of this vision is weekly individual mentoring for upper-grade students at Nehemia School. Topics such as time management, self-organization, and personal responsibility are addressed in a safe, supportive setting. Many NG staff members volunteer their time, including the executive director. Herolinda Shkullaku shares, *"Walking alongside young people, listening to their stories, and helping guide their decisions is a true privilege."*

Students who transitioned from Amaro Tan to Nehemia School are welcome to return to Amaro Tan for even more tailored mentoring. For them, Amaro Tan ("Our Place" in the Romani language) remains a place of belonging and support. It is a reminder that long-term investment in children builds stability, confidence, and a promising future.

