

The Background



Costel has a compelling story of transformation through faith.

He was born in a Romanian village that does not even feature on google maps which he left at fourteen to study and begin a new life. Life was hard and as a father of five children he became depressed, violent and dysfunctional until an encounter with a Christian mentor changed him from being a very troubled man into a stable, rock solid, community leader with a strong faith and a Godly vision. At the age of forty-five he returned to his village with a vision to restore faith, hope and employment to his small farming village of one hundred families that had no tractor and little machinery.



In 2014, working with Bill and Val Huxley who created the charity “People against Poverty,” a plot of land was purchased, and we collectively embarked on a project to assist in Costel and Tatiana’s vision, which was, in part, to provide food for a community living on the edge of survival.

With the help of local sixth form students [Prior Park, Stoner, Beechen Cliff, and St Laurence], a small farm was constructed with the intention of providing work, food, a sense of purpose and to develop a strong community spirit.

Much has happened since the project was started as Costel and Tatiana are now running this small community farm, a village church for the locals and forever fighting to give hope to a village denuded of its young men, who have migrated for work in Germany and other western European countries. Help is needed for the old people who cannot manage their small vegetable plots and for young people who need spiritual and moral guidance. The retired live on the smallest of pensions and require food and support. So, life is not easy and many challenges remain. The farm provides food and employment for some, and a corn mill is an asset for many, but difficulties remain when the locals cannot afford the real price of the food, leading to problems expanding or even for machinery maintenance.

However, there have been extraordinary Godly interventions especially when the water table dropped below the level of the bore hole leaving the animals and poly tunnels without water. I will leave that story to Costel.

More recently Costel accepted Mitica, another homeless person into the community who now has the chance of work, shelter and food. This man has both the potential to have a new life start but also to be a great help as a farm worker alongside Costel as strong labour is in short supply.



Mitica's accommodation is completely inadequate as he shares a 15m square shelter with another previously homeless man (John) and they have no space for a kitchen, to store possessions or a proper toilet facility. Costel has for some time made a very desperate and strong request, to me, for a team to come and build a wooden extension to resolve this problem.

Hopefully 2026 will be this opportunity to support Costel and Tatiana and to bless Mitica and his friend John. I have always had a deep respect for Costel and Tatiana as a couple who have fought to present a holistic Christian message to their community over many years and had the tenacity and perseverance to do the "hard miles" over the years to serve their lord through their work in the community. Please join me!

To get a sense of the project please watch this film on <https://www.graft4growth.co.uk/films> The title is Unceste Rural farm.

GB Jon