

God's Work in Albania

By David Breidenbach

Meet Some Missionaries, November 2025

Ministry Update & A Story of Impact



Denis, Ela, and Sofia Shallari

Denis & Ela Shallari are a young ministry couple living and serving in their native land of Albania (modern day Illyicum).

Albania was once a strong Christian region; however, it was taken under Ottoman rule in 1385 and remained so until 1912, during which time Islam was forced upon the people. It is interesting to note that when talking to Albanians about the Ottoman Empire occupation they have a visceral reaction, but don't correlate Islam with what was imposed upon them. In fact, for most Albanians, the fact that they are Muslim means that they are Albanian. So, in essence they have become cultural Muslims. For the majority of Albanians, this means that they identify as Muslim and continue to carry out the customs associated with Islam – but most do not practice (or are even literate in) their faith. To further complicate this mission field, Albania was under communist rule from 1946 to 1991 – where essentially, the government or state took the place of God. All of this has left a people without initiative, without purpose, and without hope.

However, the Shallari's recently shared:

Dear Friends,

We are witnessing God's amazing work here in Albania! Through our guitar lessons, we've shared Jesus' love in creative ways. Students have grown musically – one even appeared on TV and others excelled in competitions – all pointing to God's goodness and grace!

Now, after seven wonderful years serving in northern Albania, God is leading us into a new chapter. Through our new ministry, Albanians in Action for Christ (AIAFA), we are planting churches among diverse communities – reaching Albanian, Gypsy, Roma, and White families with the Gospel. Our dream is for every new church to be led by local believers who can carry the light of Christ to their own communities.

We are so grateful for the partnership and faithful support of SON, who have walked alongside us in ministry. SON's encouragement, resources, and relationships have been an incredible blessing as we move forward with AIAFA's vision!

God bless you! *Zoti ju bekoftë*
Denis, Ela, and Sofia Shallari



Praying over a new believer



Worship in Moravë

Men's Bible Study in Moravě



The Impact of One

One beautiful example of SON's impact is the story of Vali. Vali is a mother who has faced enormous hardships, raising her two children alone after her husband abandoned the family. Her son, severely ill and bedridden, requires constant care. Despite these challenges, Vali joined our English Bible camp, generously cooking for the children.

During that week, Norine, a volunteer from the U.S. connected through SON, learned about Vali's situation. Moved with compassion, Norine visited Vali's home, offered therapy to her son, and continued supporting them financially for several years so that her son could receive proper treatment.

Through Norine's selfless care, Vali saw a real and living expression of God's love. She began attending our Bible studies regularly. After studying the Gospel of Mark, when asked what she believed about Jesus, Vali responded without hesitation: "He is the Son of God, who came to save us!"

It's a powerful reminder that one act of kindness, one faithful response to God's prompting, can change a life – and even an entire family's story. And it's a testament to how hope moves through each of us and how your support of SON and ministries like AIAFA can have lasting, eternal impact.

JOIN US!

**To learn how YOU can make a life-changing and eternal impact,
Visit <https://sonetwork.org/serve/opportunities/>**



Breidenbach, David

Spiritual Orphans' story speaks deeply to Pastor David Breidenbach. Raised in an agnostic household, David heard the Gospel for the first time during a Good Friday service in 1992. Touched by this experience, he quit his broadcasting career to become a Lutheran pastor. He has been Executive Director of SON since 2015.

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Links:

Albania: <https://sonetwork.org/learn/where-we-serve/albania/>

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