

# Mission Trip to Bulgaria

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I recently took a trip to Bulgaria with an organization called Macedonia Outreach. Our mission was to take soil and water samples in a poor village called Yastrebovo. Yastrebovo has a population of around 300 people, most of whom are very poor Roma gypsies. Our goal was to determine the soil, water quality and to help the people of Yastrebovo begin to farm the land in order to feed them and possibly sell the crops to make some sort of a living.

It was a very successful trip in that we were able to determine the quality of the soil and water, meet the people in the village and discuss ways for them to survive by producing their own food for consumption and for a profit. We found that the soils were a clay-loam with a pH of 7.5. They had a sufficient amount of potassium and phosphorous, but were low in nitrogen.

We concluded that the reason for low nitrogen was due to leaching and the villagers' financial constraints inhibit fertilizing on a regular basis. The water used for farming is supplied by wells and was of decent quality. The pH was of the water was also around 7.5 and was low in sodium.

We also tested for E. coli and other bacteria, which showed up negative. I jokingly suggested that they forget about farming and instead build a golf course. My idea was rejected unanimously.

However, the highlight of my trip was teaching Sunday school to the children of the village and spending time with them playing soccer and other games.

The help that we provided this village would not have been possible without the generous contribution from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California. So, on behalf of Macedonia Outreach and the village of Yastrebovo, Bulgaria, I sincerely thank you for your support.

