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Brilliant ideas portal

Emanuele Omusoru, Project Manager YoungstarsWiki



It has been a somewhat quieter year at YoungstarsWiki, which was mainly characterised by my basic training in military service (boot camp) and my induction into YoungstarsWiki. But now big plans are just around the corner.

As Project Manager, I will be focussing on expanding our YoungstarsWiki network on a national and international level. This will allow us to grow as a wiki and hopefully also see a greater increase in donations and sponsorship contributions. The YoungstarsWiki is a portal for brilliant ideas that should also benefit youth leaders from the Royal Rangers, YMCA, Sunday School and so on. To this end, I am contacting various new organisations this year. But that's not all - as an association we also want to start an international co-operation, e.g. with YMCA Europe. This means that we will be attending additional events on occasion, such as the Micii Exploratori leaders' weekend in Romania, which will enable us to reach a whole new audience.

There will also be new promotional items, such as flyers in English, a roll-up or other items that can attract people to the YoungstarsWiki without using any specific language.

Nevertheless, we will continue to cultivate our old relationships this year and look forward to the annual BESJ team weekend. The aim is to be able to use the planned „ideas market“ as a bridge to the YoungstarsWiki and thus demonstrate the functionality of the wiki to the youth leaders. The YoungstarsWiki will also be represented at the National Coordinators Meeting (NCM), which is taking place at the same time. We will be in close contact there and see what the needs of the individual countries are and where improvements are needed. This way, the wiki will continue to develop and improve.

I'm looking forward to being active as Project Manager for the YoungstarsWiki and making international contacts. During the summer vacation, my aim is to attend various courses and camps with Youngstars International and to promote the YoungstarsWiki. This will help to expand the network and make the wiki even more diverse.

New start in Moldova

Daniel Horst, CEO Youngstars International

„Good things come to those who wait!“ Arsenie and Daniel are the new crowd-pullers in Moldova. Finding them was not easy.

Vitalie Carabet was the national coordinator in Moldova for over ten years. He experienced many ups and downs, starting out with 15 youth groups. A short time later, they disbanded again for various reasons. One reason was that many young people emigrated. The Covid pandemic also made the work more difficult. In addition, Vitalie took on more and more responsibilities in other areas and therefore had less time for the youth group work. As a result, he had been looking for a successor for two years without much success. Naturally, „Youngstars Mol-dova“ suffered as a result of these circumstances, and by the end of 2023 only four youth groups re-mained.



We are all the more pleased therefore that we have now found someone, or rather two people. Daniel Miron is still relatively young but would like to get involved in the Youngstars work as much as he can alongside his well-paid IT job. Arsenie Antonceanu is a little older and was recommended to us by „Light in the East“ (Matthias Schöni). In a challenging appointment process, we made the decision to hire Arsenie as the new National Coordinator for „Youngstars Moldova“. We are also grateful for the support of „Light in the East“, which will cover his salary. This is a great help for us, as it enables us to support the work, especially in terms of project costs such as courses etc. We are very confident that this new management team will give a new impetus to the youth work in Moldova.

First experiences with Youngstars

Arsenie and Daniel, together with their wives, attended an introductory course in Navodari, in the far east of Romania, from 19 to 21 January 2024 to gain an even better understanding of what Youngstars is about. These are their impressions:

Arsenie: „I really enjoyed the course, especially the way the management team worked together as a team and complemented each other. I can learn a lot from them to start a new team in Moldova.

As church congregations are often unfamiliar with this type of children's and teenage programme, they need more information about the responsibilities and tasks that come with Youngstars.

It was a practical, interactive lesson that involved a lot of work. The importance of teamwork became clear, and that the participation of every leader is indispensable. For me personally, it was a wonderful experience. I felt involved (I had no choice). What won me over was the simplicity and dedication of the leaders, which was infectious. I would have liked to hear from a few more youth groups that failed. What was the reason for their failure? How did they pick themselves up again? How did they proceed and what was the outcome? I would have been particularly interested to hear about mistakes in connection with starting new groups or dealing with difficult children, because we could learn a lot from these mistakes for our start in Moldova.“

Daniel: „It was a very interactive training course where we had to put theory into practice. We learned how to tell stories, how to organise activities and how to prepare a programme. I really liked that not only the ‚how‘ was explained, but also the ‚why‘ we tell stories and use objects, for example. I was impressed by the phrase ‚work versus talent‘. Even if you don't have any particular talent, but you work hard and persevere, you can achieve good results in the end. I had a great time with my wife. We enjoyed being part of the training.“

A spark can suffice

Daniel Horst, CEO Youngstars International

„En Funke isch scho gnueg...“ (A spark can suffice ...). This is how an old Swiss Youngstars song begins. It continues with „... zum ä böimigs Fүүr azünde“ (to light a strong burning fire).

Yes, if the wood is dry and you have the right kindling, then a fire burns well. Unfortunately, it's not always that easy in practice. The situation is similar with Youngstar sparks in pioneer countries where the work is still in its infancy. Latvia is one of these countries. The first youth group started there in 2022, and we were able to organise a camp in the summer of 2023.

As a team from Switzerland, we were fired up and wanted to organise a proper Youngstars summer camp in

tents. However, during the preparations we realised that it was going to be a day camp, without overnight stays and certainly not in tents. Somehow the spark didn't seem to have ignited properly and it felt as if the little „Youngstars fire“ was threatening to suffocate. Nevertheless, we organised a day camp with great joy. The result was an enthusiastic Latvian Youngstars team who had caught fire for Youngstars, but also understood that they needed more training. That's why we planned a hybrid leadership course from 12 to 14 January 2024: a mixture of a face-to-face weekend and six evenings of online training. Ronalds, the National Coordinator, was very enthusiastic and confident that the whole team would take part. My training team included Andreas and Michelle Flückiger from Switzerland, who had already attended the previous summer camp. So, we prepared for the weekend and bought the plane tickets.



Course Weekend January 2024

On the Tuesday before our course weekend, I spoke to Ronalds and he told me, discouraged, that we would only have three participants. Once again, I had the feeling that the fire was just smouldering. We asked ourselves whether it was really worth the effort. The next morning, God made it clear to me through a Bible text that the course would go ahead as planned. Three hours later I received the information from Ronalds that we now had 6–7 participants on the course. This rekindled the fire of anticipation in me.

Six people actually came to the start of the course on Friday and seven on Saturday. Not only were they present, but they also eagerly „soaked up“ everything we passed on. On Saturday, they even wanted to play the game they had prepared outside in minus 13 degrees. They were all there again afterwards for the online training. It's so nice to see that the fire has been rekindled and that they are already applying what they have learnt directly in everyday life at the Youngstars

meetings. At the same time, Ronalds was encouraged by this, because starting out with an inexperienced team can be very exhausting. But if we have patience and stick with it, it's like a fire: a single spark can turn into a wildfire!

Summer camp song goes straight to heart

Jordelio Souza, National Coordinator Radicais Brasilien

For our summer camp here in São Paulo in January, we composed a song ourselves on the theme of the camp. This became a real catchy tune for the children and young people.

You could hear this song everywhere on the camp site. They also enjoyed practising it at the tables during mealtimes until they knew the words by heart. From 8 to 13 January 2024, 187 children and 48 leaders experienced carefully planned programme items on the theme of „The Lion King“, based on the film of the same name. We used the text to the Ephesians to remind ourselves of who we are. We discussed our identity and our goals in life. The focus of the camp was on developing each participant's character and purpose in life. Every activity outdoors in nature as well as in the community had a great impact on the participants. It is worth mentioning that 70 children and young people took part for the first time.



After the camp we invited the parents to a review with photos, films, and various contributions. When all the children and young people sang the camp song it went straight to everyone's heart. The parents were deeply impressed by everything their children had experienced. On that evening some parents even decided to change their family's way of life.

The search for a camp site turned out to be a challenge, as rents are constantly rising. We started Youngstars groups and camps eight years ago. Most of the leaders were enthusiastic participants as children and adolescents, and now they are already leaders and role models for the next generation of children. Every single day confirmed our vision that Radicais is a tool to prepare children and young people throughout Brazil to become important leaders in society.

Two steps forward, one step back

Markus Karzelek, Country Manager YoungStars Polska

Of course we had our expectations, when we decided, over a year ago now, to move to Żory in the south of Poland. And (almost as expected) of course everything turned out different.

We thought for example that our Youngstars group in Wrocław would continue and even thrive. We thought that we would first get to know people in our new church and from churches nearby before slowly starting a new group. We surely didn't want to rush things. But as the saying goes: "Man proposes, and God disposes". Now, a year later the Youngstars group in Wrocław is suspended (at least for now) but here in Żory we have already started two groups. The first started in the Brethren Church we attend. Joanna, responsible for the children's ministry asked us to help her with Sunday School. Up to now we have never done Youngstars meetings on Sundays during the service. But we adapted and began with regular meetings on Sunday. Studying the Ten Commandments we followed Indiana Jones and discovered the powerful message God sent to the Pharaoh (and the Israelites) that there is only ONE God. As detectives we solved the case of the two brothers A. & K. suddenly disappearing. We looked for candidates for the perfect husband and wives (and found them) and so on.

Only weeks later we also started a Youngstars group at the Ukrainian Brethren Church, which has existed here since the start of the war in 2022. Bartek, the young pastor of this church, asked us to start a Youngstars group in his church with the help of some young men and women. So, we meet every other Saturday with mostly Ukrainian speaking kids and play, bake, read Bible stories, learn Bible verses, do sports and handicrafts. In February we also had a day-long training course for everybody involved and received some really positive feedback after the training.

Now we are planning our Summer Camp with volunteers and kids from both churches (and from Wrocław) and we hope that the camp will further improve the ministry in the churches here and in other parts of Poland. But as I said: these are just our plans. Whether God will lead it this way or not, we don't know.

Perlas of the Caribbean

Fabian Meier on assignment at Perlas Cuba together with Daniel Horst

Since 2018, Nelsy, the National Coordinator of Cuban Youngstars (called Perlas), has presented this new concept in many churches across this Caribbean Island with 11m inhabitants.

She has taught 3-day introductory training courses, which have resulted in about 11 Perlas groups. After a Covid standstill, the time was finally ripe for the first leadership training course, which took place in Holguin, in the east of the island.



This premiere was not without challenges but was ultimately a great week thanks to tireless Cuban organizers, eager participants, and God's hand over it. In a country in crisis where nothing is easy, be it electricity, water or transportation, Nelsy and her team heroically organized all necessary elements for our course. When we had last-minute problems with the location, we blessedly stumbled across the city's botanical garden with a classroom and a wonderful natural landscape.

Shivery Cuban winter temperatures (24°C) did not prevent a warm atmosphere in the group, with many "Perlas" leaders meeting each other for the first time. This group of pioneers covering a wide age range was hungry to learn more about our methods and entered enthusiastically into even the smallest games and

practical implementations. Our applied ways of teaching new methods were a refreshing contrast to the participants' experience in their education system, which relies heavily on top-down teaching and memorization.

Two highlights were certainly the scary night game and the delightful time spent toasting bread over the campfire - both new experiences for all the participants. The night game in the dark bamboo forest was far outside the comfort zone of most and led to a few loud prayers, but everybody persevered and felt proud in the aftermath.

With a strong group of pioneering leaders, we are looking forward to the future of Perlas in Cuba, in a time that is incredibly difficult for the islanders. We hope and pray that they can soon be strengthened with the next course!



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