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Dear readers,



At Youngstars International, every year brings a first — always striving to improve, always setting new goals — and this year is no different from the previous ones. Even though we plan everything and give our best to be fully prepared, there is still a sense of anticipation about the outcome. Stepping into another year with Youngstars International means walking in faith. Sometimes the steps need to be so slow that the urge to move faster could break everything, and this is something we continue to learn. God is calling us to walk in faith, one step at a time, trusting that every step we take has already been prepared by Him. He is already there; in every country, in every training, and in every life we encounter. At times, it may feel like we are asked to do the impossible, yet the invitation remains the same: to walk in faith and simply take the next step. The beauty of it is that we can walk this journey together.



Cosmin Tamas
Managing Director Youngstars International

Growth in Numbers

The foundation of each Youngstars ministry is built on small groups and local clubs, where engagement begins at community level. In the past year, 22 new clubs were established across the network. The most significant expansion occurred in Brazil, Cuba and Romania, contributing to an estimated increase of approximately 1,500 children reached with the Gospel.

Camp activity also showed substantial growth in 2025. The total number of camps increased from 57 in 2024 to 118 in 2025, representing a growth rate of over 100%. These camps engaged approximately 2,300 more children and teenagers, all of whom were exposed to the Gospel.

All countries (without BESJ)

Year	Local groups	aprox no. of participants (Local groups)	Camps	aprox no. of participants (Camps)	Trainings	Number of participants (Trainings)
2021	96	1736	34	1330	12	139
2022	100	2007	37	2100	17	290
2023	114	2592	55	2292	25	426
2024	114	3185	57	3069	39	752
2025	136	4694	118	5387	37	717

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A First Step for Albanian Youngstars

How a moment at TeenStreet grows step by step into an exciting vision.

Cosmin Tamas, Managing Director Youngstars International



The participants of the first introductory training in Albania.

From March 20–22, we held our first Introductory Training in Albania. It was a door that had been opened months earlier through our presence at TeenStreet in 2025. After many online meetings and conversations, we finally stepped into that moment, ready to begin. The journey itself was long, 15 hours by car, yet it passed quickly, filled with anticipation. We knew this was more than just a trip; it was the continuation of something God had already started.

Every new beginning comes with uncertainty. The location was far from what we were used to: a single small room in the middle of the city, just enough for 12 participants. There was no outdoor space and no green area but only walls and eager faces. The group was very young, with an average age of 13–14, making it even more challenging to deliver an intensive training like the Youngstars Introductory Course. It required flexibility, creativity, and a willingness to step outside our comfort zone.

So, we adapted. We reshaped the program, adjusted the games, and embraced the space we had. We realized that if we couldn't demonstrate that

a Youngstars course can happen anywhere, how could we expect them to start a club of their own? Our willingness to adapt became the starting point of their transformation. As we taught them how to prepare and lead games, we saw their potential come alive despite their young age and limited resources. With each session something shifted. They began to understand not just how to run activities, but how to care: to notice children's needs, to create meaningful alternatives through play, to understand the environments children come from, and to design programs that truly serve them. Each lesson became personal, practical and deeply impactful.

By the end, a simple but powerful thought emerged: "I think we can start a Youngstars club too." Whether spoken with confidence or hesitation, the seed was planted. Now, we wait in faith not for the first step but expecting the next step in Albania's Youngstars journey.



Cosmin telling the story of Jonah while the participants are blindfolded and smell fish.



The leaders wash the children's feet as part of the story of Jesus.

Latvias Walk in Faith

Whether the changes are visible or invisible, whether we have many or few resources, in Latvia we want to run Youngstars together with Jesus and do our very best. For He is at work.

Ronalds Svarups, National Coordinator Latvia

Last Saturday morning in Riga, a 13-year-old boy was spotted heading out early. Uniform on, backpack ready. He was on his way to Jaunsardze (New Guard) – Latvia's national youth cadet programme that trains young people in discipline, character and service to their country. A few years ago, this same boy was one of the harder ones to reach, restless and difficult. He needed a leader remaining at his side every afternoon. Someone did and something changed. That boy G. had found his way to Draugu Cilts and has now outgrown it. As a different young man he is living in his country.

I, Ronalds Svarups, first came across Youngstars International in Switzerland, where children gather in nature to learn skills and hear about Jesus is simply a normal thing. When I returned to Latvia, the idea would not leave me. Latvia has forests everywhere. And more than that – Latvia has children who need Jesus. In 2022, I founded Draugu Cilts, which means "Tribe of Friends", in the neighbourhood of

Jaunciems, Riga. The vision was clear from the start: reaching children who do not know Jesus yet and supporting them into the best they can become.

Latvia carries real needs. More than 95% of people have no personal relationship with Jesus. Over



Participant shoots with a bow he made himself at the camp with Andy Flückiger.

half of the marriages end in divorce. Many children grow up without much stability or direction. Into that reality, Draugu Cilts brings something different – a team of around five leaders showing up every month, heading outside with a group of 8 to 12 year olds. They spend an afternoon building shelters, learning survival skills, acting out Bible stories and hearing a Christ-centred message. No rows of chairs. No performance. Simply people and children, out in the forest, together.

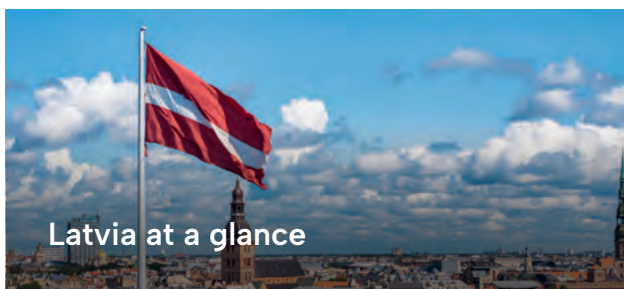
The camp has become the heart of the year. Draugu Cilts has now held three camps. The first was a day camp at Jaunciems Lutheran church – a start. The second took a step forward, an overnight stay at Davida Kalna Skola, a Christian-owned place near Madona. Then last year, thanks to donours from Switzerland, the children slept in tents for the first time. In the earlier camps, Daniel Horst, former CEO of Youngstars International, came to lead. Last year it was Cosmin Tamas, current Managing Director, making the journey from Romania together with a team of four volunteers from Switzerland. This year, the camp is led mostly by the Latvian team themselves, which is a great sign of progress!

“Every child that comes, even from a good family, needs someone to look up to. This is the place where we try to be the best role models and inspire these children to live a godly, meaningful life.”

Ronalds Svarups

Camp is where things tend to shift. Two boys from non-Christian homes attended last year's camps and came back differently. Their parents noticed changes – in their behaviour, in the questions they began asking at home. Then there is a boy known as M. He started coming to the afternoon gatherings and kept coming. After a while, his mother began attending the local church. M. was not a believer when he first walked through the door. Today he is – and he has not missed a single camp and attended almost every afternoon gathering.

We do not always see the full picture. Most of the stories we will never even hear. That is fine. It is not



Population

Approx. 1.85 million – one of the fastest-shrinking nations in Europe, with many families separated by emigration to western countries.

Faith background

Approx. 68% identify as Christian (Lutheran, Catholic, Orthodox), yet regular church attendance is around 7%, probably even less. Decades of Soviet-era atheism left its mark regarding active faith.

Primary challenges

Nearly 1 in 5 Latvian children face poverty or social exclusion, rural isolation, family instability and a secular culture make it hard for young people to encounter Christian community.

Youngstars founded

2022 – Draugu Cilts (“Tribe of Friends”) launched in Riga as part of the global Youngstars International network.

Key stats

Monthly gatherings and one yearly camp that combines survival skills and fun outdoor activities with a Christ-centered message.

because of us anyway – it is Jesus working through the word that is preached.

I want to be honest about where we are right now. This winter has been hard. The attendance has dropped. Two of our leaders have welcomed newborns into their families, which means less capacity for everyone. We are a smaller team at the moment, doing our best with what we have. But we believe Jesus sees the effort. He knows who needs to be at each afternoon's programme. Even if only a few children show up, He cares for the one who comes.

Our hope is that some of the children who grow up in Draugu Cilts will become mini-leaders themselves and eventually lead their own clubs in their own cities and generations to come will be blessed by this.

Fear Transformed into Courage

How trusting God step by step turned a shy young woman into a leader impacting lives across Brazil.

Barbara Gomes, Assistant Manager Radicais Brazil



Barbara at a camp with her small group. That's where discipleship begins.

On a quiet day in Rio Grande do Sul, I stood in front of a group, prepared to lead a training alone, far from home, and only three months after losing my father. The weight of grief was still fresh, yet there I was, stepping forward. In that moment, I realized how far I had come. Years earlier, I had been a shy girl from the south of São Paulo, unsure of my place, and now I was leading others.

The journey had not been easy. When I first joined Radicais Brazil in 2016, I carried deep insecurities: shyness, low self-esteem and a constant doubt in my ability to lead. Saying "yes" to that first invitation felt like stepping into the unknown. I wanted to grow, but I didn't know how. Being part of a team was already a challenge; seeing myself as a leader seemed almost impossible. Yet something inside me kept pushing me forward.

Over time, Radicais became a space of transformation. Through trainings, responsibilities and real-life challenges, my perspective began to change. I learned to step out of my comfort zone, to face my fears and to trust the process. That defining moment in Rio Grande do Sul became a breakthrough despite my pain, I saw lives being impacted, people drawing closer to Jesus, and I understood that my story could serve a greater purpose. What once felt like weakness became strength and I began to see myself not as incapable, but as called.

Today, after 10 years, I serve on the board of Radicais Brazil as treasurer, leading trainings and supporting the growth of the ministry. The journey continues, with faith that what started within me will keep inspiring a new generation.



Winning at the bucket ball championship, a game that was taught previously in a training and now is played with the kids.

Growing in Our Calling

A team weekend in Bulgaria helps leaders discover God's plan, grow together and start the coming year with confidence.

Nikola Popov, Assistant Manager Bulgaria, SIP Bulgaria

At the end of January, the room was alive with voices, laughter, and anticipation. Thirty-three leaders arrived from different cities and age groups, each carrying stories, questions, and a heart to serve. I am Nikola from the SIP Bulgaria team, and this weekend marked our second leadership gathering. From the very first moments, it was clear this would not be just another meeting, it would be a time to encounter God and each other in a deeper way.

The challenge was real. Many of the leaders did not know each other well. We also carried the weight of the past year with unanswered questions, successes, and mistakes. It was easy to arrive with expectations and leave with routine. Yet we wanted to leave the gathering differently and wondered how God would guide us for the year ahead.

Over the weekend, God met us in the simplest yet most powerful ways. Through prayer, worship, small groups, and honest conversations, barriers began to break down. Cosmin, our main speaker, challenged us to listen to God's calling for our lives, and many leaders felt a fresh conviction about their purpose. Moments of laughter mixed with deep reflection,



First Devotion at the team weekend, asking the question: Do you have a calling?, which was the main theme of the weekend.

and slowly, leaders who barely knew each other began praying for one another, sharing struggles, and celebrating victories. By stepping into these moments together, we realized that ministry is not just tasks or programs; it is people walking in faith, supporting and encouraging each other.

When the weekend ended, no one was in a hurry to leave. Hearts were lighter, relationships stronger, and vision for the year clearer. God had exceeded our expectations, showing us, that leadership is first about following Him and walking together in faith. This gathering reminded us that when we step out in unity and trust, God can do far more than we imagine.



A group of leaders on a hike at Boyana Lake. It was time for bonding in nature.

Events

April

04/02 – 04/05 | Youngstars Italy
Introductory training

04/04 – 04/11 | BESJ Switzerland
Basic training

04/04 – 04/11 | BESJ Switzerland
Leaders training

04/11 – 04/18 | BESJ Switzerland
Leaders training

04/16 – 04/20 | Radicais no Brasil
Camp, Sergipe

04/18 – 04/25 | BESJ Switzerland
Leaders training

04/22 – 04/26 | Youngstars Int.
NCM, Hungary

04/30 – 05/03 | Radicais no Brasil
Camp, Espirito Santo

May

05/02 – 05/03 | BESJ Switzerland
Module: Nature (for all leaders)

05/05 – 05/06 | Youngstars Ukraine
Hiking with teenagers

05/08 – 05/10 | Youngstars Int.
Introductory training Moldova

05/09 | BESJ Switzerland
Floorball: BESJ-Masters U13 (competition)

05/14 – 05/17 | BESJ Switzerland
Module: Move in the nature (for all leaders)

05/29 – 05/31 | BESJ Switzerland
Module: Lake (Training for lifeguard) with SLRG

05/30 – 05/31 | BESJ Switzerland
Floorball: BESJ-Masters U16 (Competition)

05/31 – 06/06 | Radicais no Brasil
Leadership training

June

06/03 – 06/07 | Youngstars Polska
Group leaders training

06/04 – 06/07 | ABÖJ Austria
Techniques training

06/05 – 06/06 | BESJ Switzerland
Regional leaders meeting/retreat

06/07 | BESJ Switzerland
Modules: River (Trainings for lifeguard) with SLRG

06/12 – 06/14 | Perlas del Caribe CU
Introductory training

06/19 – 06/21 | BESJ Switzerland
Instructor training for BESJ trainig leaders

06/20 | BESJ Switzerland
Advanced modul zip-line

06/21 – 06/26 | Perlas del Caribe CU
Kids camp

06/21 – 06/28 | Youngstars Int.
Leadership training Moldova

06/24 – 06/28 | Radicais no Brasil
Camp, Paraíba

06/27 – 07/04 | Youngstars Italy
Camp

06/30 – 07/03 | BESJ Switzerland
Team support training

Volunteers needed



Poland

Group leader training, 03–07 June
Basic Training, 03–09 July
Kids camp, 11–17 July

Bulgaria

Teenagers Camp, 01–08 August

Youngstars Int.

Leadership training Moldova, 14–20 June
TeenStreet Germany, 01–08 August

► Contact us at info@youngstarsint.org

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