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A course that remains..

Patricia Ghevalt



“Sí, se puede.” (Yes, it can be done). These words, spoken by one of the participants, have echoed in my mind ever since we returned from the Team Leader Training course in Cuba. I can confidently say, “It can be done.” Why? Because I met leaders there with unwavering hearts for Christ and a deep commitment to ministry, despite the many challenges they face. Their passion was big, and their drive to make a difference was inspiring.

Before leaving Romania, I knew very little about Cuba. We didn’t know what to expect. Everything was an adventure one that we embraced to the full. From a flat tire on our journey from Havana to Santa Clara, to frequent power outages during the course, and the distinctive Cuban food - each moment added to a uniquely memorable experience. The main goal of the course was to teach participants how to work as a team. What surprised me most was how quickly they applied what we were teaching, particularly when it came to teamwork. Every day, I saw their growth they were eager to learn and fearless in asking questions. One remarkable thing was how quickly they learned the technique of the low ropes course, which was a new concept for many of them.

Cultural differences were evident, but they weren’t a barrier. I remember during the first lesson, many of the participants were talking to each other while we were teaching. Yet, through open communication and mutual understanding, they quickly adapted to our expectations. It was a beautiful reminder that when hearts are open, there’s always a way to bridge gaps.

Throughout our time in Cuba, I couldn’t help but feel the protection, love, and care that God provided. For instance, we faced power outages nearly every day, but they always seemed to happen during the daytime, when we didn’t need power. Only on the first evening when we were watching a movie, the power went out when we needed electricity - and even then, we were able to proceed without any issues. Despite the challenging climate, the leaders had almost no health problems, and we adapted to the changes quickly.

But of course, no cross-cultural experience is without its challenges. For me personally, the biggest challenge was the language barrier. Teaching in Spanish was difficult, but the participants’ willingness to help and their



eagerness to understand made all the difference. Their kindness and teamwork were truly a blessing. What moved me most was seeing how the training impacted the participants. Many of them shared how valuable the course was, and they were excited to take what they'd learned back to their ministries. They were eager to multiply what they knew and spread it to others, creating a ripple effect of transformation.

In the end, we witnessed something incredible: despite the scarcity of resources and the challenges they face, the ministry in Cuba is thriving. This is possible, only because it's God's work, driven by people who love Him and are dedicated to serving others.

A milestone for SIP Bulgaria: Our First Team Weekend

Cosmin Tamas, Managing Director Youngstars International

The first weekend of February 2025 was a momentous occasion for SIP Bulgaria as we hosted our very first team weekend.

Like any "first," there were moments of uncertainty being a small team, we weren't entirely sure how the program would unfold or where our main focus should lie. But we walked forward with faith, and your prayers and support during this time made all the difference. The weekend was filled with worship, community building, small games, workshops, and meaningful input sessions. For me, there was almost no time to sleep but the energy and excitement of the event made it all worth it! Our main goal was to inspire our leaders to step out in bold faith and to encourage them to invest more deeply into the ministry they're so passionate about.

A personal highlight for me was hearing Cosmin's powerful teaching on Sunday from the story of Gideon. His words struck a deep chord: "The numbers don't matter." It reminded us that growth isn't about having hundreds of people it's about having the right people, those who are fully

committed and ready to give their all for the ministry. Personally, I am still discovering what it means to give everything for this cause, and I know that each step of faith is a journey we take together. It's truly a heartfelt answer to prayer that we already have 35 (and counting!) dedicated leaders on this journey with us. Another prayer answered is that this weekend even took place at all! The fact that we gathered together as a team to take this step, is a testament to God's provision and faithfulness. As we move forward, I continue to pray that the seeds we've planted will take root and grow. May God continue to speak to His people, guiding us in the work He has called us to do.



Youngstars International at the BESJ Team Weekend

Michelle & Andi Flückiger

Around 1200 Youngstars leaders from all over Switzerland met from March 21–23 in Huttwil (CH) for the annual BESJ Team Weekend. We took part - manning the Youngstars International promotional stand. “Youngstars International does such valuable work!” we heard several times.



A pastor came to our stand and was interested in introducing YI to his church members. “It’s important to me that people from our church also look beyond the borders of Switzerland,” he told us.

Two young adults who grew up abroad came to the YI stand for the second year now. They are planning to return to their home country in the future and were interested in starting with Youngstars there again. We encouraged them to get in touch with YI if their plans become concrete.

In all the conversations we had, it was exciting to see how God moves people’s hearts for different regions: for some it was Central America, for others Eastern Europe, for others Asia... For Andi and me, our hearts beat for Latvia. That’s why, in addition to YI promotional material, there were also small tents and a Playmobil campfire on the table. In the summer, we will be supporting the Latvian Youngstars team at their third summer camp. For the first time, the camp will be held as a tent camp. However, as the Latvian Youngstars group does not have its own tents, tents must be

rented. To ensure that the camp fee for the children does not have to be increased as a result, we had the idea of looking for sponsors to support the tent rental.

We don’t know exactly what effect the team weekend had on everyone. But we hope that people will be moved and that the support for the worldwide Youngstars movement can grow.

We have something to say!

Hensie Van der Merwe, President Youngstars International

This quarter, we want to introduce you to the Youngstars International Executive Communications director, Marcel Klausberger.

Marcel is married to Mirjam, who herself is a founder member of YI and member of the YI supervisory board since the very start, serving as our Treasurer. She has also served on the Juropa board for 12 years. They have two beautiful children, Livia and Eric, who have both graced us with their joyful presence at many international YI meetings.

When Marcel agreed to serve our association, we expected that his charismatic manner, enthusiasm for promotion and heart for the Lord would be a great blessing to Youngstars. However, we, as the Youngstars board could not imagine the exponential impact the love of this family for the Lord and this ministry would have.

Marcel is only working for Youngstars for 20% since he is also the CEO of his own communication agency called “Uftritt.” In his 2024 report, Marcel remarks, “Within “Uftritt,” we distributed the working hours among the team. Everyone contributed: the videographer (Christian), the copywriter (Tamara), the graphic designer (Jeffrey), and myself. Our big goal is to make the entire appearance of Youngstars International more professional. We were able to create a lot last year.” This is the kind of commitment one sees when someone understands that all in our lives ultimately exists to honour our Lord.

With a mix of hope and expectation, they wrote to over 150 churches, accompanied by carefully formulated cover letters and detailed financial brochures. "I received a delightful response from Andreas Maurer, the person in charge of the Reformed Church Dürnten. He is currently in talks with Cosmin to open new paths in Armenia and plans to financially support YI.", Marcel writes. "We have realized that we can only act in trust in God and that He is the one who opens doors. It was a year full of challenges, but also full of blessings and divine guidance."

The goal for the promotion for 2025 that Marcel set was to reach out to 20 church communities per year in the hope of finding an open door to present the work in at least 10. To Marcel's disappointment, so far, he received only rejections, "We already have enough projects," was the common response. However, another of our YI heroes, our accountant, Markus Sigrist, was able to present the project for the first time in his community "Brennpunkt" in Uri, with the aim of honoring God. The subsequent response was enriching and appreciative. Praise the Lord!

Various other opportunities to share about the ministry has presented itself. Marcel ends his report with, "... events, such as youth group meetings and prayer meetings, have partially arisen. People should find joy in honoring God with this work."

Youngstars is growing because of commitment of our executive team, our members and our partners who keep us in prayer. Praise to the Lord and thanks to those who sacrifice time and energy and finance to see the Lord's Kingdom come in the next generation.

