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Report on TeenStreet, July 26 - August 2, 2024

Daniela Horst



TeenStreet? We didn't know exactly what to expect. TeenStreet is a 6-day mission conference in Germany organised by OM for teenagers from all over Europe. It takes place every year at the end of July and is attended by several thousand teens.

The event took place at an exhibition center in Germany. The halls were arranged in a rectangular shape and in the middle of the halls was a large square with various food stands. Our task was to represent Youngstars International with a stand, which was part of this "TS Village", where people liked to hang out and where there was a festive summer party atmosphere, especially in the evening. We were able to make a small fire in a fire bowl and anyone who wanted could come and grill marshmallows - and many people wanted to. We used about 25 packs of marshmallows and 800 wooden sticks!

The conference was incredibly good on several levels. On one hand, it was an excellent opportunity to make Youngstars International known as we talked to teens, on the other hand we met accompanying adults - leaders and coaches

working with children and youth in their countries. Many of them would also like to have Youngstars in their country and we hope to make some new contacts and opportunities to be able to work with existing organisations in the future or to start new Youngstars ministries. A sponsored run, called the RAG Race (Raise and Give) also took place. We are richly blessed as one part of the money raised will



go to Youngstars International.

Of course we weren't the target group, and yet the topics of the main teaching sessions really spoke to us. And yes, the worship was not only loud, but very, very loud - teens are loud in everything they do! But the week was not just about fun - it was incredibly encouraging to see how enthusiastic these kids are for Jesus, how seriously and devoted they want to follow him. We are convinced that they were encouraged and strengthened by the whole event - and the same applies to us. We are absolutely impressed with TeenStreet and the concept behind it.

Transformed generation

Cosmin Tamas, Managing Director Youngstars International

Camps are always demanding. Teens amplify the effort you need to put in to make everything run smoothly. As a camp leader my biggest fear was focusing too much on fulfilling every program element of the camp and neglecting the personal needs of the teens, for whom I did this camp, and neglecting needs of the leaders.

We had the camp at the Torchbearers Center at the foot of the Bucegi mountains in the heart of nature. What made this camp unique was the harmony created among participants and leaders. It was unexpected to see almost eighty people from at least 15 different locations to, get along so well, in such a short time.

My desire was to see God working in the lives of teens also through a camp instead of just a Micii Exploratori teens camp as a place where one can experience nature, meet new people, have fun playing games, go on the mountain and sing. I wanted a lasting impression that this is a place where one can experience God.



We started the camp on Sunday afternoon. The days went by quickly - until Wednesday when time seemed to stand still It was the day we were going to introduce the teens to the Gospel and pray that their lives would truly be transformed by God

Imagine a small soccer field with several rows of bleachers. Teenagers sitting and listening to the gospel, through a very simple message told by



Andrei, one of the leaders. A question asked, "Whose servant are you?". As the question hunged in the air, all the teenagers who wanted to and who felt the need to talk to someone were invited to come down to the soccer field where the leaders were sitting and waiting for them to talk to them and pray for them.

There followed a few seconds of silence where nothing happened. We sat and waited for at least one teenager to make a decision. Those seconds felt like many minutes, and then the silence was broken by the sound of footsteps coming down from the stands and heading our way. Finally, I began to pray that all those present to whom God had spoken would have the courage to come and when I opened my eyes, one of the most beautiful sights unfolded. With each leader sitting on the field, there were two or three teenagers praying, tears in their eyes but joy on their faces.

M's testimony: "While Cosmin was talking about temptation I felt that he was talking about me, that everything he said was part of my life and somehow he knew all my struggles, I didn't understand what I should do and why I felt like this, the next day I understood from Andrei's study that I was a prisoner and that although I sing and go to church I

as not serving God, I realized that I have a battle to fight and God is the solution"

A few weeks after the end of the camp, I found out that a group of girls from different places in Romania, were asking for help from one of the



leaders. They had created a WhatsApp group with the aim of studying and deepening more of the Bible!

The 30 minutes spent that day on the soccer field were the highlight of the camp, God showed me that a camp is not only a place where you can have fun but also a place where a generation of people can be transformed.

“A journey towards a future”

Gustavo, YoungStars Radicais Brazil

My name is Gustavo, but within Radicais, in my local YoungStars group, I’m called Max. I’m 20 years old and I’m from the southern part of the city of São Paulo, Brazil.



I started participating in Radicais (the Youngstars Organisation in Brazil) when I was 13 years old, at a summer camp organized by the team. At the time, I had just started attending church, and the camp was about to happen. Since I couldn’t afford it at that moment, I wasn’t going to go. But Jordelio—the main leader and president of Radicais—called me to talk and asked if I was going. After I told him no, he said he would bless me, and when he found out that I had a brother, he said he would bless him too, so we could both attend the camp. This gesture deeply impacted me

and my family. After that, my involvement came naturally, and it has been 7 intense years since then.

Radicais has become a part of my life, and I can’t see myself apart from it. To me, it’s a tool for evangelism and discipleship that prepares children and teenagers not only for church life but for all areas of life. It’s a place to overcome your limits, even the ones you thought you couldn’t leave behind. A place to connect with people and live intensely through everything that lies before you.

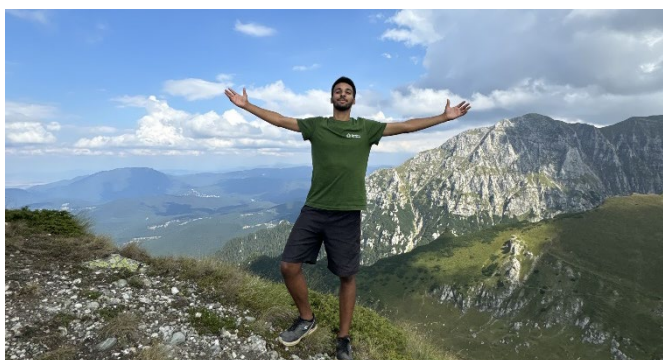
Radicais in Brazil can teach everyone a lot about tackling tasks with intensity and team spirit. It’s about being competitive and passionate about what lies ahead, and always be ready to take on new challenges. What makes the team different, in addition to this, is the spirit of unity that brings everyone together for a single purpose, making us a family.

In July, the Youngstars in Brazil, Radicais, sent me, one of the leaders to Europe to gain more knowledge and experience, with the goal of continuing to improve the work already happening.

It was an extraordinary experience, filled with challenges and valuable lessons. In the end, there were five camps in four different countries, Switzerland, Austria, Germany and Romania, where we worked with children and teenagers, focused on pioneering techniques, engaged in physical activities, and much more. This experience and knowledge I can share back home, will broaden our perspective and prepare us better for our work in Brazil. It also deepened our connections with other Youngstar organisations.



After everything I experienced, the most profound feeling I have is gratitude for this privilege. It's impossible to share two months of rich experiences in a short text, but I am confident that these moments will bear fruit. I'm eager to share what I've learned with the team in Brazil and to continue growing in our mission to spread the gospel to more people.



What I can say for sure is: This journey is a milestone in my life, and I'm committed to applying everything I've learned to make a lasting impact back home.

A Vision-Changing Week in Italy

Omşoru Emanuele

"This training gave me a new vision for our national Youngstars movement." This is one of many statements, made at the end of the Team Leader Training that took place in July in the mountains above Bergamo in Italy. With 13 participants, coming mostly from the host country with a few joining from Bulgaria, we as training team not only taught but also learned a lot in this week. The differences regarding the average age of participants served us so that we gained a lot through an awesome exchange of knowledge and experiences.



This training opened doors to deepen the relationship with ASEI – the older of the two Youngstars movements in Italy, the other being Youngstars Italy. It was a special experience for me because the ages of the group were quite different in comparison to other Team Leader Trainings I attended. I, as a trainer, was one of the youngest people in this training, but have been received with open arms and honour as hearts were open to learn from my knowledge and experience.

On the other hand, I could gain so much from participants with years of experience in leading a Youngstars club. This was what made this training quite interactive and rich in discussions.



For me personally, to be leading in this course, was an indescribable rich experience. It showed me how different Youngstars clubs are working around the world and gave me a deeper perspective of this wonderful network. It surely was also a challenge! We faced so many different problems, with different cultures and with their roots in very different contexts. But exactly through all those conversations I realized how God is using this training to strengthen the ministry. I am convinced that participant's comment at the start of this article, came from the bottom of their heart and that this sentiment was shared by most in this training. It was a "mind-changing" training that gave a new vision, a new perspective and new methods for the local Youngstars ministry that also strengthened the international network.

Building Leaders: Reflections on Group Leader Training through the Story of Nehemiah

Viktoria Rüdiger, S-Board YI

Every year for about 13 years now I pack my backpack each summer to embark on the next camp adventure. For some years I served as a helper, leader, co-leader and this year as the main leader of the Group Leader Training.

As I packed for this year's training, I reflected on our topic, Nehemiah. While his story centers on building a wall, I considered the need to build up leaders—a task that may be equally, if not more, challenging, I will let you decide. Unlike constructing a wall, which allows for careful planning regarding materials, skills, time, and execution, developing a leader is far less straightforward. There are no clear timelines, instructions or completion dates. By the time I finished packing, I felt both overwhelmed and excited by those thoughts and also eager to see what the week would bring.



After a long journey, we finally arrived at the camp, ready to begin. As participants arrived, I could sense their eagerness and excitement to learn, evident in their eyes and their careful preparation—complete with all the necessary stationery (pens in every colour) and journals.

We began the first evening by reflecting on the experience of our training leaders - some of whom had completed their Group Leader Trainings (GLTs) over 30 years ago. They shared valuable advice for the participants to take into the week ahead. Throughout the week they learned about discipleship, project management, managing difficult children, camp ministry and planning a camp, creative projects, mapping out a hike and much more. Our goal was not only to deliver the lectures with passion and clarity, but also to motivate and equip participants with the tools necessary to start local groups. Apart from teaching this needed to happen through personal conversations and feedback.

In SIP (Youngstar organisation in Bulgaria) the summer camps are the pinnacle of our ministry and we have many dedicated leader and helpers. However, we face a significant challenge: a shortage of experienced leaders willing to step up and start local SIP groups. This responsibility requires ongoing dedication and planning throughout the year, unlike the limited commitment of a few weeks during summer.



On our final evening, I wanted to shift our focus to the future. I wanted to provide participants with an opportunity to offer advice to the leaders who will come after them, but also for them to take time and pray about their personal calling. We created a time capsule, where anyone could leave a letter,

picture, or memory. Here is a short excerpt from one of the submissions:

"This week was amazing. The lectures were practical, and the leaders had so much experience we could learn from. I just want to encourage you that you are in the right place. Be an example for the children, and don't shy away from taking on more responsibilities. Most importantly, remember that the children and their salvation are your ultimate goal."

Before and even at times during the training, I was primarily focused on making the lectures memorable and assessing whether the participants were ready to start a group in their churches. Yet, my ongoing prayer remains that the seeds we planted and the experiences they had will inspire and give them the confidence to further invest in the ministry, creating opportunities for children to encounter and experience God. While the training and its materials provide a solid foundation, I have come to realize that my ultimate trust is in God, praying that He will meet each participant personally and call them to fulfill His work.