

Let's talk about summer camps!

news from Novi Most Autumn 2021 New Bridge

pioneering youth work in Bosnia and Herzegovina

@novimost   

For a long time now 'make the most of every opportunity' has been a motto we try to live and work by. This summer it felt especially relevant. With all the uncertainty related to the pandemic making normal planning feel like an almost futile process, a lot of what we've done this summer has had something of a spontaneous feel to it.

As we've talked together as a team and as the summer's drawn to a close the overwhelming sense is one of gratitude for what we have been able to do in our locations, and the experiences that we have shared together at church camps. There might have been fewer camps than usual, but it was a big deal that there were any at all. The camps that did happen highlighted, once again, the importance of having national events and how much people value them.

Then there are the specifics we are thankful for. Some might seem like little things, some are obviously big moments. Hopefully you'll pick up on them as you read through this New Bridge. We want to thank you for your support and encouragement. It plays such an important role in enabling everything we do to create life changing opportunities for young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A BIG THANKS TO ALAN AND HIS FAMILY

Alan Leese finished his work with Novi Most at the end of August. We are thankful for the part he has played in the team and for all he has invested in young people over the past decade. He gave us a few thoughts on leaving.

I find moving very exciting and one of my favourite moves was coming to Mostar 11 years ago in 2010. Way back in 1994 - single and 22 years old - I was praying to God that he would bring me to Bosnia and Herzegovina to serve but he didn't. However, fast forward 16 years and I was on a plane - with my wife Liz and our two children, Gabrielle and Ben - coming into land at Dubrovnik airport, where we were picked up by Ivica. He drove us to Mostar and a new adventure began.

One reflection I have is that God called us all here, not just me. He has used Gabrielle and Ben to shine his light at school, in sports, amongst peers, even when they were just 8 and 6. Don't discount the little ones. And that's what Novi Most is all about - what will God do in young lives? Novi Most at its best is as good as it gets at partnering with local churches and helping young people discover more about themselves and God. So many here say that the best times in their lives were Novi Most moments. You're part of that through your kind support. Thanks.

It's time for us to move on from Novi Most, though we'll still be in Mostar. Moving forward our new brief will involve more multi-generational work that focuses on serving across the life of the church, getting involved in formal education through working with both teachers and pupils, and personal evangelism in our local community. In essence, we want to help build bridges between the lost and the church through the gospel. Please pray for us.



Hands up who wants to hear our highlights from this summer!



The Novi Most team on retreat back in June



Ben, Alan, Gabrielle and Liz... and let's not forget Zlatan!



YOUTH CAMP



Beki leading the opening session of Youth Camp

Emek Beraka, the campsite owned by the Evangelical Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina, hosted various camps this summer. The biggest was Youth Camp, which gathered young people from across the region.

"For me the highlight of the summer was definitely camps, even if we were afraid of having camps because of corona and how the situation is currently in the country. So first of all it means a lot that we were able to have some camps, and second it was special that we had around 70 young people at Youth Camp. The highlight of that camp was that on the last night four young people came forward to accept Jesus in to their lives. And there were many who didn't come forward who renewed their relationship with God. I felt that it wasn't just an emotional reaction or response to how we shared the gospel. It was really obvious that these young people want to follow Jesus from now on, they want to live a different life."

Beki – NM Sarajevo



The title of Youth Camp was Hokmah – the Bosnian transliteration of the Hebrew word for wisdom. It was so encouraging to see the young people really embrace this theme and ask lots of questions about life during the week.

"At Youth Camp the theme was Wisdom, which meant a lot to me. I'm looking for God's wisdom, that I don't live by worldly wisdom. It meant a lot for me to speak and be responsible for the programme on the Wednesday. I spent a lot of time thinking about the day and praying it would go well, and I'm really happy with how it went."

Ivica – NM Čapljina



Volleyball is always a favourite at camp!

Marija hosting the 'grill-a-pastor' Q&A



We saw a lot of young people take on new challenges during camp, whether that was leading discussion groups, or leading worship, or leading the programme. Marija is a Novi Most volunteer in Čapljina and camps this year gave her a great opportunity to be stretched.

"Youth Camp was really good. It was really good to have the opportunity to be together and to see people grow. It was really good to see Marija step out of her comfort zone and to take on things that this time last year she just wouldn't have done."

Becca – NM Čapljina



Ivica playing in the first football tournament on the new pitch at Emek Beraka.

Indira, Novi Most administrator, has been part of establishing a Royal Rangers group in Mostar over the past couple of years. She gives us her camp experience.

"First of all I want to thank God for protecting us and for working in the hearts of young people. The theme of the Royal Rangers' camp this year was 'Storms'. There were young people from all over the country – Sarajevo, Tuzla, Jajce, Prijedor, Brčko and Mostar. We took 12 young people and three leaders from Mostar. These 12 young people are a part of Novi Most through Royal Rangers.

I have to say that it really encouraged me that these young people took responsibility and successfully completed their tasks. For most of our young people it was their first time at camp, although three of them had been scouts. It was the first time for them sleeping in tents and cooking for themselves and what they made was really tasty. They didn't only surprise us but they were surprised themselves. Their parents were so happy when they heard this. We also had workshops such as archery, running, tying knots, pampering and pyrography. For the evening programme we gathered around the camp fire and shared about God from his word.

On the last evening we had an evangelistic talk where after the word young people could raise their hands if they wanted prayer for the storms they are going through in their lives. For me it was really encouraging that four young people from Mostar raised their hands and asked for prayer and we could pray with them.

And of course as well as taking part in all these activities the young people made new friends with young people from other towns. I believe this is just the start of what God will do in the lives of these young people and in us leaders."

Indira – NM Mostar

ROYAL RANGERS CAMP



Still happy after having to cook for themselves!

CAMP TEAM RETREAT

The camera-friendly part of the team!

Lots of opportunity to be stretched musically



Each year at Emek Berak there is a 'full-time team' - the people who are at all the camps to make sure everything is set up properly and runs smoothly. Many of the team are late-teens and twenties. Beki explains how this is a training opportunity.

"We had a retreat for the full-time team, who worked at Emek Beraka camps. I can see how they are growing and maturing. They want to serve and they feel more ready and equipped from year to year. All of this is part of our vision at Novi Most. We want to equip and encourage them to keep being part of a change in society. With the skills and self-confidence they get from their time serving at camp they can transform the places where they live."

Beki - NM Sarajevo



With no big Teen Camp this year the Čapljina team organised a Mini Camp for some of their teenagers.

"We did the mini camp for our teenagers in Čapljina knowing they wouldn't be able to come to Youth Camp. What I noticed is it made them really appreciate camp more, they noticed how much work goes into the setup, especially the people who'd been on camp their whole lives."

Becca - NM Čapljina

"The theme of the camp was 'I can't be bothered'. Most of them on the camp were teenagers and this is a very teenage attitude: I can't be bothered. Where does that attitude lead you? If you can't be bothered you won't go anywhere, try anything or see anything. I told them that it was great they could be bothered enough to come on the camp. That's a good first step. We did some great work together - there was a lot of grass cutting and cleaning - but we also had a lot of fun. For a few of them it was their first time on the camp, and they were excited about it. I hope they'll want to come back next year."

Ivica - NM Čapljina



Last-minute video-of-the-day viewing!

CAPLJINA MINI CAMP

Without anyone ready to go to youth camp this year, Rowan and Budo opted to turn their focus to working with a new group of young people.

Just some of Rowan's many violin students



"This summer we have focused on young people in 7th-9th grade. It has been great to see a new group forming and we are excited about what will happen with this group in the future. We had weekly activities such as tennis, volleyball, barbecues and board games sessions, and one-off events including a concert, an escape room, a treasure hunt and a ukulele workshop. We had planned for the concert to be outside but out of all the lovely summer days we have had, on this day it poured with rain so we had to fit everyone into the church for the concert. Twenty young people performed so with all the parents watching it was very squashed but the atmosphere was great and the response from the audience was very positive."

Rowan - NM Jajce



Volleyball is also a favourite in Jajce!

JAJCE SUMMER PROGRAMME



Budo with young people eager to try tennis

Cluedo was a big hit!



"I'm really happy with how's it's gone. The idea for tennis this year was more about scouting, let's see which of the young people are really interested in this. Let's look at those who come to our various courses and offer them something a little bit different. Those who've come have really enjoyed it. For some of them it's been the first time they've had a tennis racquet in their hands. Maybe some think it's easy to be a Djokovic or a Nadal, but when you pick up a racquet you realise it's not quite that easy. But I'm really pleased with them and their desire to try, and maybe in the future one of them will become a star!"

Budo - NM Jajce



The race to win the treasure hunt in Jajce!



Summer 2021

WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE & DREAMS ARE REALISED

In the last New Bridge we talked about Taner, his new rock band Castra and how it was his dream to be the first rock band from Jajce to have made a music video.

We are pleased to say the band now has not one but two music videos out. The first was shot on the green screen in Matt's studio, the second was filmed in the theatre in Jajce.

Matt was excited that the second video was filmed by Ema, a young person from the church in Brčko, who sung backing vocals on Buka Vesela, the album based on the Psalms.

"I love it when there's an overlap between the work we do with young people from churches around the country and the work in town. We want to inspire young people in church to write worship songs, and to want to record them and make videos for them. For me, making singles with a band is part of proving this is possible. So it was great to see Ema get this experience. We had song writing workshops at Youth Camp and I really hope we're going to see new church music from some of our young people this year."



Ema captures Matt proving he hasn't forgotten how to be a poser!



CHECK OUT THE VIDEO FOR THE NEW SINGLE ON YOUTUBE.

MANDALA IS AVAILABLE NOW ON ALL STREAMING PLATFORMS.

Rehearsals with players from across the country



COULD IT BE YOUR TIME FOR A NEW GENERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA? MUSICIANS IN TOWN

We know that perhaps right now the thought of travel seems daunting but maybe you're dreaming of a visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina, maybe even of becoming part of the work here. If that's you then please contact our office and let's start a conversation about what's possible.

Don't forget that even if you can't visit you can continue to support our work through the website. Clicking the green 'donate' button will take you straight to a simple and secure CAF Donate page. (If you are reading this as a PDF file you can click the button below.) The QR code will also take you straight to the CAF donate page.

Rowan is the conductor of Limena Glazba, the town wind band, in Jajce. The band was founded 123 years ago and last conductor held the post for 50 years. When she took over the need for new, enthusiastic players was obvious. It's the conductor's job to teach young people who want to join, so she's been teaching half a dozen different brass and woodwind instruments. Now a new generation is emerging. This summer she had the opportunity to take six teenagers to a Limena Glazba camp in Stolac. Over four days of workshops and rehearsals her band members learned fifteen new songs and got to perform a concert with other musicians from around the country. Many of the band's new young members are also connected with Novi Most activities. We are glad to be able to provide such a wide range of musical opportunities to young people in the local community.

Limena Glazba plays at cultural events in town. This summer that has included the waterfall diving competition and at the annual theatre festival, which always features a fanfare from the balcony as part of the opening ceremony.



Rowan waiting for the moment for trumpets!

SEARCH 'LIMENA GLAZBA JAJCE' ON YOUTUBE FOR VIDEOS OF THE BAND PERFORMING.

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pioneering youth work
in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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