

So many memories have been made in Mostar

News from Novi Most Autumn 2022

New Bridge

pioneering youth work in Bosnia and Herzegovina

@novimost   

We've observed over the years that people in the local church love visitors who come back more than once. Former Novi Most director Gill Rowell has made countless visits to BiH over the years, so there was a lot of excitement when she said she would visit this summer. The team and the churches she visited really appreciated her trip, but what impression did she leave with?

This year I made the difficult decision to stand down from the role of Trustee feeling the time was right, time to "let go" and hand on the baton to others! But having last visited in 2018, I wanted to visit the team again – this time not in any formal capacity, but as a friend, a co-worker in the vision and dreams captured years ago, to witness for myself how everyone was doing and see what God was up to. What I saw was dreams being faithfully realised. It was so heart warming.

Beki (Novi Most Director) and his family met me at the airport and we drove to Jajce. Beki told me that this year the summer camps were "the best ever", that everyone was so expectant and eager to be involved. Also, young people had joined in from Serbia and Croatia, something to really celebrate. In a world of so much division, Novi Most and the church is working hard to bring God's unity and reconciliation.

Highlights of Jajce were staying with Matt and Rowan Hellyer, meeting people, hearing the stories of young lives growing in confidence. Especially seeing how the music scene has developed, and Matt's studio for recording songs written and performed by locals, who, without their encouragement and patient teaching skills, would not have stepped out in such creativity or vulnerability.

4 Hombres and Flowery, the band in which local Novi Most worker Budo plays drums, were launching their first album "Mirna Bosna" (Peaceful Bosnia) and I was so excited to be at the concert. Before the band played, a younger band "Generation" (one of whom was Budo's daughter) played a song. These young people were 11-13 years old – this was a huge opportunity for them, one which was certainly formative and has the capacity to change their lives. One of the parents of the young violinist told me, completely unsolicited, that loads of really great things had happened in Jajce over the summer, and the Novi Most team had had a hand in many of them. It was so encouraging to see them making and being such a good influence in the town.

Next stop was Mostar, where I met up with Indira, had fabulous ice cream, watched bridge jumping off the Stari Most. I remembered the times I had been there before, what God had done in the members of the team, locals, young people, many of them married now with their own children coming along to youth events.

On Saturday Indira drove me to Čapljina, where Becca and Ivica opened the Klub doors to the kids who were excitedly waiting to be let in. Ivica arrived on his motor bike, something of a local hero it seemed to me, and Becca followed on her bicycle. The kids set to playing pool, computer games, and board games. Ivica sat with a lad learning guitar. It was relaxed and noisy and exciting to be there.

Becca and Ivica are working hard in Čapljina and it is so encouraging to see them flourishing as leaders. They would really like others to join them though as there is lots to do and it would be good for them to work in a larger team – if you are half tempted, please get in touch with the Novi Most office for more information.

I was left with the strong impression that Novi Most is a part of the accepted scene in the locations we work, that we really are changing lives for the better. Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of those magical places on earth where, though the most horrendous atrocities known to mankind have occurred in our lifetime, there is healing and joy. All of creation there was shouting out the praises of God; the mountains stretching to the heavens, the waters deep and and tempestuous. God is working his purposes out, and it was a real joy to be alongside team members I had recruited years ago, who have given their lives so that others living in a land where blood was shed in war might know the joy of knowing Jesus, whose blood was shed to bring peace and reconciliation.



In Jajce and ready for Budo's concert



Hanging out with Becca and Ivica in Čapljina



Last night fun in Sarajevo!



SUMMER CAMPS AT EMEK BERAKA



This year saw the Evangelical Church of Bosnia and Herzegovina celebrating 20 years of summer camps at their campsite at Boračko Jezero. Once again the Novi Most team played a key role in helping to organise and run the camps. We asked some of the team for their thoughts on how things went.

KIDS CAMP

Indira was part of the Royal Rangers camp that happened in late June. She was also at the Kid's Camp in early July.



Indira grabbing a moment to sit down at Kid's Camp!

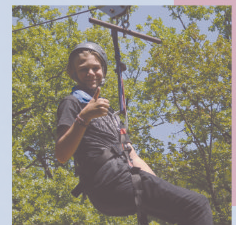
"This year we were able to take eight kids from Mostar to Kid's Camp. It was their first time at a church camp. Most of these kids come from a Catholic background, and this is first time to face with camp like this. I can say that God did something in the hearts of those kids; especially in the heart of one young person who comes to our meetings regularly. He comes from a divorced family. He used to behave badly but now we can see some changes in him, and particularly since the night at the camp when we shared the Gospel. He was crying a lot and I believe that was a night when God really touched his heart. So keep him in your prayers, that he and the other kids will open their hearts for God and be transformed. All of the kids enjoyed the camp activities. I have been really encouraged by the positive feedback from them and from their parents after camp."



Lot's of fun and games...



...and songs with actions!



TEEN CAMP

Becca and Ivica led the planning for Teen Camp. Becca tells us what was particularly encouraging about this year's camp.



"Teen camp was back! Having not had it since 2019 there was much anticipation and excitement both for the teenagers and for those of us organising camp. The 2 year break meant that the majority of campers were on teen camp for the first time.

The theme of the camp was "BRO". Throughout the week we looked at the different friendships Jesus had and how He modelled friendship for us. Through talks and discussions we explored both the positive side of having friends but also the challenges it can bring – a topic especially relevant for teenagers.

The camp, however, built up to giving the teens an opportunity to accept the invitation of friendship that Jesus offers. Almost a third of the teenagers present at camp responded saying they wanted to accept that invitation! Our hope and prayer for those teenagers is that it will be a decision that will change not only their lives forever but also have a much wider impact too."



Afternoons at the lake are a big part of camps.

Mealtimes are a time to chat and to serve.



Beki organised Youth Camp; here are his summer highlights.

YOUTH CAMP

"We had an amazing camp for young adults this year. A hundred young people got together in the beautiful scenery of Boračko Lake from different cities across Bosnia and Herzegovina and also from Croatia and Serbia. As one of our goals is to see reconciliation among people from different ethnic groups I was privileged to see how something like that is even possible. Seeing that new friendships are established, new skills are gained and stereotypes are challenged gives me joy and hope for the future.

The young people had the opportunity to learn more about themselves and about their heart. Our theme was "What comes from inside" – that dreaded, sinking, I-can't-believe-I-said-that-out-loud feeling. We talked about the disconnect between our own attitude and our own actions. "For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks," states Matthew 12:33. The words we "accidentally" speak and the actions we later regret are actually in keeping with what's hiding in our hearts. Scary, but true!

A highlight of this summer was seeing the group of interns serving for the month at summer camps. To see 20 young people willing to be challenged in their walk with God brings hope to our nation."



Ivica and Beki with Saša, who carries the overall responsibility for Emek Beraka



Happy to be caught on camera!



Enjoying the evening programme



Matt spends a lot of his time encouraging young musicians

IZVOR ŽIVOTA

In spring of 2022 Matt produced a worship EP of songs written by him and some of the young people involved in playing on the recordings. It was released in time for the summer camps.

Izvor života means 'source of life', and the EP has five new songs on it. For most of the young people involved in the project it was their first experience recording like this. We hope it will not be their last!

"It was a great privilege to be part of this project. I think it was a big step for us."

Rahela – Vocals



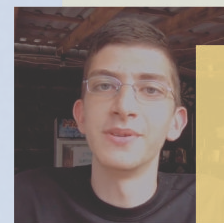
"I think it was something that was outside our comfort zone for both of us. It was a time when we realised we are in a bubble and we can go out of the bubble. I think that's where the freedom is. When you realise you have so much to give, more than you know. And for me, that was the experience."

Angela – Vocals



"The experience was super exciting. Essentially it's a dream come true for me. I could never imagine doing something even half-professional, let alone something of this high quality."

Elizej – Keyboards



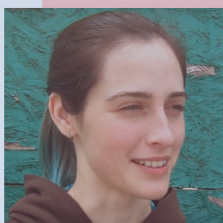
"It was such a wonderful experience. Especially because this was done very professionally and it was my first time to do anything recorded professionally. I was very happy with how our EP came out and hopefully by next year we will have a full album."

Saša – Guitars



It was really fun. We recorded everything really fast but the outcome was great and I really enjoyed it. It's always a pleasure to do things like this because you are leaving something behind you. It's a nice thing to see when people sing those songs and you can see they are enjoying them.

Emma – Bass



Inspired to play and sing.



It's good to see young leaders leading at camp.

LISTEN TO IZVOR ŽIVOTA ON THE NOVIMOSTMEDIA YOUTUBE CHANNEL



A youth camp so big they don't all fit in the picture!

UNDER THE WATERFALL

BUDO ORGANISES 4 HOMBRES & FLOWERY CONCERT IN JAJCE



As they say: location, location, location!



That moment when the hard work pays off.



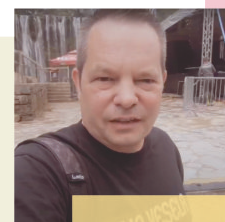
General opinion was it was a great night of live blues rock!



MIRNA BOSNA WAS RELEASED BACK IN MAY.

MATT PRODUCED THE ALBUM AND IT HAS RECEIVED GREAT REVIEWS FROM MUSIC CRITICS IN BIH, CROATIA AND SERBIA.

'Generacija' - a band of Novi Most Jajce music students - got to open the show.



Somebody likes to talk on camera!

FACING FEARS AND OPENING DOORS!

During the school holidays Indra organised taking young people from Mostar to aqua park. It was a great way to cool off during a hot summer but, as she explains, it was more than that.

"It was fun for them but it also helped some of the teens conquer their fears. Seeing that was an encouragement for others but also for us leaders; it open the door so that we can speak into their lives. Please keep the young people from Mostar in your prayers. Pray that they will open their hearts to God and be hungry for Him. Pray for the new beginning of the new school year. We want to see these young people get good grades and be instruments that God can use. Please pray for their protection from lies and things that would try to steal their joy."



FROM ENGLISH COURSES TO TEACHING IN ENGLISH!

Hatidza started coming to Novi Most in Čapljina back in 2015. She has completed two English courses with us and received her Cambridge certificate having passed the exam. We have seen her grow in leaps and bounds not just in her knowledge of English but also in her confidence. She recently got a job at United World College, the international high school in Mostar, teaching Biology in ENGLISH! This is a huge step for her and although she is nervous awaiting the start of the school year, we know she will do an excellent job and be a fantastic teacher. Here's what she has to say about learning English with us:

"I have been studying English at Novi Most since 2015. Being in an environment full of positive energy and young people who want to learn has helped me to improve my English. I'm glad that I can learn from people such as Becca and Ivica, who really know their job and are always there to help."



If you'd like a little bit more on some of the stories in this New Bridge we recommend you check out Matt and Rowan's weekly vlog on their 'WeDoAdventure' YouTube channel.

Although their videos are focused around their work in Jajce they have recent vlogs from Teen Camp and Youth Camp, as well as videos with Generacija in rehearsal and from the 4 Hombres concert. Also don't miss out on Gill Rowell reflecting on the first few days of her recent visit to BiH.



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