

NCM 2019 Odessa

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This year we were again able to participate in the NCM (National Cordwainers' Meeting), one of the highlights of the year. Usually it is the only occasion to meet representatives from almost all countries in the YS Int network. Otherwise we communicate by email, phone and skype during the year.

This event also involves a lot of work for the leaders and hosts in terms of preparation, planning and coordination, and then we don't get bored during the days we are there. However, it is also an excellent opportunity to meet face-to-face and the aim is to meet, get to know each other and exchange resources and experiences. Accordingly, it is held in a different location each year, so this year we travelled to the Ukrainian city of Odessa on the Black Sea coast (nearly a day's train ride from BiH).

The planned sponsored run was a great success and well received. We were unsure beforehand how well it would work - we are not used to fundraising events like this in Eastern European countries. However, the money raised exceeded even our wildest expectations. Half of the donations will go to the YS Int network, while the other half will go to our Ukrainian partner Nasledie (orphans and children in institutions or special needs camps, e.g. SNI, autism).

The themes of the few days of devotions and personal silences were organised around the book of Daniel. Each time different (national) reflections were brilliantly brought close and illustrated the message of the prophet. In small groups, we then took the daily impulses further towards personal application - we found the fellowship enriching and also contributed to getting to know each other's (different cultural) thinking.

We can speak of the prayer evening in similar superlatives. Each national YS movement set up a corner and a poster with useful information and prayer requests. For me, prayer is always like a little foretaste of eternity: different languages and cultures united before the throne of God.

So NCM has once again highlighted what the Youngstars network is all about: wherever, in whatever language and culture, our aim is to proclaim the Gospel (in our case especially to children and young people) and to glorify God. In this we help and support each other in a variety of ways, across borders.