

Projekt „Diocesan youth ministry coordinator in Latvia “

– Anda Aleksandrova

Zwischenbericht



The beginning of the “Diocesan youth ministry coordinator in Latvia”

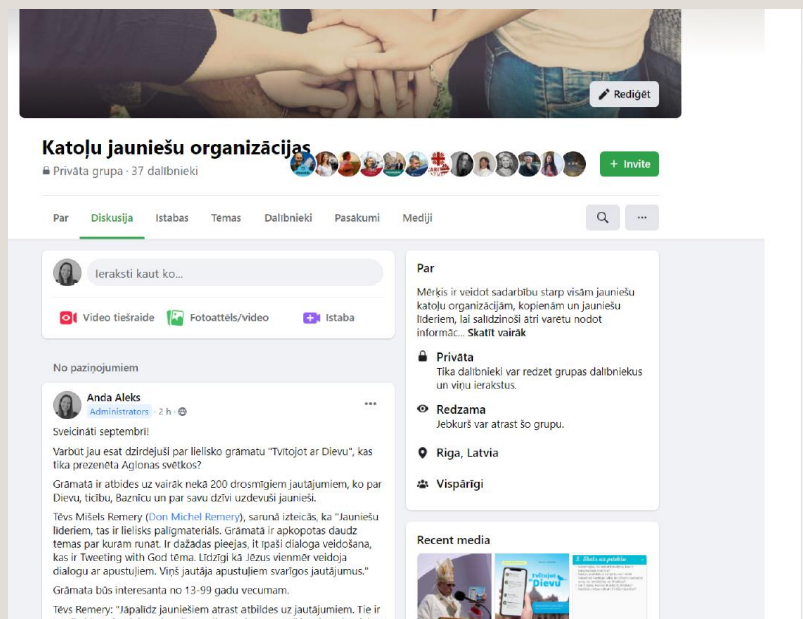
Thanks to the financial support by Bonifatiuswerk and the initiative of the Archbishop -Metropolitan of the Roman Catholic Church in Riga Zbigniew Stankevich, a vacancy was announced in the archdiocese of Riga for the position of Youth Work Coordinator. After a selection process, Anda Aleksandrova was chosen to perform the duties of a Youth Coordinator. In the following the project will be described by Anda Aleksandrova.

Preparations

Since January 1st I had more than 90 interviews with organisations, priests, congregations, youth and other persons who are involved in youth work in Catholic church. All interviews can be seen [here](#). After all these interviews main benefits are:

- We will create working groups for different topics relating to young people (for example: Family role and organisations who work with youth in this field; Materials for youth work in Parishes etc.)

- There will be written strategy for 3 years for work with youth in Latvia
- Common working activities. All organisations will work under one umbrella. Organisations already have met each other on the 30 of June at Catholic Gymnasium ([see photos of event here](#))
- All of the organizations are now in closed group on Facebook, where they all can collaborate and I can present all news concerning youth work (please see photo of FB group Catholic organisations).



2 the facebook group

- Created database of 270 contacts who work in Latvia in Catholic Church and who have some kind of relevance with youth work.

Projects and campaigns

Hackathon 2021

We have organised Hackathon 2021 on 17 of April.

In Hackathon, four main themes were raised: leisure and socialization of young people, support for young people in various aspects of life, skills and knowledge needed for real life, and a sense of belonging to the local community, support for young people and self-confidence.

A total of 23 young people participated in Hackathon and they were divided into 4 teams and each of the teams was assigned one of the issues. Leaders and mentors were involved in the teams, who helped with their knowledge and skills. The teams were able to develop ideas throughout the day and at the end of the evening they were presented.

The idea of the first team was about leisure activities. It was based on the problem of the Covid 19 pandemic - the isolation of young people indoors, which has led to a deterioration in their social and physical health. The proposed idea is an application in which the young person receives the challenges of the day, with the possibility to add friends and earn points for the completed activities.

The idea of the second team was to create a youth support network. It would provide an opportunity to gain individual support for young people. This network would enable young people to access the necessary resources (literature, podcasts, testimonies), as well as the opportunity to receive individual mentoring or to join groups with similar problems.

The idea of the third team was based on the acquisition of real-life skills and knowledge. The problem is that the school does not fully prepare young people for real life. Possible skills were considered - financial literacy (taxes, pension, savings, inflation and credit), healthy lifestyle, etc. current topics for young people.

The idea of the fourth team was to implement the project "Sunday of Mercy", with the aim of persuading people to do good deeds, helping others.

The personal involvement of each young person in volunteering, their personal testimonies, as well as the initiatives of the young people themselves would be invaluable.

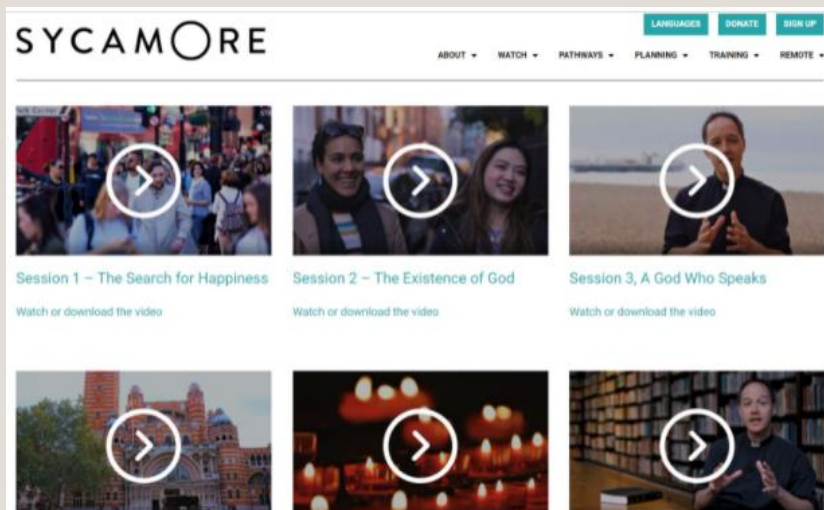
The first place in this hackathon was won by the idea of creating a youth support network!



3 During the Hackathon.

Materials for Parishes

I have started to work with materials which will be used in Parishes. I have contacted Susan Loghurst and we are now translating Sycamore films for youth in Latvian. These films will be great working material in Parishes.



4 These films are translated in many languages and used in Catholic Schools and Parishes to speak with youth. See more about Sycamore here: <https://www.sycamore.fm/>

Another material which will be used in Parishes is book Tweeting with GOD. Which have been translated in Latvian. I have been in contact with Father Michel Remery and together with KALA Raksti and Aija Balode (who translated this book), we could present it on 14 of August in Aglona. Our Archibishop Zbigniew Stankevič presented it and we will work now to distribute it in churches to catechists.



5 Archibishop Zbigniew Stankevič presents the book “Tweeting with GOD”.

Cooperation with katolis.lv

I have started to interview youth themselves and together with katolis.lv we put short answers to questions on Facebook. Katolis.lv have more than 3000 followers and this is great chance to let other know what young people think of GOD, of parents, of religion etc.

Pilgrimage to Aglona

We have had Pilgrimage from 2 – 14 of August with Radio Maria Latvia. There were many young people with whom I had spoken about leading group of young people in Parishes, I have interviewed them and gave all contacts, as well we have made contact for next projects and working groups.



6 The youth group in front of the Agluonos bazilika.

Support for young people to mitigate the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic

We applied to this project and won grant of 10 000 EUR. We have started these activities:

- Charity works for kids with autism, together with young people;
- Mentoring for Youth with priests, psychotherapists and mentors;
- Acquisition of skills and abilities - video production, content production, etc. Radio Maria Latvia
- And others



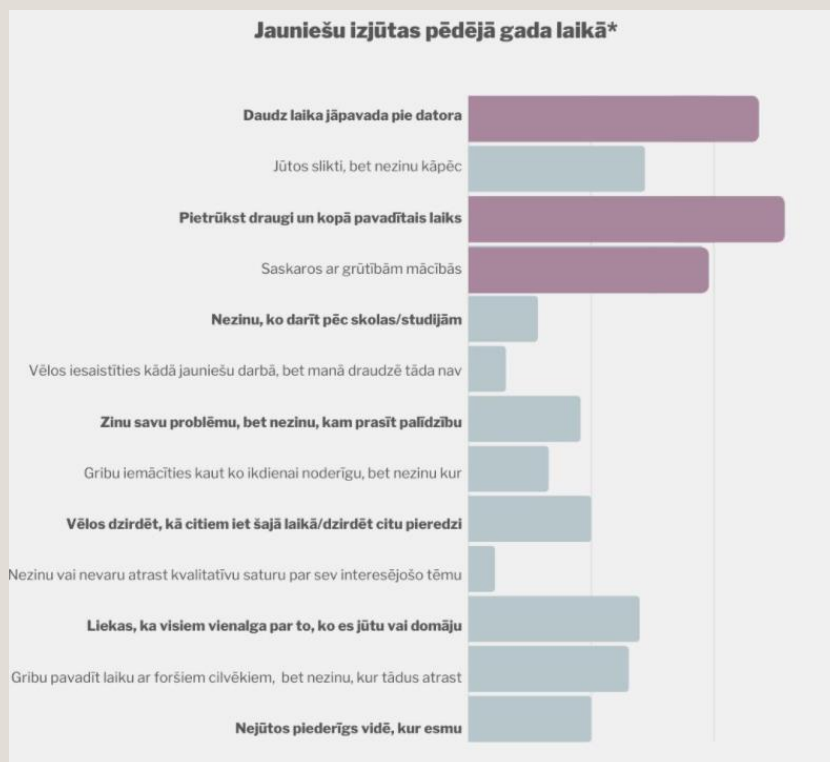
7 During a record of a testimony of youth.



8 The young people get education about leadership, how to work with people with autism etc.



9 In cooperation with the association „Nepaliec Viens“, project participants have the opportunity to gain experience in volunteering and spend time with children and young people with special needs.



10 another aspect is the conduction of surveys on how young people feel and what they should receive, including churches.

Camp Oasis 2021

From 21-28 of August, we have organised youth camp, called OASIS 2021. 40 participants from different Latvian cities participated in this camp. There were various evenings, during which young people had the opportunity to learn about the creation of the world, listen to various lectures, participate in master classes, as well as one of the evenings young people had the opportunity to listen to testimonies from animators. There was intercession and also the opportunity to

accept Jesus Christ as our Savior. There was also an evening of forgiveness, during which the young people reflected on their relationship with their parents, loved ones and God. The camp was very emotional and the young people went home with filled hearts and a bright view of the future.



11 A church service at the camp.

Conclusion

In conclusion I want to say that each interview showed a great love of God and a plan for youth work. Interviews with young people also showed how much this work and the support they need from the church. Real support for young people and congregations is needed, with accurate materials, instructions, training. There are many materials from other countries that have already been prepared and that we can use, they just need to be translated and adapted for Latvian youth. Also work with leaders, they need support, training and regular meeting with me and also with other leaders for experience exchange.

Within the next year plan is to work together with organizations. Strategy development, joint activities, and planning. Summary of interviews and opportunity to get acquainted with them.

Development of materials for congregations.

And until the end of the funding period, plan is:

1. To establish joint cooperation between organizations who are working with young people in Latvia
2. Establish a material support and a contact point where youth leaders can obtain the necessary materials to work with young people within congregations
3. Create a single platform that acts as a bridge to all organizations and structures - radio broadcasts for Christian youth, camps, retreats, events, materials, etc.

4. To train youth leaders in congregations and to establish cooperation within dioceses.