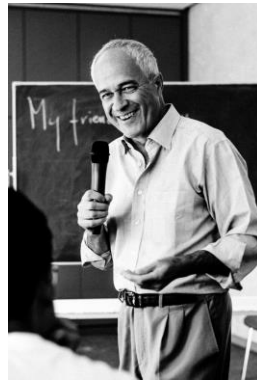


ESGD Summer 2016 ~ Our reflections and reports



Looking back to the full summer of workshops, we want to share some reflections and reports about what was experienced and created together. Many blessed children around Europe and beyond were involved, and so we believe it is worthy to look back on what was achieved as inspiration for the coming year.

Inspired by True Mother's Cranes Club speech, this year's summer motto was "Be original". We wanted to provide an atmosphere and education, where we, as blessed children, could connect to our origins in the Principle, in True Parents and in our own parents, gaining strength and confidence to become "deeply rooted and uniquely creative" ~ our sub-motto. I was able to staff on the Junior, Senior and ODP+ and on a personal note, I feel very grateful to be so involved in education, and to spend my summer's fully packed with workshops. So, I wanted to take the chance to begin by sharing a more internal overall report, with the following individual workshop reports focusing more on participant reflections.

This year in particular, I could really experience the power of the connections we share as blessed children. We share our course and we face similar challenges. And so it was very moving to see the many occasions where, as the workshops built up, elder brothers and sisters were taking time to share personally with their younger siblings one-on-one. It reminded me that there is so much we can learn from and offer to each other. There was also a significant amount of 2nd gen staff and team leaders giving morning services, testimonies and lectures alongside ESGD which added so much to the quality and diversity of education. Indeed, there are those lessons you learn from the text or the book, and then there are those lessons you learn from life. I felt so grateful to be in an environment where, based on our care for each other, so many beautiful life lessons and diamonds could be shared, passed on and caught. We are co-creators of our own lives, but also of each other's. What we do, what we overcome, what we achieve and learn, matters. And having the courage to share it, is what can often help others to find hope and strength for their own lives too.

Connected to that, many experiences this summer confirmed for me that understanding our roots is key to understanding and walking our path. Too often, it seems that we, as blessed children, are hoping for a "conversion experience" that many of our parents went through, or are waiting for the moment we independently "choose" to live this way. But I believe that our challenge and our course is quite different. It's true that we didn't choose this life; but we don't have to either. God has chosen us. We are not converting from one way of life to another, like our parents ~ we were born into this. And so, our challenge is not so much about *choosing* the principle, but about *becoming* and *living* it. These roots have been given to us. And allowing them to shape the life we create more and more, is what I see as the key to us reaching our full potential. That is why, year after year, I believe God guides so many of us to invest into these workshops. Because good education and care matter. I see it year after year, that education and environments of real care and trust are so decisive. It is what allows us, as blessed children, to grow in confidence about our responsibility and our potential to create something good in our lives, together with God.

Lastly, this summer reminded me again of the story of my local hero that my village Church is founded on ~ St. Lawrence. He was a trusted Priest of Rome in the 3rd Century, responsible for the care of the treasury and riches of the Church. And he cared a lot for people. As Roman authority grew, they demanded that St. Lawrence turn over all the riches to the empire. And as the tale goes, he asked for three days to gather all the wealth but in that time, actually did the opposite ~ he worked day and night to give away as much of the Church's treasures as he could, to the poor and to the families around him. After the third day, the Roman officials ordered him to give up the wealth of the Church, but he had nothing left to give them. On being demanded to show them where the riches were, St. Lawrence brought forward his congregation ~ the poor and the crippled, the women and the children. And he said, "These are the true treasures of our Church". Every summer I am reminded of this story ~ that out of everything we are trying to do and create as a Church, our blessed families and our blessed children are one of God's biggest treasures.

Drawing on these experiences, I do believe that all of us as individuals, families and communities can greatly benefit from reflecting on how we can lean in a little closer and play our part to support those around us more. And that we choose to make real steps, day by day, to express to the people in our lives that, more than anything else, they are our biggest treasure.

It's hard to fully estimate or grasp just how valuable this summer was. But my personal opinion is that for God, being involved in these kinds of workshops is also one of his yearly highlights. It is so impacting to be surrounded by an environment where those around you, in their own way, are trying to reach out to others more, trying to let God and others into their lives more, trying to challenge themselves in wanting to make better and stronger choices. And so, connected to that, we want to thank and express our gratitude once again to all the staff, upon who's care and effort these workshops could grow and thrive: to all the team leaders, to all our educators including William Haines, Jack Corely, Rev. David Hanna, Armando Lozano and Ando Rodrigues; to Janja Rybarova and Brigitte Schawaller as workshop Mothers; to the kitchen staff; to all the core staff that supported us as ESGD in the main running of each workshop ~ and of course to all the parents and families who trusted us again, to care for your children and for giving your continued support.

Yebuny Hanna, on behalf of the ESGD team



Treasures of Heaven workshop ~ July 12th – 17th



This was the fourth of its kind in Europe, designed to support Second Generation with physical or mental special needs. Our TOH participants were supported by their parents and Second Generation volunteer 'buddies', which brought a wonderful family dimension to the workshop. We were able to enjoy at least one session all together each day, whilst also giving space for parents and children to follow separate programs that catered to their specific needs.

The Second Generation (TOH participants and their buddies) enjoyed a varied program of art therapy, music therapy, swimming, dance and games. Time was also set aside for more internal content, including short yet moving talks from the buddies on the summer motto ('Be Original'), and a time for reflection and prayer whilst experiencing a beautiful sunset at the holy ground. It was so inspiring to see the huge improvement some of the returning participants had made - they were more open, more comfortable and generally brighter and happier. As an example, one of our participants (who has autism), was able to sing for the very first time in his life, and even gave a spontaneous and highly entertaining performance at the camp fire! The buddies also appreciated the opportunity to expand their hearts while taking care of the participants, but felt they could gain much more than they gave. With the special environment that was created, they could feel free to just express, and be, themselves.

Whilst the second generation took part in a full schedule of activities, the parents enjoyed a well-deserved opportunity to relax, reflect and recharge in the peaceful surroundings of the Neumuehle Workshop centre. It was a precious opportunity for the parents to share with each other and find solidarity and support amongst the other parents and staff.

With the support of prayers and donations from our brothers and sisters all over Europe, we were able to create a very special atmosphere of community, spirituality and love. Participants, parents, and staff alike were able to benefit immensely from this experience and would like to thank you once again for your donations and support, without which, the workshop would not have been possible!



Junior Harp Workshop 2016: July 22nd – 30th



With 88 participants and 18 staff, the workshop was divided into four clans, connecting to the original elements of earth, water, fire and wind. Each clan consisted of 3 individual teams and had its own unique characteristics and values. And with the help of this, there was a strong sense of belonging that built up, with brothers and sisters growing in confidence, daily, to contribute to their teams, their clans and beyond. The sports, creative groups and Challenge day were particularly creative this summer with many new ideas brought in from the sports co-ordinators. We also had daily

themes that guided the educational content and activities, adding a lot in exploring what it means to be “deeply rooted and uniquely creative.” Feeling that we are in this together, that we want to support each other to share the successes and to overcome the challenges, reached its peak in the last evenings with our family night, performance night and “gratitude activity”. Thank you once again to all the staff who offered their time and care.

A few excerpts from some participants' reflections:

“I could get to know many people I’ve never seen before and now I have friends all around the world! The singing as one workshop was always very special ~ sometimes I had to cry. I could learn very much from the lectures and all the testimonies were so touching and sometimes funny too and I was always so interested. I’m so inspired to set my own goals for after the workshop and I really want to reach them! To me, be original means that I must know who I am and know what my roots are. I shouldn’t be the cheaper version.”

“The most impacting moments are connected with our team as we became really close to each other, sharing our thoughts and experiences. Also, on Challenge Day I got the goal to talk to each team member and tell them what, in my opinion, makes them original. It extremely changed my point of view because I realised how amazing, creative and original they are. It helped me a lot and made me decide to change my attitude to others in my life, to try to love them as God does it. The lectures were also great – I think I’ll never forget these hours as I heard so much useful information which I really needed to solve difficult problems in my life and to become a better sister and daughter. One of my favourite moments of the workshop was prayer night when we were able to

concentrate, to talk to God, to think about our own life.”

“What impacted me the most was the point that purity is much more important than popularity. That we should focus more on how to make our lifestyle more pure than on trying to act cool. Actually, I realised that every person is cool and original just by being themselves. I was also really impacted by the last morning service about meeting the refugees during fundraising. I feel like a billionaire ... I have my lovely family, I’m not sick, I can go to workshops and so I really want to focus on living for the sake of others. I feel like the luckiest person in the world to attend workshops like this.”

“My time here has really shaken my perspectives on myself. I have been moved by what others have experienced and I realised that I still need to grow the spiritual aspect of myself. I also found new ways to relate and love others: by looking at the situation from God’s standpoint. To be original to me means to not be afraid to have conviction, faith and trust in what it is I believe in; to maintain confidence amongst the contradiction of others. It’s about not lying or making excuses to justify actions that reject my original nature and reject God.”

Senior workshop 2016: August 7th- 14th

This year's Senior workshop was particularly distinctive because of its intimate size. With 71 participants and staff in total, a strong and close atmosphere built up very quickly that brought a very inclusive and bright spirit. In line with the motto, "be original", the participants were divided into eight tribes of Israel. According to history, these tribes were each allocated a different part of the promised land and given their own identity and independence. Yet, they were required to stand together as a league of tribes,



supporting each other against common enemies, and formed the first Kingdom of Israel. Gradually, over time, however, they lost their culture and took on the ways of the people around them, eventually disappearing from history. These tribes are our origins. We are facing similar challenges in creating a new way of life that does not give into the secular ways around us. And with that, a strong educational theme came through, exploring what kind of culture we are trying to create and how we can set and live our standard with confidence. There were also various sharing and reflection activities where we were encouraged to think about the key experiences and moments that have impacted our lives so far and new commitments we wanted to make. The tribal theme and structure also provided a strong narrative for the workshop activities, on which a lot of creativity could be added. Supported by ESGD and William Haines as the main lecturers, and Jack Corley and Rev. David Hanna who lectured for one afternoon, there was a very uplifting tone to the education that was encouraging participants to become unique and responsible co-creators of our lives.

Below, we have included some excerpts from our closing 'Be the Change' Commitment ceremony. Every participant wrote down and read out a unique, personal statement in front of the whole workshop, as a pledge of something they wanted to commit to or change in order to "be original".

"From today on, I want to freely give first to those around me, with a sincere heart. I want to stop waiting for the time when it is convenient or easy to give. I already have everything I need to give openly."

"From today on, I want to see my qualities and embrace them. I don't want to be ashamed of who I am! I want to believe in my unlimited potential. I have all the qualities in me that I admire in others. I just need to grow them."

"From today on, I want to be more confident, share happiness and be more grateful for what I have and build on it. I don't want to try to escape from life but face the challenges and persevere on my way."

"From today on, I want to remember what my roots are and that I am creating roots for the next generations. I want to see purity as a gift and not as something that bothers me. It is a lifestyle I chose and I will keep on fighting for what I believe."

"To me, the motto 'Be original' means that we have to take responsibility in life and we have to work hard to be original. We have to become the clear water to influence the world and not the other way around. Everyone has the potential to be original but we have to take care of the seeds so they can grow. That means we need the right environment, the right attitude to change something and we have to get over our comfort zone. We have to live every day consciously and take our choices and words seriously."

Mobilisation workshop ~ July 19th – August 9th



The 21-day Mobilisation workshop offers a different set-up from other workshops. Primarily, it focuses on experiential education through a variety of key learning activities. This programme offers unique experiences of team work and friendship with goals to practice living for others, developing self-discipline and personal internal growth. The participants get involved with local service projects, fundraising training and an Ocean challenge including fishing from boats. There is always a very special bond created among participants after 3 exciting weeks.

Excerpts from some participants' reflections:

"I have learnt to be a lot more open with letting other people in and with understanding others and what they've been through. Especially allowing myself to get to know others properly before making any judgment. Also, I have learnt to be more patient and to persevere when nothing is happening and understand that as long as I invest myself, a result will manifest itself. "

"It was good to be a volunteer at the service project. It's nice to see people happy when you help. It's possible to have fun even during hard work like when we had to clean the river. It was also great to live close to nature, a special experience for me. I could feel more free and less stressed. I live in a city and I don't have many opportunities to stay in the nature."

"You can always get through hard situations without complaining but taking it with humour instead. I could realise how important friendship is and that we should always care about our friends. My favourite moment was the second day of fishing. I caught 30 fish and it was amazing feeling to be on the boat for



such a long time and invest yourself into fishing with the whole team around you! "

"I loved the service project and actually I wanted it to be longer. I was happy to visit and experience two new countries (Slovakia and Denmark) for the first time. The time with cool people on my team was the best!"

"Your attitude can really change things around you; to follow my conscience, being able to take the better decision in a few minutes."

ODP+ workshop ~ August 16th – 30th

Adapting the format slightly from the senior workshop, the participants were divided into four tribes: North, East, South and West. The four tribes were larger in size than the normal team structure with 13-14 members per tribe. Through meeting in different sub-tribe groups, this gave the opportunity to connect with a significantly larger number of people on a personal level. With the addition of the tribal chants



and war cries to this dynamic, a very strong energy and atmosphere built up within and between the tribes, which was particularly intense on challenge days and in sports! The two challenge days and challenge night also had a very different nature this year, purposely focusing more on pushing internal barriers and boundaries rather than only physical ones. With many themes of the Principle expressed in new and personal ways, the lectures and the wide-range of education is something that impacted everyone.

Below are some participant reflections:

“This workshop was very meaningful for me and I could breakthrough internally a lot because of the depth given to the activities and the education. One of the deepest experiences for me was during the second challenge day when we had to carry someone on our backs up a hill. It's amazing how doing something physically can have such a big impact on your internal world if you give it a deeper purpose and meaning. My focus was the relationship I have with my Dad and after completing the challenge I felt empowered to invest more in that relationship. I think that there was a really great balance between the internal and external aspects of the challenges. There was always a very clear meaning to all of the activities that we did which gave me a lot of strength and helped me feel empowered to breakthrough during the activities.”

“ODP+ 2016 was a workshop I believe I very much needed exactly at this point of my life. I loved the sisters talks and sharings. I really feel like the real life examples and experiences really allow us to realise the value of purity in a more down to earth way. Especially the testimonies. Having the different speakers and lecturers also brought about a dynamic exploration of the topics. I realised that God is really present with us and wants to guide and intervene if necessary. It's up to us to allow Him to. I felt now my relationship with God is more real. It's not brainwashing or blind faith. It's real for me and it's up to me to choose to go deeper.”

“The talks before and after the prayer evening, and the prayer evening itself was probably the biggest moment for me. I think the atmosphere changed after that. I was really looking for God and I learned through the lectures that you can find God within yourself and through your conscience and original mind. During the lecture after the prayer evening I was in some kind of super-focused, mystical state. It sounds weird but it's true. I think everybody felt that evening was special or extra intense somehow.”

“This workshop will shape my life in a completely different way. Talking with the staff and listening to the lecture content really made a difference to my view of life and about how I was leading my life. I learnt about finding the balance between intellect, emotion and will and how that leads to happiness. I learnt the importance of honesty, first of all with yourself and then with others. Thanks to that, I feel I can change. I feel like I learned things that can help me lead my life in a better direction, not just words and theoretical things. In sports, I also understood that it was my responsibility to overcome my limits. I think that everyone now feels determined to challenge themselves even more.”