

## PRAISE & PRAYER



**A FRIEND.  
WHO TRULY.  
LOVES JESUS.**

*Trips help international students make friends, like on this ÖSM Austria Vienna group's visit in 2019*

### SOBREMESA

IFES has issued a new call to students worldwide: Imagine every international student met one friend who truly loves Jesus. Imagine that friend was you.

IFES movements around the world have been serving international students since their founding. Jamil, IFES Regional Secretary for the Middle East and North Africa region, started his journey to faith in Paris as an international student from Tunisia when a group of French students extended their kindness to him and introduced him to the gospel.

More recently, the lives of international students from South Asia studying in a former Soviet state in Central Asia were transformed when students from the IFES movement there befriended and helped them. In that country they were seen as foreigners to be exploited and faced great hostility. From welcoming them into their homes to helping them with police and housing issues, Christian students gave them a completely different experience of overseas study and, most importantly, a vivid picture of God's love for them.

This is what we hope that IFES new Sobremesa initiative will see happening time and again around the world. Sobremesa is a call to each Christian student to befriend an international

### THANK YOU

Each time we look to the future, it is essential to look back and praise God for his faithful provision for IFES through supporters like you. Thank you for the time that you have spent bringing the needs of student groups around the world before the one who brings hope and forgiveness. Thank you for your gifts and your ongoing interest in student ministry.

In this new year, please continue to stand with IFES students. Without your prayers and financial support, student ministry cannot thrive. It is hugely encouraging to read notes and messages sent to our offices testifying to the love and care shown by those who look back on their own student days and the challenges which were faced, and pray for today's students. Each gift received is valued and appreciated. It has been very powerful to hear of supporters who have passed on to glory and have chosen to leave gifts in their wills to invest in new generations of students. Even the briefest of prayers and the smallest of gifts can change a student's life.

**Thank you all so much for all that you do to support student ministry around the world.**



**World Student Day Events:** The Compa Mexico group in Ensenada followed COVID protocols to meet; UESI India students in Nagaland were blessed with a beautiful morning for their prayer walk; The InterVarsity/USA chapter at Moorpark College prayed with the EUS Bosnia-Herzegovina group in Sarajevo



IFES

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Jan – Mar 2022

**World Student Day Events:** UGBB Burkina Faso students met in Ouagadougou; AFES Australia's group at James Cook University Townsville met for a prayer breakfast; GBU Italy students prayed in Siena

## THIS MOMENT

On 15 October, IFES World Student Day, over 30,000 students, staff and supporters in 144 countries prayed for student ministry – including at least three countries currently without an IFES movement. 156 prayer cards were submitted from over 65 countries and used by individuals, student groups and churches all over the world.

Each year it is such a joy to hear from participants ranging in age from high school to their 90s, and to see movement calls to prayer on social media – this year from St Lucia, Tanzania, Venezuela, Togo, Brazil and Armenia, to name a few.

Social media shows us the amazing connections across the Fellowship, with Zambians praying for Ethiopians, Ecuadorians praying for Bolivians, Taiwanese praying for Australians and Scots praying for Slovenians. Students met to pray in El Salvador, prayer walked in Nigeria and India, and ate together after praying in Australia, Scotland and the Netherlands. Movements like KIVF South Korea translated IFES resources to help

students pray for their peers elsewhere, TSCF New Zealand sent hourly text messages to students on exam leave and IVCF Philippines in Bicol region invited a speaker to their online regional prayer meeting to encourage students that it was their time to reach out with the good news.

National online prayer meetings were held in many places including South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago and Indonesia. Online gatherings across borders are always the most exciting. This year they included a Spanish language gathering of participants from IFES movements in Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Uruguay, Equatorial Guinea and Australia and an English language meeting for staff and students in Canada, Greenland, the Netherlands and Poland. Also encouraging was seeing students in the US praying with students from across the MENA region.

**Praise God with us for the power of united prayer and ask him to keep students prayerfully choosing to use each moment for his glory.**

**SOBREMESA** continued...

student studying on their campus. It means “over the table,” describing the Spanish tradition of relaxing around the table after a satisfying meal in good company. Sobremesa describes a time and space where we can lay our defences down to enjoy one another’s presence and develop deep relationships. The goal of this initiative is to fill our table with people from every walk of life. We want to taste the goodness of His grace through conversations that go deep and move our hearts. We want to sit at a table that is made whole in its diversity and reflects the loving character of God.

Sobremesa aims to help IFES students welcome people from every nation, tribe, and tongue to their tables by providing resources about cross-cultural communication, building genuine relationships, leading Bible studies, and partnering with the local church.

*“Sobremesa isn’t simply about hospitality, or about evangelism, or even about missions. It is talking about bringing hope to a broken world, bringing healing to xenophobia. About God’s nature and how we, as His people, should also reflect His nature.”* – Martin Haizmann, IFES Associate General Secretary for International Ministries

**Please pray that students would offer a warm welcome to international students around them.**

## IFES PERSON: LENA WELCH

HEAD OF GLOBAL RESOURCE MINISTRIES

Lena’s story reflects the joy of IFES ministry. A friend invited her to an CCX Ukraine group at a nearby university when she was a student. After committing her life to Christ, she was involved in pioneering a new student group at her university, and went on to serve with CCX Ukraine, including as co-leader of the movement. Since 2011, she has served with IFES Eurasia, particularly investing in training and development of staff not just in the region, but globally through her role as a mentor on the IFES Global Leaders’ Initiative. All of this experience has shown her how essential it is for IFES to support and equip national movements to thrive.

Newly appointed by Tim Adams to his senior staff team, Lena will be bringing together several IFES ministries, including Governance Development, Scripture Engagement and Indigenous Support Development. These ministries support and strengthen local movements, building capacity and skills for long term sustainability. She will be listening to those who know their students, universities and local context best, discerning where God is working and guiding.

Lena asks us to pray for her as she settles into this role and develops her team. Ask God to give them discernment, creativity and wisdom to identify new needs and to adapt or develop new resources and ministries to serve IFES movements.



## CONTACT DETAILS

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