

# GRAPEVINE



The regional newsletter for IFES Europe  
Spring 2026



## Monty writes...

Welcome to this edition of Grapevine. Hopefully you will be encouraged by what God is doing among students and graduates throughout our region.

Read how one movement with a link to an InterVarsity group in the US decided to show solidarity with our small pioneering movement in Greenland at this uncertain time – and how another movement was able to navigate a major crisis and rebuild.

Find out how a forthcoming conference on global mission will broaden the horizons of many students and motivate them to look beyond their own borders, and how our recent staff training event in Poland has encouraged and inspired our team in Lithuania.

Our ministry also transcends generations. Discover what we are learning about how the current student intake from Gen Z are learning and engaging with the Gospel, and also how we are serving past generations of students through our Graduate Impact work that is helping them to relate the gospel to their work contexts, whilst also keeping them connected with IFES and their national movements.

Thank you for your partnership with us, either through serving in a national movement, or praying for and supporting those who are.

Monty  
David Montgomery  
*Regional Secretary, IFES Europe*

## Going deeper in faith and life

Every day we're surrounded by worldviews that quietly influence how we think and live. This summer there's a chance to explore how God's word speaks into our complex world, helping us discern, think wisely, and live faithfully.

Bible & Culture is a unique week of learning, reflection, and community for students, graduates, ministry workers and supporters who want to connect faith with the realities of today's world. Set in a peaceful location near Berlin, the program offers four in-depth courses exploring topics such as biblical worldview, church and culture, Christian political participation, and the relationship between art and faith.

We'll join an international community to study Scripture, engage contemporary cultural questions, and learn from experienced teachers. Alongside the classes, there is plenty of time for conversation, relaxation, and building friendships with people from across Europe and beyond.

Whether you're beginning your professional life, serving in ministry, or supporting the next generation, Bible & Culture offers space to think deeply and grow together. Find out more at [bibleandculture.org](https://bibleandculture.org).

The graphic features logos for IFES, Graduate Impact Bible & Culture, Regent College, and EEA. The central text reads 'BIBLE & CULTURE SUMMER 2026'. Below this, it says 'BRIDGING FAITH AND EVERYDAY LIFE FOR GRADUATES, PROFESSIONALS, AND SEEKERS WHO WANT TO GO DEEPER.' Four speakers are listed with their photos: Iwan Russell-Jones (Regent College), Christel L. Ngnambi (IFES), Tim Vickers (Graduate Impact, IFES), Jeff Greenman (Regent College), and Julia Doxat-Purser (EEA).

## Pray with us

...for visas to be granted to participants from outside the EU.  
... for fruit to be born in the lives of all who attend.

## Holistic support for stronger teams and effective planning

Why this one event in the IFES Europe calendar is a “must-do” for the movement in Lithuania – and elsewhere.

In the depths of a Polish winter, themes around light, life and love ignited the hearts and minds of almost 40 IFES and national movement staff members and volunteers. They had gathered for the annual IFES European Staff Consultation (ESC). This popular retreat gives teams a rare opportunity to escape the everyday pressures and be renewed, inspired and enabled in their ministries. It is often key to solving problems, addressing issues and accelerating growth and is especially helpful for smaller organisations with stretched resources.

### Restored in body, mind and ministry

“ESC is one of the key events we try to attend as a whole team,” says Sigita, General secretary of LKSB, Lithuania. “It is a wonderful opportunity for our staff to spend extended time together—hearing Bible teaching, holding team discussions, reflecting on the past year, and planning for the next.” The holistic three-day program offers teams Bible-guided reflection focusing on their personal journey (day one), their progress and wellbeing as a team (day two) and their mission (day three). Craig Weyrens, IFES Europe Associate Regional Secretary, leads the event, and this year Hannah Donata from GBU Italy had been invited to speak.

***“It is so refreshing to simply ‘receive’—to be taught, fed, and cared for”***

“For me as a leader, it is so refreshing to simply ‘receive’—to be taught, fed, and cared for. Craig and his team did a great job taking care of our national teams, and Hannah did an incredible job helping us unravel John’s message on 1 John, about a God who is Light, Life, and Love.”

Just as importantly, these events provide a valuable space for fellowship between the IFES Europe family of movements. “We hear each other’s stories, pray for one another, and share ministry experiences, ideas, joys and struggles,” Sigita reflects.

### “Immense benefits”

“There are immense benefits for our small team. The ESC provides good ideas for the new year, a fresh view of our service to students, and encourages us to move forward!” reflects Sigita. This year her team’s main takeaways included ensuring staff meetings are planned more regularly and continued to include Bible studies. They also resolved to dig deeper into IFES new Gen Z report (see next page) to inform their approaches to training students and evangelistic events, in particular their upcoming student training weekend. “We host this at the beginning of each semester, and are already integrating insights from the report into our planning.”

### Pray with us

...for the LKSB groups in the cities of Vilnius and Kauna, where most of Lithuania’s 100,000 plus students live.

...for the new international student ministry group and the English language Bible study group in Vilnius..

...for the 15 students who came to the training weekend, as they seek to invite others into fellowship with God..



The 2026 IFES European Staff Consultation, with Sigita seated second from the left in the front row, and Craig also in the front row.

## Brand new research-based resources for reaching Gen Z (in English, French and Spanish)

### How is Gen Z's spiritual openness, digital immersion, cultural awareness, and pursuit of wellbeing impacting student ministry?

A major new **Gen Z Insights report** from IFES offers national movements a practical tool for reimagining ministry among today's students. It draws on interviews and focus groups conducted across our global fellowship.



### Three key findings have emerged from Europe:

#### Authentic communication is most effective for engaging Gen Z seekers.

"My friends want to see that Christianity is real, not just right," one student in Ireland commented.

#### Gen Zs are deeply concerned for their mental health, and see the strong connection to their physical health.

In Great Britain, for example, students frequently talk about "going to the gym to keep the voices in my head quiet." They expect communities – including Christian groups – to support their quest for wellbeing.

#### Gen Zs are more willing to change their spiritual beliefs than their parents.

The report also cites a separate study which found that European Gen Zs are more likely than their grandparents to believe in spiritual realities and to hold positive views of religion.

*"We are already integrating insights into our planning."*

*Sigita, General Secretary, LKSB, Lithuania*

### A helping hand for movements

To help them communicate the gospel effectively to this generation, national movements have access to a brand new **Gen Z Insights resource hub** offering:

- **Bible studies**
- **a podcast series** (coming soon) featuring a Bulgarian student
- **video interviews** with French-speaking students.

All are available in English, French, and Spanish.

### Pray with us

...giving thanks for these new resources.  
...that the Holy Spirit would inspire all our European movement staff with wisdom and creativity as they find new ways to engage Generation Z.



## Growing faithful witnesses in the workplace, through ministry to graduates

**Christian Pichler, former member of the IFES Europe leadership team, and director of the 2025 European Student Festival, describes his new direction for 2026.**

"After my adventure at the student festival in Latvia, I began a new chapter in January 2026 by joining the IFES Europe **Graduate Impact** team – serving specifically to strengthen and represent our work across Europe. This ministry exists to equip students and young graduates to become God's ambassadors in secular workplaces."

### Character formation at work

"In January I travelled to Serbia with Rodica Rosior, who leads this ministry in Eurasia, to run a one-day **Cross Current** seminar for graduates from national movement EUS. Cross Current is Graduate Impact's unique six-part course focused on forming Christ-like character at work, as a foundation for whole-life witness. Modules cover service, love, honesty, generosity, humility and beneficial purpose. It is normally delivered in depth over six weekends, however if necessary we can offer shorter seminars like this one."



Rodica Rosior trains EUS national movement staff in Serbia in leading the Cross Current course.

### Preparation for new graduates

"In early February, I joined part-time team member Christel Ngnambi (based in Germany) at the national conference for Hungarian movement MEKDSZ, where we led a track on entering working life. Our **Transition** nine-part mentoring resource is for groups of graduating students, and addresses the questions they face when taking their first steps into the world of work: *What is the purpose of work? How do I develop Christ-like character? How should I handle money? How can I live out and share my faith at work?* Based on the parable of the sower, it explores how we can grow in faith and fruitfulness in working life. We offer taster seminars for movements."



Christian (left) and Christel (right) at the conference of the national movement in Hungary, MEKDSZ.

## Transforming European society

"Now under the leadership of Tim Vickers (based in England), and supported by administrator Ana Hmelic (in Romania), **IFES Graduate Impact has built this ministry over more than 20 years, serving over 5,000 young Christian adults in more than 40 nations.** Through programs such as Transition and Cross-Current, our network of professional groups, our annual **Bible & Culture** conference, and our international **Leaders' Conference**, we aim to form workers whose character, ethics, and witness can help shape societies for good."

## Pray with us

...that the IFES Graduate Impact team will help movements in Europe to integrate this crucial ministry with their student work.

...for many Christian graduates to come to the Bible & Culture conference in Germany in July, and discover how to connect better what they believe with the world we live in.

The International Cafe run by VBG, German-speaking Swiss movement, in Zurich.



## A European ministry with Global Impact

### Equipping national movements to spread the gospel beyond their own borders

It's estimated that two million of the 29 million tertiary students in Europe are international students – that means, where they study is not their home country.

Studying abroad should be a wonderful, enriching experience. But it can also bring significant challenges. Cultural differences and homesickness may trigger overwhelming feelings of disorientation and loneliness. There may be financial and administrative stresses, or language barriers that affect academic and social confidence. It can take a very long time to build any kind of meaningful connections where the student feels truly accepted and included. Even Christian students may feel at odds with the local church culture, resulting in doubts about themselves and about God.

### Loving the foreigner\*

So what can we do to support those who are struggling and create welcoming, inclusive spaces where they can feel connected? How can we help students from abroad find God in their new environments, so they return home stronger in faith – or perhaps having met Jesus for the first time? That's where IFES **International Student Ministry** comes in. ISM brings together a network of European movement staff, volunteers and students who are exploring or already committed to serving these individuals.

One of the ways ISM does this is through its bi-annual spring conference, **Global Impact**, taking place in April 2026 in Hungary. Here members with experience can share with those just starting out, while formal training from the IFES European staff team builds up skills and confidence.

### A call to ministry

Ahlke (shown above, right) is currently serving in a small university town in southern Germany, partnering with national movement SMD. She describes what Global Impact has meant to her personally.

"Attending Global Impact as a student many years ago was the starting point for considering international student ministry as a full-time job. At the time, I was part of our local student ministry group, and also a leader in the international student group – mostly because no one else wanted the job! I joined the conference at the last minute and was amazed to discover so many people in so many European countries doing something very similar: reaching out to international students and inviting them to get to know Jesus Christ. This opened my eyes to the bigger picture behind our small weekly gatherings. I also realized that God really wants me to participate in his ministry."

\* From Deuteronomy 10:19

**"Global Impact was the starting point for considering full-time international student ministry."**

*Ahlke, who is currently serving alongside German movement SMD*



### A shared ministry

"At the last Global Impact conference, I spoke with a young staff worker who felt alone in their efforts to reach out to international students. They found it so encouraging to talk to other people in a similar situation. I am excited that we will have another Global Impact conference this year and I am already looking forward to being encouraged, and to encourage others, to continue to reach out to students from all over the world."

### Pray with us

- ...for the Global Impact conference taking place in Hungary from 17-20 April.
- ...for Ahlke and others like her, bringing Jesus' love to international students in Europe.
- ...that this ministry would impact families and communities around the world with the gospel.

## Co-workers in God's service, from Belgium to the USA and Greenland

On either side of the Atlantic, two IFES movements are exploring the joys of partnership.

Most movements say that the best thing about being affiliated to IFES is the connection to a global family that stretches across the entire world. The opportunities for building each other up are wide-ranging. Take, for example, the partnership between ICHTUS in Flemish-speaking Belgium and InterVarsity in the US state of South Dakota.

### Building each other up in evangelism

"We've been partnering with South Dakota for a long time," explains Sem from ICHTUS. The collaboration started with a three-year placement in Belgium for InterVarsity state director Jeremy Hamilton in 2009. While there, he experienced "the most amazing 90 minutes of his staff career" – discovering the **Mark Drama**. That's a powerful evangelistic tool that immerses students in a theatrical reenactment of the entire gospel, during which many encounter Jesus anew or for the first time.

*"It is impossible for someone to experience the Mark Drama and leave unchanged."*

*Lara, ICHTUS staff member*

Back in the US, Jeremy was excited to train his team in this transformative resource. So he invited ICHTUS staff workers Sem and Lara to show how it was done. "Since then the South Dakota team has taught it to five other states in the region," says Sem – now ICHTUS general secretary, "and in March 2026 they'll return to help us with a Mark Drama focusing on international students, in Ghent."

### Deepening the friendship

Strong relationships need quality time spent together, and in 2020 the Belgian team planned to take some students to South Dakota for a cultural awareness trip that would include visiting Native American reservations. But we all know what happened in 2020...

Determined not to let a global pandemic get in the way of their plans, the partners came up with an imaginative alternative: a virtual distance challenge from Brussels to Sioux Falls – a span of just over 7,000 kilometres (4.4 miles). "The rules let you cover the distance by registering any sports activity" recalls Sem, remembering that "the craziest was hunting!". He can't help smiling when he reports that the Belgian team won!



### Partners in sharing

Fast forward to 2026 and another step forward for the transatlantic partnership. "Jeremy suggested we start giving to another movement together... I thought it was a good idea and came up with a list, one of which was the pioneering movement in Greenland."

The South Dakotans were equally keen to support this pioneering branch of Danish movement KFS. In Nuuk, the Greenlander's evangelistic activities include fortnightly meetings where a meal is served. This spring both movements are taking collections at their spring conferences that will help pay for the food for these outreach events. Not only that – the donations will be topped up by ICHTUS board members who didn't want to be left out!

### Pray with us

...thanking God for blessing this fruitful partnership  
...pray for the pioneering work in Greenland,  
especially at this time of uncertainty.



**Would you like to support student ministry in countries around the world?**

**Find out how on page 9.**

## “God is growing a beautiful ministry” in Czechia

**How Czech movement UKH is responding to a new openness to the gospel.**

Michael is from Slovakia but currently works for IFES UK in Oxford, England. He also has family in Czechia, where a few months ago he told us that “God is growing a beautiful ministry among the students”.

“Right now there are 13 student groups across seven university cities – like Prague, Brno, Ostrava and more – meeting weekly to study the Word together. Many students exploring faith are coming along and this year some have already come to know Jesus personally! One student, Martin, recently came to Christ and has since been baptised!”

“The team is also seeing encouraging openness from universities, with several officially recognising the Christian student groups and welcoming them into campus life. [In response], the Czech staff and volunteers are boldly looking to expand – hoping every university in town may one day have its own staff workers.”



*One to one Bible study with a new student.*

### Daniela grasps an opportunity

“One of those cities is Opava, in the east of the country,” adds Tom, General Secretary of Czech movement UKH. In October, Daniela, a Christian student, went to study history for her MA course. During the Christian History classes she observed her classmates take the person of Jesus and the events of the Bible as a myth. One of the assignments for everyone was to prepare a presentation about a biblical character.”

“Daniela decided to choose key characters like Abraham, Moses, Daniel and a few others and presented the gospel as fulfilled promises in Jesus. Growing in her desire to see her class mates come to know the Lord Jesus, Daniela looked up the Czech IFES movement (UKH) and asked if they could help her out to reach her university with the gospel.”

### UKH gets involved

“Our student worker then prayed with her and soon another two Christian students joined her. Now there is a regular Bible study taking place in Opava and an outreach Easter event is in planned.”



*The new student group in Opava, with Daniela in red.*

### Pray with us

- ...for Daniela, Dominik and Klara witnessing in Opava.
- ...for more staff and volunteers, especially to reach new cities like Zlin, Jihlava, Pilsen and Liberec.
- ... for deep joy and conviction for every member of the movement.
- ...for confidence for students witnessing through public events.
- ...for long-term fruit of the recent evangelism training conference with deep study in the gospel of Matthew.

## Grace, vision and faith in Romania

### Out of a time of crisis, God is raising up leaders with vision in Romania



He already runs a centre for autistic children and two small businesses. With his wife he leads a couples' Alpha group. And he's dad to four kids aged 2 – 12. So how does Dragos find the energy to also steer Romanian student movement OSCER through a time of transition?

"God is giving us strength, courage and vision!" he says, smiling. Dragos has been involved with OSCER for over 20 years – as student, local staff member, and from 2010 to 2018 as general secretary. "That's when I developed a real passion for student ministry nationally", he says. Now serving as board chair, Dragos is currently also acting as interim general secretary.

At its peak OSCER comprised almost 1000 students, but in 2026, its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, it is rebuilding from a base of just over 100 students, after an intensely difficult period of internal struggles.

"What has sustained us through this time," says Dragos, "is the knowledge that God is enough; he is in sovereign control and hasn't forgotten about us. Throughout this turbulent time, students were running mission weeks, doing outreach, seeing others come to Christ – and an international student ministry was pioneered."

### Stepping out in faith

Reflecting on the growth, Dragos observes how "all good things start with one person having a vision... saying 'no matter what, I'll stay for this'. And for us that person was Diana, our former General Secretary, who gave the movement stability and helping us navigate the crisis." Part of Diana's vision was for international student ministry. Led by Natalie from the US, this has been one of the most encouraging areas of the work (and an example of how we

have been blessed by volunteers and staff from other IFES movements)." Unwavering faith has also characterised the witness of Ruslan and Mihaela. Against friends' advice, they forged ahead with a pioneering ministry to Moldovan students in Galați (close enough to the border with Ukraine to have been hit by a Russian drone). When their Christmas outreach event seemed set to fail, they held on in faith... and were rewarded with a turnout of around 70 students, many of whom came to Christ for the first time!



### Looking for authenticity

Winter camps, combining daytime skiing with evening evangelistic talks, have been another successful outreach tool. One girl came to faith after noticing the joy on the face of her roommate as she read her Bible every morning. "That's what attracts students who aren't into religion," remarks Dragos, "it's the authenticity."

As elsewhere in Europe, the OSCER team are seeing a new openness to the gospel. "Somehow students are more willing to listen." In a country that is 90% Orthodox, many young people have received a theoretical knowledge of Jesus. But a church culture that prioritises tradition, a doctrine that emphasises works over grace, and leaders given over to materialism – these have left Generation Z seeking something more meaningful. "They're looking for authentic relationships," says Dragos. "When you have this, all the barriers and preconceptions fade."

### Investing in leaders

Last autumn, with the help of a grant from IFES and input from IFES Europe's regional team, OSCER launched **Aquila and Priscilla** an intensive one-year training program for six students and staff, involving study, reading and practical work including outreach. "In midst of challenges, we're still investing in growing students and leaders," observes Dragos. "It doesn't bring instant fruit but will bring it."



### Pray with us

...that the 60 students returning from ski camps will be encouraged and supported to grow in faith.  
 ...for an English-speaking volunteer to go and serve with the International Student Ministry alongside Natalie  
 ...that God will raise new staff and leaders with a vision for their teams.  
 for financial provision, and especially for re-establishing relationships with supporters.

## The joy and impact of being part of something bigger



When we read about the impact of Global Giving Day, it's easy to see how 'giving is receiving'!

In April last year, staff workers, students and supporters from over 100 countries and territories (including 14 in Europe) raised over \$243,000 to help shape godly leaders across IFES. Global Giving Day was a thrilling display of generosity and solidarity!

As one family, we've supported over 20 initiatives worldwide (from 2025 Global Giving Day funds)

In our region, the **European Student Festival**, attended by over 500 students, staff and volunteers, and our **Young Staff Network**, developing leaders for the future, both received support from last year's funds.



In Eurasia, student leaders – many from sensitive countries – were shaped for service at **Formación**:

*"At this conference I left my former identity that was deep inside of me. In the past, I was constantly offended and frustrated. But I gave it all to God and I'm working on my positive development."*



In Africa, national movements were equipped by the EPSA region's **Institute for Staff Development and Training**:

*"One of the most enriching aspects has been learning alongside staff from different African movements – cross-pollinating ideas, sharing ministry strategies, and reflecting together. These relationships continue to strengthen my ministry in the Kenyan context."*



### Now is the time to let Christ's light shine!

Today's students are yearning for a brighter vision of life and searching for authentic spirituality. This year we can all join in, to make a difference! On **16 April**, our generosity can help students, young graduates, and staff workers follow Jesus in all things and radiantly engage with all aspects of life. Our support could...

- equip staff workers in Latin America to address mental health needs on campus
- encourage graduates in Asia to integrate faith and work
- disciple students in all regions through practical mentoring programs.

### Find out more about **Radiant - Global Giving Day, 16 April 2026**

**Supporters** - Could you tell your church and ministry networks? Let them know that your student movement is part of something bigger – and that they too are invited into this global event.

**National movements** - Could you ensure your staff, volunteers, student groups and graduates know about Global Giving Day?

**Everyone** - Follow the IFES and IFES Europe social media accounts and like, comment on, and share the Global Giving Day posts to help spread the word.



### Pray with us

Let's prayerfully consider what we can do and give to support radiant witness on campuses around the world.