

THE UPPER ROOM REPORT



PROJECTS

HOW TO SUPPORT



"WHAT IF?"

First camp for young adults in Austria

A bunch of young, motivated people came together to an idyllic place in Burgenland Austria.

In this report we not only want to present to you our first camp in Austria but recap this last year of the The Upper Room organisation together.

[LINK TO THE VIDEO](#)

PATIENCE IS TRUST THAT EVERYTHING WILL HAPPEN AT THE RIGHT TIME

Anonymous

This past year challenged us to learn again how to trust. Sometimes plans don't unfold like imagined but there's always beauty to be found in unexpected places.

Read
about

- "What IF" Camp in
Austria
-3-
- Happy Birthday
-7-
- Job - Recording
-8-
Webinars
-12-
- Recruiting
the hostels
-13-
- School project, India
-16-
- The good news of Job
-19-
- Refresher meet
-20-
- the team
-22-
- Thank you
-26-



"A RIGHT TIME FOR EVERYTHING"

Ecclesiastes
10-13 september 2020

CAMP IN
AUSTRIA



TO BE LOUD AND TO BE STILL

a campsite retreat

We found the ideal setting for young people to connect with others in this remote campsite in the woods of Austria. The perfect place to engage in conversations, rest and recharge.

A pleasant covid-surprise

➤ Unplanned but pleasant was our first camp held in Austria. Due to restrictions on international travelling our team decided to run a project for the local youth. So far a motivated team used to travel to India each year to do outreach and organize meetings. Taking this idea of engaging with youth - especially working with underprivileged teenagers - a movement developed, "The Upper Room". Recently the organization was officially registered as non-profit organization in Austria. In a fairly small amount of time more and more people started to invest into this organization by giving their time, creativity or financial support. The whole team of The Upper Room is on fire for working with young people and inviting them to a dialogue.

This Summer was the first time to run a camping-weekend in Austria. It was a joy to see how many people excitedly responded to our invitation. About 25 youngsters from Austria and even beyond were eager to experience a format with a main focus on exchange and interest in questions of life and faith.

"THE DIVERSITY WAS UNIFYING"

Georg L., 25 years

CAMP IN
AUSTRIA

LET'S AGREE TO DISAGREE



In order to break the ice as fast as possible we implemented a varied program. Singing at the campfire, spontaneous water battles, a challenging scavenger hunt but also deep "silent" discussions about "luck" and "trust" where one is only allowed to communicate on paper. We washed each other's feet as a visible symbol of our appreciation. Alongside we heard daily inputs about topics like

"do", "un-do", "be" and "be-loved".

Each day the participants met in their small groups to openly discuss the topics or for example to prepare some kind of presentation or interaction for the others to engage in. Even if the outcome is "let's agree to disagree". At the end of the day it's ok to have different opinions but we want to let ourselves be inspired by others.

Trusting in the weather definitely paid off - all the tents remained faultless. Everybody could enjoy the whole venue to the fullest. The different locations were decorated with charming detail. Some bystanders might have wondered why the direction signs had such funny names. Soon everybody noticed that "animal fattening" is the dining area and that "cathedral" are not some stone walls but actually a quiet place to pray and meditate.



STRESS FORBIDDEN

-literally-

CAMP IN
AUSTRIA

"It's always heartwarming to see the openness and trust the participants show from the very first moment on. Each of them helps creating this special atmosphere."

JUDITH, 21 YEARS



Sometimes you gotta look at life through different lenses - the participants received these stylish sunglasses as a reminder to sometimes change perspective.



Even the phones were shut down for the weekend. This led to a truly "stress-free" time and this is meant in the most literal way: Whenever someone used the word "stress"- which is an overly used word in Austria - everybody made a ridiculous dance movement to correct that person. The woods offered another convenience: the trees were used to set up hammocks in our chill-out area and there was always enough wood for the campfire at night.

"DIVERSE, FUNNY AND DEEP PERSONALITIES"

Xaver, 23 years

**CAMP IN
AUSTRIA**

When a group lost at the crazy games they had to perform a punishment from the punishment board.



„I would describe "The Upper Room" as "unconditional love", because no matter what you do or with whom - you are committed wholeheartedly. For example I see so much love in the way you decorated the woods"

Georg L., 25 years

"An incredible atmosphere of acceptance. I felt like I could talk about anything that is on my heart and didn't have to explain myself."

Lea , 19 years

YOU´VE GROWN UP SO FAST



HAPPY BIRTHDAY THE UPPER ROOM

„Look at how much you´ve grown“ a sentence a lot of kids don´t like to hear. But at this point we can relate a lot to how young parents and relatives must feel, when they watch their little „baby“ grow older. In July we proudly celebrated our first anniversary – the first birthday of The Upper Room.

It was a day full of joy and gratitude. Already one year ago The Upper Room was officially registered as non-profit organization in Austria. Of course its roots go way back but we realize that this was an important and intentional step for the organisation. It is unbelievable to see how all the work is slowly taking shape. Like Anson and Georg mentioned in their toast

**„Normally a room is a space built with walls but
The Upper Room is a space built with people“**

That day was the perfect opportunity to pause for a moment to say thanks to each special person who is contributing to this particular atmosphere of acceptance – through their acts of service or just with their presence. Friends from all corners of the world joined: India, Austria, Dubai, Italy. Fr. Cyril celebrated holy mass with us in a peaceful garden setting.



Fr. Cyril celebrated mass with us. Despite the distance we were able to connect via livestream with our friends.

The rest of the evening we spent eating birthday cake and drinking bowls. Late at night you could still hear our laughter because Fr. Cyril shared with us his years of wisdom and experience in working with young people. He presented to us one crazy funny game after the other. It took quite some time until we released him to go to bed. Just like watching a child grow up it is a miracle to be a part of this maturing and prospering process. We know, that this doesn´t happen by our own strength. Thank you!

WORK IN PROGRESS

RECORDING OF "JOB"



We're currently working towards recording and releasing our self-written musical "Job - Where are you Father?". This piece was premiered last summer in Northeast India. Now it's going to be launched on several channels. The first reading rehearsal took place in September and with it the joy about this project began to rise. We are thankful for the committed people who contribute to this project with their heart, their time or their voices. Through the devotion of many different people we're honoured to smell the air of professional work. A big THANK YOU to **Karl Wenninger and Caleb Siems** for many hours of assisting and challenging us to fully tap our potentials.



A mixed group of music students and friends rehearsed the German as well as the English version of the musical.



SUFFERING IS A COMMON LANGUAGE AND HOPE IS A COMMON SONG

RECORDING OF "JOB"

Some "Moo" here, a little bit of crying there, some cheering and everywhere highest motivation. If you wander through the music center in Vienna, 23. district, you might hear some weird noises and heartwarming melodies. During one whole weekend the musical "Job" was recorded. Both the German and the English version of this piece that was originally written for school dropouts in India can finally be brought to people's homes.



It takes quite some experience and patience to not turn completely deaf after many hours of listening carefully.

It took our team four whole days to record the songs and dialogues. People from various backgrounds and fields of work formed this talented ensemble. With their voices they brought to life the roles of Job, his wife Myrna and their children to life. But also the animals - sheep, donkey and oxen join the chorus with their mooing and baaing, while god and lucifer gave comments on what's happening. Especially those of us who didn't have a whole lot of experience in recording could highly profit from the wisdom and input from our experienced directors and sound engineers.

"IT'S SO HUMAN, IT'S SO ACCESSIBLE AND I THINK YOU CAN PROBABLY FIND SOMETHING IN EACH CHARACTER"

Danylo, 23 years

RECORDING
OF "JOB"

Caleb Siems and Karl Wenninger - our directors who are working in professional settings like the Vienna English Theater or the state opera of Vienna - never got tired of helping us bring hidden potential to light and create a piece of art together that expresses both professionalism and authenticity. Thank you for your flexibility and honesty to polish this musical. Beforehand a lot of work was put in rehearsing the dialogues and songs - often even via zoom calls - to convey the right emotions on the day of recording. Our trained sound engineers didn't miss a single tone. This weekend felt somewhat nostalgic for our team who went to India in the summer of 2019 to perform this musical for the very first time during a camp for school dropouts. There's something magical about this musical: Teenagers in North-East India as well as the students here in our studio in Vienna can find themselves in the characters they're portraying. All of them discovered individual and unique ways of expressing the pain and joy of this story.



"The reason that job the musical is so amazing because it shows that you can have a personal relationship with god"

Theo, 20 years

The german CD is here!
To finance this great project we launched a kickstarter campaign, where people could invest different amounts of money in the recording and got the CD and little gifts in return. We're happy to announce that we reached our goal! The english version will be released in December.

ORDER CD NOW



UPPER-ROOM.INFO

"SOMETIMES I MEET YOU IN THE GREY AREAS OF UNCERTAINTY AND NO EXPECTATION"



from the musical "Job - Where are you Father?"

CD
RELEASE



Summary

Job - a righteous man has done everything right during his life. But suddenly he's confronted with unbearable pain and suffering. How can God let all of this happen? The protagonist encounters God himself in a deeply human manner to directly address his questions to him. In a dialogue of **doubt and faith** Hiob experiences God's unique and loving way of seeing the world and finds healing in unexpected places.

How to get a CD



Order samples of our
German version (release: December 2020) or the
English version (release: January 2021).

[CLICK HERE](#)

or call +43 677 63 981806

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

WEBINARS

”

It was an unexpected life changing experience for me. My personal favourite topic was on human suffering and death because I had a lot of doubts about it. The Upper room used arts as a means to open up our minds. And via these sessions I was less judgmental and more accepting of suffering and death. When you see from the eyes of Love, real meaning emerges. My mother passed away during these sessions, but my faith grew stronger. I thank everyone who came along to share wisdom.

Deepa on "Credo"

The first Webinar was held in spring. The theme of the seven-part series:

Looking at faith from a fresh perspective



CURRENTLY

Let's talk faith to faith

5 MEETINGS OF INPUT AND DISCUSSION

Surrounded by people from diverse walks of life, observing various religious traditions and imbibing ideals instilled by ancestors and religious leaders, how are we to value and support each other's choices?

The time is now ...

via Zoom

MORE INFORMATION

join Whatsapp group

UPPER-ROOM.INFO



REANIMATING THE HOSTELS

JAIRAMPUR,
INDIA

previously...

In September of 2019 two tuition centers were established in Northeast India, one for girls and one for boys. There teenagers who for various reasons no longer go to school get prepared for their open 10th grade exams. The students who started in September already passed the exams in March. We would have been very happy to train the next cohort of students and had already made many plans during our visit in February. But unfortunately it turned out differently than we thought. The planned restart of the program in April sadly had to be postponed again and again due to the pandemic. The constant uncertainty if, when and how the learning centers could possibly reopen was not easy. In order to offer the students the possibility to study an online course was launched in June. The idea was to enable the students to study at home - with videos and tasks of the teachers. We faced a big challenge especially because the young students in the villages often do not have good network or even access to a computer.



REANIMATING THE HOSTELS

JAIRAMPUR,
INDIA

Therefore, the joy was even greater when the Indian government announced that the schools were allowed to reopen on October 16 (at least for the older students, which includes the students of the tuition center). And then things started to move very quickly. The tuition center staff arrived and the students were already waiting. The houses had to be set up, the timetable had to be arranged and the exam registrations had to be submitted! We are very excited that there are already **11 girls and 12 boys** in the learning centers. Some of them go to a regular school and some prepare for the open exams.



The walls of the tuition center being filled with young people again is simply an indescribable joy and fills us with great gratitude.

Even though the last months were sometimes tough, we are all the more eager to pursue our vision again. It is our dream to prepare the young people for the exams in such a way that the exams can be passed successfully and still enable a holistic education.

OUR GOALS

JAIRAMPUR,
INDIA

learning

- to ensure effective preparation for the exams with good instruction in all subjects required for the exams.

But learning is not only about acquiring exam knowledge but also about developing useful skills for everyday life. For this reason a computer course is also part of the timetable. Equally important is the opportunity to discover and develop one's talents and interests through music and sports lessons, gardening and creative work. The students are also trained in the making of various traditional crafts and objects. The aim is not only to preserve their traditional roots, but also to cover part of the costs of the tuition center by selling traditional craft.

living

- having fun, being a child, just laughing and relaxing, a good familial atmosphere. This is the key to learning and growing. Strengthen team spirit through picnics, movie nights, play times, fun evenings with singing and dancing as well as prayer and meditation times together.

growing

Due to the many positive experiences with personal counseling sessions these will also be part of the holistic program to better respond to the needs of the individual youth. It is also our goal to support the further education of the students in assistance in the application process or by supporting them financially.

SCHOOL PROJECT IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

ASSAM,
INDIA

Plant seeds & give trees room to grow.

In February a team of five of us from Austria and India headed to Diphu, a place in Assam (north-east India) to take up the challenge a second time: to rehearse and perform the musical JOB in five days. „JOB - where are you father?“, which was specifically written and composed for a camp in summer 2019 and recorded now with instruments. We were thrilled to see the unique way in which the biblical figure Job was to be brought to life this time. The performance took place at a school in the Indian state Assam with the help of 75 camp participants in the age of two to sixteen years.



**Auf diesen Baum durften die Kinder die
Früchte dieser Woche schreiben**

The camp theme was centred around the symbol of a tree. A seed is at the beginning of every growth process requiring a good surrounding and nutrients to grow. This is where the kids learn what it is going to mean to trust when the wind blows in a very different direction. Therefore, they learn which big role roots play in life.

SCHOOL PROJECT IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

ASSAM,
INDIA



Everybody was just so joyful because of everything happening here.

Activities, crafts, riddles, games, singing and dancing- the kids and teens have been active participants at everything and their motivation and joy was so contagious! Many of the topics in these days were simplified through skits etc. to make them easier for the children to understand. Even puppets were organised for the little kids. Additionally to the content-orientated topics there was a lot of time for crazy games which was just pure joy for the kids.

In the small groups the children could select three different values which are important to them. Subsequently, they choose one of them in their groups to put on a candle.



➤ It is so rewarding to see how the kids actively participate in these exercises and what the outcomes were. Most of the groups choose words like love, trust or hope and created real masterpieces. For most of them it takes a great deal of courage and strength to hold on to these values. Sadly, the reality is that they are exposed to drugs and alcohol at a very young age.

SCHOOL PROJECT IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

ASSAM,
INDIA



**A motley
group of kids
and teens
between the
age of
2 and 16.**

Even in this short amount of time spent with the kids we could see how they reached out in every direction! Just like on a tree, where the smallest fruits are often the sweetest, we witnessed many small moments which were just heart warming and inspiring for the team. The peak, of course, was the musical which is always very moving, especially for the team as we all grew close to the kids and got to know their stories.

**It is such a great
honour when young
people give trust,
step for step and
one can walk a bit
of their path of life
with them.**



THE GOOD NEWS OF JOB

HAFNERBACH,
AUSTRIA

The „good news of Job“ - does that even exist?
Yes, and we love to share the story!

...to share about our wonderful experiences in north-east India. About the touching stories of the children and youth who we had the chance to meet and about how the story of Job speaks to them in a very special way. But not not only to them, also to us the story brings a lot of encouragement and hope. Planned with the songs and dances of the musical, we were able to share the „good news of Job“ in Hafnerbach, Austria in early March.

It was such a great joy to share the stories which touched us so much and motivate us.



We'd also love to
share our story in
many new churches
and places as well.

THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL



Refresher meeting, February

MUMBAI,
INDIA

Flipping to the first bookmark of the year 2020, we come to our refresher meet held in February. Within this 2-day meet we coned our thinking, focusing wholly on Pope Francis and 'The Joy of the Gospel'. In the doing, we opened our imagination onto paths never walked upon.



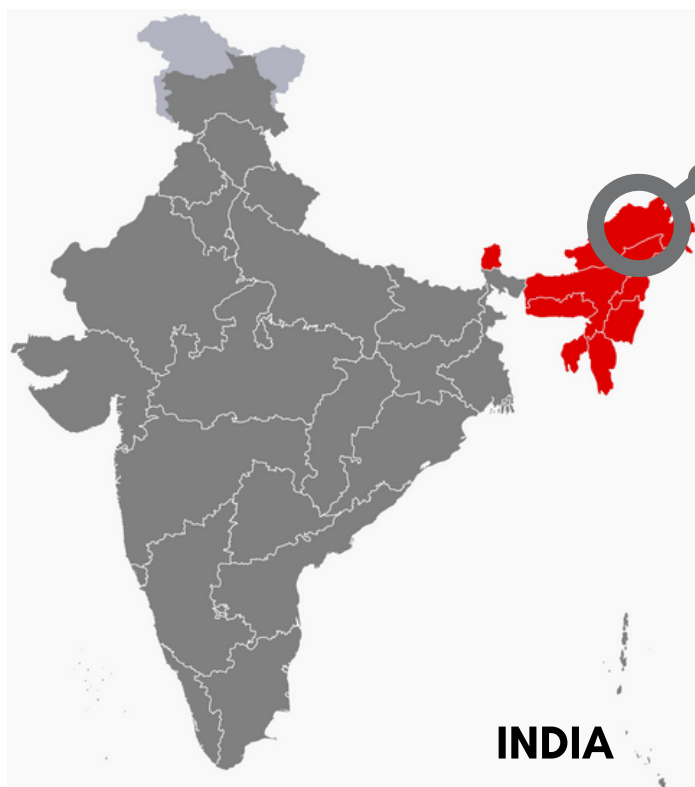
➤ To begin on a powerful opening note was the Movie, Pope Francis- A Man of His Word. A subtle documentary shedding light on the virtues and life of Pope Francis. A completely new face and meaning to the livelihood of The Papacy. A figure, all-loved and praised; a pioneer, the whole community looks up to. Post-movie, we witnessed the varied conflicting opinions we had about the Papacy, and how it molded into positivity with Pope Francis im zentrum. The following day after the soul-filling breakfast, we came down to pondering upon the Pope's exhortation - Evangelii gaudium (Joy of the Gospel).

Breaking it and summarizing it into three main parts, we understood as to how it gave meaning to our euthanized faith in humanity and our roles as Christians; as followers of Christ. Followed by this was a profound topical discussion on 'Mission - Agenda or Attitude'. This discussion helped rationalize our thoughts and beliefs as individuals serving the Society of God. It enriched our vision getting it astute and broader into evangelism, but at the same time not forcing it upon people from other faiths. After such a comprehensive session, there were fun-filled games induced to lighten up our minds as well as our bodies. And following that, was another rather interesting session, based solely upon the idea of the Church, as put together by the Pope, in his address. Over time, groups were formed and each with a motive to design and structure your own Church. With great enthusiasm and wit, new ideas and structures were brought about, as to how an ideal church should be. And sharing of these ideas took the lid off of our medieval beliefs of what a church must offer. On an ending note, we had a small prayer session followed by the 2020-Camp announcements and finally a sloshed party to tip it all off.

Altogether, this meet was truly refreshing indeed, restoring our faith in the Papacy and revitalizing our mission in spreading the Joy of the Gospel, not just as Christians but as humble human beings; as disciples of Pope Francis.

HELP US TO HELP

INDIA



Arunachal Pradesh



between **ages 4-24** are currently supported financially by The Upper Room (separate from the hostels)




20 € /month *
school fees,
housing and food
*240 € per year

With a donation we help children to attend **primary school** and get proper education



60 € /month *
university fees,
housing and food
*720 € per year

With a donation we help students to get a degree at **university**.

DAS TEAM



Georg

Georg's first hands-on encounter with India was during his one year of voluntary service in India. His passion and talent in composing music has brought many opportunities to use art as a means to work with youngsters and we're excited where this ambition may lead us in the future. Besides he oversees the finances and administrative work needed as an official organization with great precision. Both he and Anson love to encounter people and connect to people and connect people.

Luci's huge heart and love for India has started to grow since she was a teenager and was finally put in action when she spent one year in India to work at a school. It was only a matter of time until she met Georg and Anson and instantly wholeheartedly devoted her time and energy to the people The Upper Room supports. She is responsible for the hostel in India and coordinates the students and teachers there.

Olivier is the most recent newcomer to the Upper Room family. Due to his reliability and good expressiveness he is in charge of fundraising and communications. Thanks to his commitment and his own initiative a crucial part of funding is covered. We love his straightforwardness and clear thinking.



Olivier



Luci



Diana

Diana has been there for The Upper Room since the very first moment. One could even see her as the mother of The Upper Room - the idea for the name of the organisation stems from her. She brings organisational talent, the ability to put ideas into words and structure and lots of experience in PR to the table. Many times she has been the missing link when work had to be done from a distance - planning trips and camps or reacting right on the spot. She has deep insight and understanding for our work. Since spring we are lucky to have her on the team on a more regular basis.

THE TEAM

Being born in India and working as a teacher in northeast India Anson has a high sensitivity and understanding about the needs and culture in this area. His heart was stirred to bring people with different stories together and provide a safe space to discuss all kinds of topics in faith.

When he moved to Austria to complete his studies his way crossed Georg's. It didn't take long for them to start developing ideas and dreams for a movement together. Back in 2016 he ran the first retreat in India together with a friend. We love his ability to put complex thoughts into beautiful dialogues, plays and camp songs.

Anson



Andreas



Andreas - our administrative and financial brain shares his years of experience in working in non-profit organisations with us. We are lucky to have such a diligent person who guides and supports us in matters of finances. But also for logistical needs and logical questions we are happy that we can always count on him.



Joktang is one of the most important helping hands in India and it is easy to trust him since he's always committed to his work faithfully. He assists and oversees the students and coordinates the team in Jairampur. Thanks to his reliability, flexibility and love for people a big part of the work at the hostel can be carried out smoothly.

Joktang

As the cousin of Georg she knew about The Upper Room but her first commitment was to join the team for a camp in Northeast India in 2019. Eversince she helps by writing content and reports and translating to English and German. Together with Diana she is part of the PR Team and loves to find creative ways to best present and describe the work of The Upper Room. She assists in doing choreographie for dances for the camps and musicals and loves to jump in wherever she can help.

Judith





THANK YOU

A big and hearty thank you to all the people and dear friends and family who keep supporting us in many different ways. May it be financially, materially or emotionally.

As a non for profit organisation the work is highly dependent on people who partner with us to invest in young people and support us with their contributions.

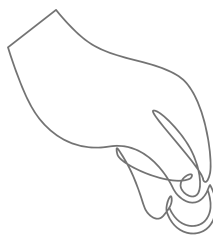
Camp "WHAT IF?"

There's still possibility to donate specifically for our camp "What IF?" in Austria. We intentionally kept the costs for the participants at a minimum to allow a high number of youngsters to take part. Due to covid-19 some had to cancel last minute. All in all we were not able to cover all costs for the camp. You find a short throwback under "video" to get some impressions of the weekend in the woods. It summarizes these days in a beautiful way and captures precious moments shared together.



[VIDEO](#)





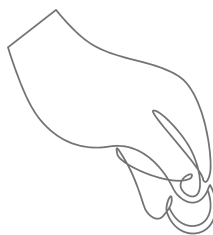
HOSTEL IN JAIRAMPUR

Due to the current situation we're working eagerly to mobilize resources to reanimate the hostel in Jariampur. One of our team members is actively recruiting new students. We want to encourage young people to further pursue their education and invite them to be supported in the process in our hostel.

*We are thankful for all general donations. More specifically we are in need of financial means for several **students** who live at the hostel, **students in general** who don't live there (primary school to university) and **salaries for the teachers** working in Jairampur.*

Warden and teachers make sure that the teenagers are fully devoted to their studies and help them wherever they can.





THE UPPER ROOM OFFICE

Starting from November, the new headquarter of The Upper Room will be right in the center of Vienna in **Johannessgasse 16**. We are excited to take this step. We are confident that this is a good start to build a solid basis as an organization in Austria. We have many opportunities to use the other rooms of this huge building and would be happy to welcome you in our new office.

*We would be very thankful if you want to support us financially since we have to cover the **rent** for this great working space.*

The Upper Room

Verein zur Förderung von Bildung und interkulturellem und religiösem Dialog

IBAN AT61 3258 5000 0859 1133

BIC RLNWATWWOBG

Purpose of donation:

- a) What If
- b) Hostel
- c) office
- d) No specific

Thank you



mit Fotos von Tobias G. (S. 1,3,4,5,6,7)
und Jakob G. (S. 8, 10, 17, 18)

sponsored by

OPTIGEM

SOFTWARELÖSUNGEN FÜR VEREINE
UND GEMEINNÜTZIGE WERKE



www.optigem.at



altmüller

AUF JEDER LINIE - MEIN INSTALLATEUR

**LUX
BAU**

FEUERBERG

MOUNTAIN RESORT · SPIRIT & SPA



CLOSING WORDS

Dear friends,

2020 – a year to fast-forward, right? We've had to face innumerable difficulties and isolation. On the other hand how much solidarity and humanity have we encountered!


We experienced this uncertainty concretely in the following ways:

- Our learning center and hostel had to close at the beginning of March and we were faced with the decision to close down the project. Thanks to many common forces and small miracles, 22 young people are learning again today in this learning center.
- Unfortunately, we had to cancel the annual camp with teenagers and young adults planned in India, but in mid-September we hosted 26 young people in Burgenland and celebrated unity in diversity at a camp there!
- Our team grew by a considerable size during this time. Thank you Diana, Judith, Olivier (our most recent teammate), Lucia, Joktang and Andreas for your loyal and passionate cooperation.

On behalf of the whole team we would like to thank you for your prayers, your emotional support, the regular inquiries about the students and the projects, your generous and constant financial help! We wish you all the best from the bottom of our hearts. When this is all over, we hope to meet each other soon, in person.

Prayer requests:

- For all children and young people who are in our learning centers or in different schools, for health, personal growth and their families
- For peace between religions, countries and people
- For everyone suffering from the current Covid pandemic, for health, strength and stamina



ANSON & GEORG

Gründer von The Upper Room

