

July 19, 2019

Around the world through the power of friendship

The Yuujou travelers have reached the other side of the world by traveling from one friend to the next. After 100 days of travel experiment, it shows: There is a friendship connection around the globe.

With this project, the Yuujou travelers want to show the real connection between people. According to the Six Degrees of Separation theory, each one of us is only six introductions away from any other person on this planet. What happens if you actually travel from one friend to the next? Are we all really friends, linked to each other by varying degrees?

To discover this, two teams met in Berlin in April and then traveled in opposite directions from one friend to the next. They had 100 days to reach Japan. The route was not planned, it was created during the journey and the next stop was always at a friend of the current host. *"It's great to travel like this. Thanks to the chain of friendship we experience the cultures and people much closer than on an ordinary backpacking trip,"* says Yuujou co-founder Yvonne Eisenring.

A difficult start

Now the two teams meet again in Tokyo and a worldwide friendship chain is forged. The stops of the 100-day travel adventure and all the hosts can be seen on www.yuujou.world. Yuujou-traveler Joey says that the journey has been one of the most incredible and rewarding experiences of his life: *"Forming these friendships across the world is something I will cherish for the rest of my life."* Swiss bestselling author and former journalist Yvonne Eisenring is now writing a book about the Yuujou journey, and a documentary film about the travel experiences is also being produced.

For a long time, however, the experiment seemed to fail. Team East zigzagged through Eastern Europe for over a month and found no host for two weeks. At this point John left his team and returned early to India. Renata from Brazil followed to replace him. In the second half of the trip, things went much better: Team West was able to travel from Brazil to Mexico, then to the USA and finally to Japan with a stop in Hawaii. Team East traveled through Europe to Ukraine, then through Russia until Krasnoyarsk, after which they went to Hainan, China. From there they traveled via the Philippines to Japan.

Over 30,000 applicants for the journey

The travelers for this 100-day adventure were found online. The international casting exceeded all expectations: Over 30,000 people from 167 countries applied for the journey. A jury selected the winners after a multi-stage evaluation process: Panos from Cyprus, Paula from New Zealand, John from India, Jed from South Africa, Renata from Brazil and Joey from the USA have been able to assert themselves against thousands of applicants. They were joined by Yvonne Eisenring, who is also one of the founders of Yuujou.

Friendship is the key to a happy life

"What if we only travel from one person to another - can we make it to the other side of the world? Wouldn't it be interesting to see where the journey would lead you and who you'd meet along the road?", was a thought that Yvonne and her sister Corinne Eisenring, a TV producer for travel documentaries, had always marveled at. Together with Oliver Herren, a Swiss internet pioneer, and founder of Switzerland's largest online shop "Digitec Galaxus", they finally breathed life into their vision. He is happy that though Yuujou, a long-held dream has come true: *"I have long had the desire to do an online project with relevant content and to show people never appearing in the media."*

The media art-project sets an excellent example for humanity and our inherent kindness, and the wonders that can be achieved if we only open ourselves to connect with our immediate surroundings. The founders of Yuujou believe there is nothing more important than friendship, and several large-scale scientific studies have similar conclusions: Genuine friends and face-to-face moments are the key to a happy, healthy and long life. However, numerous surveys have shown a dark picture in this respect: 50% of U.S Americans report they feel alone and miss meaningful face-to-face interactions on a daily basis. The loneliest generation of adults is the 18 to 22 years olds. Surveys of other countries show similar results. The founders of Yuujou are trying to make a difference. They know that they can't beat loneliness. *"But we can show the importance of friendship!"*

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Press material:

More information on: www.yuujou.world/about

Pictures on: www.yuujou.world/newsroom

Video "What is Yuujou": <https://youtu.be/QlbQQ6JnXfg>