

Live to Learn - Learn to Love

Prozor-Rama, Bosnia-Herzegovina, July 7 - August 1, 2014

The hostility after the Yugoslav war of the 1990s towards the “other” (anyone who does not belong to their own nation, ethnic, and religious group), is especially accentuated in Bosnia and Herzegovina where three ethnic groups share a single territory. I was born in Croatia and grew up in Bosnia and Herzegovina in a Croat, Catholic family. Croats are one of the three major ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with Bosniaks (Muslim) and Serbs (Christian Orthodox). In most other countries, especially Western countries, this information would be insignificant. In my country, on the other hand, belonging to a specific ethnic group dictates all aspects of one’s everyday life.

As a Davis Scholar who has not only studied at a United World College, but who has also had the experience of living and studying in the United States, I realize the need for Bosnian-Herzegovinian youth to learn how to thrive in such a diverse society, instead of constantly being held back by fear, hatred and a lack of understanding.

Therefore, I plan to organize a summer school with in-class activities and three field trips, for students aged 14-19. To participate in the project, students under the age of 18 will need to have their parents’ permission and a signed consent by July 10. A total of twenty participants will be chosen through an application process. Ten of the students will be Croats and ten Bosniak. Because no Serbian students attend any of the schools in Prozor-Rama and because of liability issues, only students from Prozor-Rama will be able to participate in the summer school. Prozor High School will provide us with the venues where workshops will be held and any other help we may need (e.g. faculty and staff assistance).

The main goal will be working with diverse groups in pursuing a mutual goal, focusing on personalities rather than ethnicities. I want young people to learn about our country’s complex nature, its history and diverse culture through travel, observation, and interaction with different people. By doing so, the students will learn to view diversity as an advantage and an asset from which they themselves and society as a whole can benefit.

The following organizations have agreed to assist with accommodation and workshop facilitation:

- Prozor High School – 2 senior assistants will be chosen through an application process
- Prozor primary schools
- *Djeca Nade (Children of Hope)*, Prozor
- United World College in Mostar (UWCiM) – current UWCiM students chosen as volunteers are: Antonija Simunovic (also a citizen of Prozor), Emina-Ema Ibisevic, Ivan Pejic and Mojmir Stehlik
- Rebecca Davis Dance Company (RDDC), Mostar
- ASUBiH (High School Student Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Sarajevo
- *Zajedno (Together)*, Banja Luka
- AIESEC (International Association of Students in Economic and Commercial Sciences), Banja Luka
- *Udruga Apollo (Association Apollo)*, Posušje (leadership speakers, co-founders of *Udruga Apollo*: Jozo Kolobaric and Marko Petric (UWCiM ’11 and Hood College ’15))

Details of the project

The project will begin on July 7 and end on August 1. Three days (July 7 – 9) will be dedicated to training assistants and volunteers who will also be chosen through an application process. Participants will be introduced to the project's objective as well as its schedule on *Introduction Day* (July 10) when we will visit the local museum Scit and Ethno Village Uzdol. Workshops for students will be held four days a week, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Through these workshops students will learn to use technology in a way that will help them develop and enhance skills they can use professionally and to introduce them to the concept of using social media to stimulate positive social change through messages of tolerance, peace, and understanding.

Mondays will be *Educational Film* days where we will watch a movie/documentary about the place or the culture we visited on the previous weekend. Following the movie screenings, community leaders will give short presentations on what they and their respective organizations do to promote peace and tolerance. A question-and-answer session will follow the presentations.

Tuesdays will be *PowerPoint Presentation* day, where students will learn how to use PowerPoint, create presentations, present in a professional manner, and work in teams. Presentations will be about the field trips with various specific topics assigned to different groups, consisting of both Croatian and Bosniak students. Teaching students these computer skills will benefit their future academic and professional endeavors.

Wednesdays are designed to be *Interactive English Workshop* days for improvement of students' English language and team building skills with volunteers from different organizations. The most important workshop facilitators will be current UWCiM students, as I would like to show an example of students who currently live, study and work in one of the most diverse high school in the world.

Thursdays will be *Creative – Volunteer* days where we will visit local organization *Djeca Nade* (*Children of Hope*) and work with children with special needs. Since local schools do not have adequate computer labs, the two computers and a laptop intended to be purchased for this project will be donated to the *Children of Hope* at the end of the project.

Fridays and Saturdays will be dedicated to field trips to three major cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- Mostar, a predominantly Croatian city (July 11-12);
- Sarajevo, a predominantly Bosniak city and the capital (July 18-19);
- Banja Luka, a predominantly Serbian city (July 25-26).

We will stay in each of these three cities for two days to get the opportunity to volunteer with local community and interact with individuals of other nationalities and religions. Accommodations in each city will be provided by local organizations, which will also organize workshops, tours of the city, and introductions to local customs:

- In Mostar, UWCiM will be our host and RDDC will be facilitating workshops.
- In Sarajevo, ASUBiH will be our host, holding workshops and presentations which will also include a flash mob with our combined student members.
- In Banja Luka, AIESEC, an international organization that provides students with leadership training, will be our host in cooperation with the organization *Zajedno* (*Together*).

Sundays will be days off for students. August 1 is the *Closing Ceremony* day. Parents, friends, volunteers, supporters, and the press will be invited to celebrate the successful end of the summer school.