



**ENCOURAGING DEMOCRATIC VALUES
AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AMONG YOUTH**

2014/15

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>> ACTIVITIES >>

1. Educational and Skills Development Program and Debate Training

The 9-day educational module held in Sarajevo from November 29 until December 7, 2014 included lectures and workshops covering topics of human rights, democracy and democratic values, identity, nationalism, active citizenship and volunteerism, as well as communication, presentation and research skills, critical thinking skills and finally debating skills.

For the purposes of the 1st module, EDVACAY gathered 14 lecturers and 4 debate trainers with the aim to provide the participants a broad and deep insight into the discussed topics. Our lecturers were mostly young active professionals and leaders who have both theoretical and practical knowledge of the matter. They were selected according to their expertise, recognition in BH society, openness and willingness for future cooperation with participants. Their role was not just to teach, but also to motivate program participants, which has been accomplished to a great extent.

The chosen lecturers received quite a positive feedback from the 15 EDVACAY participants, as it could be seen from the extensive evaluation forms conducted at the very end of the educational module.

The developed program was devoted to a specific topic each day:

1. Democracy

The first day of the program allowed participants to increase their awareness and basic knowledge related to the basic democratic concepts. Participants learned about the history of the development of democratic ideas, formal and legal foundations of democracy, democratic models, main components of effective democracy, democratic values, democratic political culture and political education.



2. Human rights

The second day was focused on human rights including the main human rights categories, basic documents on human rights, core principles of human rights and the instruments needed to exercise them. Special attention was devoted to the assessment and discussion about the state of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as dialogue and tolerance as behavioral characteristics that seem to be missing in BiH society. The day included a human rights simulation game on the European Court of Human Rights that put functioning of the Court, as well as the cases brought before it, into perspective for the participants.

3. Identity and nationalism

The third day dealt with basic concepts of identity and the influence of social factors, positive and negative aspects of collective identity, prejudice and discrimination based on identity. In the focus of discussions were questions of collective identity in BiH and nationalism. Critical reading and thinking were singled out as one of possible tools for

overcoming nationalism.

4. Youth engagement and active citizenship

The fourth day focused on youth engagement and offered the participants insight into how active citizenship and volunteering can influence both individuals and communities. The speakers emphasized possibilities offered through civil society organizations, described ways of youth participation in decision-making processes in BiH, and presented an alternative to the current discourse in the form of civil disobedience and community organizing.

5. Communication skills

The first day of skills development workshops focused on various aspects of the communication process. The participants learned about active listening, assertive and nonverbal communication, public appearance, presentation skills etc., and also received individual feedback on their communication abilities. Part of the day was devoted to the topic of using social media as a tool for promotion of ideas and initiation of actions.

6. Leadership skills

The second skill building oriented day was devoted to the introduction of the concept of leadership, characteristics of leaders, leadership styles, defining participant's styles with personal feedback and review of leadership concept in BiH society. Special attention was given to developing effective presentation skills, as well as specific leadership skills related to time management and managing teams.

7. Research skills

The aim of the last program day was to prepare participants for the next phase of the project. They learned how the research process should be framed, how to develop a research synopsis, research methodology, data sources and what research techniques to use. The organizers allocated research mentors and asked the participants to present their research ideas. The mentors then offered individual feedback on the proposed topics.

8. Debating skills

The addition to this year's program, the debate training, turned out to be very successful – the British Parliamentary style of debating was largely unknown and unavailable to the participants, and thus quite appealing. The three-day debate training was hosted and supported by the University of Sarajevo Faculty of Law.



Formats used throughout the program were: interactive lectures, simulation games, group work, debates, workshops, movie screenings and discussion, panels and individual work.

The goal of the organizers was to introduce participants to different types of teaching and learning methods which stimulate active participation, being aware that these methods are rarely applied in formal educational settings in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



2. Individual Research

As part of the second program phase that lasted from 15 December 2014 until March 15, 2015, program participants conducted individual pieces of research. They addressed issues directly related to the existing obstacles that hinder the effective participation of youth in their local communities and other problems and deficiencies in these communities that they would like to see resolved. The research they are doing therefore tackles the examples of discrimination and violation of human rights among young people, as well as other relevant inquiries.

Based on the provided guidelines, the participants chose research topics which delineate a wide spectrum of their interests. Some of them are as follows:

- “Students’ Attitude towards Youth Activism and Volunteering: the Example of Faculty of Political Science, Faculty of Law, and Faculty of Philosophy” by Lejla Mušanović
- “Youth Unemployment in Zvornik” by Petar Rajković
- “The Impact of Internet and Social Media on Children” by Olivera Šebić
- “Cinema in Goražde” by Tarik Alić
- “The Administrative Literacy of Students at the University of Tuzla Faculty of Philosophy ” by Mirza Halilčević
- “Transitional Justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina” by Ana Jovanović

After selecting their topics, the participants were each assigned mentors who are experienced in conducting research. Each of the three mentors supervised a group of five participants. Mentors communicated with the mentees on a regular basis and provided hands-on support during the research process.

3. Project and Financial Management Training

The main aim of the third phase of the program was to provide the participants with skills and basic knowledge in project and financial management in order for them to be able to plan, implement and report about their group projects properly. The second aim was to give them the opportunity to present their research papers which they created during the second module and also to facilitate a process of planning group projects that will be implemented solely by program participants from the end of mid-April until the end of May 2015.

The four-day intensive training was organized in Neum (March 26-29, 2015).

On the first day of the program participants presented their research findings and conclusions., after which the group was given an opportunity to ask questions during the discussion at the end of session. Participants showed great interest in the



research topics of their colleagues. They offered constructive criticism, suggestions for advancing conclusions, and they discussed how the researched problems reflect on their everyday life. At the end of day, the participants had a short “advisory session” with Inga Kotlo, Project Coordinator, who summed up the tips and general rules for writing the research papers which can be useful for the participants’ further academic advancement.

The second day of the program was fully dedicated to the development of project and financial management skills. Participants were taught what projects are, the basics of the project cycle, how to translate an idea into a project, how to write project proposals, how to create a budget, how to monitor and evaluate projects and how to do narrative and financial reports. Special attention was given to the proposal writing part where participants learned how to determine the purpose and specific goals of the project, target group, activities and timeline for their implementation, expected results, and possible risks that could occur in the project implementation. Each of these learning segments was followed by practical work and assignments for participants.

At the end of this day participants were divided into 3 groups which will act as project teams in the following period. Each group received guidelines on what is expected from them in the next phase of the program. They had a few hours to brainstorm and to do background research in order to justify the need for the project they proposed.

It was very encouraging to see that the research the participants conducted served as a basis for the projects they have envisaged. For example, the research about administrative literacy conducted by Mirza Halilčević served as a basis for the group project “My application has been accepted!” or the research about the cinema in Goražde which served as basis for the group project “Are you up for the cinema?”.



On the third day, divided in groups, program participants worked on writing their project proposals, planned their project implementation, divided the work among themselves and developed budget proposals. After completing the proposal outlines, the groups had to present them to HIA staff and a trainer. Their feedback served as a basis for improvement of the participants’ ideas and as preparation for more effective implementation of project.

The last day of the program was concluded with group work on using social media for promoting projects. This training will be useful for obtaining more visibility of their projects during the next phase of the program, thus demonstrating the ability of young people, represented by program participants, to bring about change in their communities.

4. Civic Campaigns

After the 3rd phase, the participants divided into three groups started to implement their mini-projects in the period from April 10 until May 25, 2015. Aside from the obligation to plan and conduct the project activities on their own, they were in charge of submitting the mid-report (on May 10, 2015), as well as final narrative and financial report (on June 1, 2015)

with which they have circled the project cycle.

The three implemented group projects are as follows:

1. The project **“My Application Has Been Accepted”** (*Moja aplikacija je prihvaćena!*, abbr. MAJP) was a project designed and implemented by Agić Šejla, Bukvić Aldin, Halilčević Mirza, Jovanović Ana and Mujkić Sabahudin. The project had the aim to provide basic knowledge of administrative literacy to the highschool students of final year in four BH cities: Tuzla (Opća gimnazija KŠC „Sv. Franjo“), Fojnica (SMŠ „Zijah Dizdarević“), Doboj (MSŠ Doboj Istok), and Sarajevo (JU Dobrinja). During these workshops within “MAJP Travelling School”, the participants gave advice to the students how to write pleas, requests, motivation letters, curriculum vitae and a business e-mail. For the promotional and informative purposes, the group created a [Facebook page](#).



2. The project **“Internet – Good Servant, Bad Master”** (*Internet – dobar sluga, loš gospodar*) was designed and implemented by Begić Dženeta, Mušanović Lejla, Rajković Petar and Todorović Milan. The participants wished to raise awareness on the impact of internet on children, and to present both the good and bad sides of internet. In other words, the project emphasized the good ways in which internet can be used (e.g. for

promotion of socially beneficial projects), as well as the dangers lurking online if youngsters give away too much information about themselves and their location. The workshops within this project were held in two BH towns: Zvornik (Dom omladine Zvornik, where highschool students from Zvornik and Bratunac gathered) and Lukavac (JU Gimnazija Lukavac).

3. The project **“Are You Up for the Cinema?”** (*Jesi li za kino?*) was designed and implemented by Alić Tarik, Bebanić Adi, Lazarević Daniel, Maglić Arnela and Šebić Olivera. The project was created with the aim to draw attention to the existing but non-functioning cinema in Goražde. This cinema is perceived as a public space that can potentially foster social cohesion and further social and



professional progress of the youth in the town of Goražde, but is nevertheless neglected. Thus, within this project there was a petition started (“Civic Initiative for Starting a Functional Cinema in Goražde – We are against an empty cinema hall!”) as well as one-day

street event of a festive character and a cinema-projection in the mentioned cinema within Cultural Centre in Goražde.

The participants gathered around the project “Internet – Good Servant, Bad Master” wrote their impression in their final narrative report:

“We have learned a lot during the project implementation phase – both in the project management training in Neum which gave us useful information on how to plan and draft a project proposal and as well as in the implementation and reporting phase. We have learned that good communication among the team members is of crucial importance for the success of a project and that it is necessary for all members to fulfill their tasks on time and successfully in order for the process to run as envisaged. We have learned to deal with the obstacles arising during the project cycle and we have realized how extremely important it is to have a plan B because one can never know what can go wrong. We always need to think about all bad things that might happen in order to have an exit strategy for every problem. Having implemented our project, I am convinced that we have managed to enrich our existing knowledge as well as to learn many new things we didn't have the opportunity to learn earlier. Before we were mostly members of the projects organized by other persons, but now we were the ones who needed to make something, and I truly believe we succeeded at it and came out richer in knowledge and skills.” (Dženeta Begić)

Some of the participants of the project “My application has been accepted” also shared their views:

“While conducting this project, I have acquired self-confidence to stand in front of a crowd and speak about something. I have learned how to teach and present which will certainly be useful for me later on. Also, I felt great each time someone approached us and said our workshop inspired him/her to apply for something. I am glad we managed to implement this project successfully and I hope the project will continue.” (Ana Jovanović)

“Having in mind that this is the first project I ever worked on, I consider I have learned a lot. Firstly, I am glad to have left my comfort zone and went a step further in the team work. It was not easy – there were 5 persons with different personalities and ideas that needed to be harmonized, but I hope we've done a good job. I have tried to apply all the theory presented at the 9-day seminar in Sarajevo while interacting with participants at our MAJP workshops. I hope to continue with activism and transfer all the knowledge I gathered here to other people and new projects.” (Šejla Agić)

4. Closing Ceremony, Project Presentation and Debate Tournament

The two-day closing ceremony, debate tournament and project presentation session was organized in Bijele Vode near Goražde.

On the first day of the program participants enrolled in a debate tournament together with 6 guests from the Law Faculty of University of Sarajevo. The debate tournament served to consolidate the skills acquired during the debate training in the 1st module (December 2014 in Sarajevo).



The topics covered a wide array of issues such as: whether internet brings more benefits or dangers, whether it is a good investment for a city to be a host for the Olympic Games, whether newspapers are outdated, whether faculties should introduce a unique system of entrance exams or whether boxing matches should be banned.

The second day of the program was fully dedicated to the presentation of group projects and summing up the project results.