

Report from the study trip organized as part of the project "Young Heroes - Empowerment of Youth in BiH at the community level"

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As part of the project "Young Heroes - Empowerment of young people in BiH at the community level" implemented by the Association of Election Officials in BiH (UIZBIH) from January 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024 thanks to the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the organization AGORA CE in the time of 30.09. - On October 4, 2023, the planned project activity Study trip to the Czech Republic was carried out for project participants, representatives of the Association of Election Officials in BiH, high schools, and local communities of municipalities/cities included in the project.

Among the members of the study group, which consisted of Ernes Jusović, Acting Officer of the Association of Election Officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ervin Dragović, Office Assistant of the Association of Election Officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Professor Dragana Kartal, Secondary School Center Nedžad Ibrišimović Ilijaš, Alma Mahmutović, Gymnasium Muhsin Rizvić Kakanj, Amra Baždar, High School of Civil Engineering - Geodesy, Sarajevo - Center, teacher Aldina Džanko, Gymnasium Muhsin Rizvić, Breza, Sanja Zagorac Jozić, assistant to the head for social activities, Municipality of Ilijaš, as marketing and information officer for the City of Konjic, I had the honor and pleasure to be part of the Study Trip to the Czech Republic, which enriched us with experiences, new knowledge and established unbreakable business ties and mutual friendship.

Our common goal of empowering young people in schools and local communities to be active actors of change, after spending 5 days in the Czech Republic, got a new impetus, and the experiences enabled us to have a better approach to the realization of the next project activities.

Members of the Association of Electoral Officials in BiH, AGORA CE organization, and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic through planning a tour of key institutions, educational institutions, and municipalities in Prague and Kutná Hora contributed to creating a quality image of the way of life, work and action in the Czech Republic in the field creation of preconditions for the active involvement of young people in all important processes in their schools and communities, which can be a good starting point for the implementation of this project, but also the design of new projects with innovative programs, and the creation of adequate mechanisms for more productive activity in the community, both for young people and other citizens.

The very position of the accommodation we had during our stay in Prague at Hotel New Town, at Žitná 28, allowed us to be at almost all the destinations planned in the tour program in a short time so that we were efficient without deviating from the planned activities.

All the members of the Study Tour and the hosts Kristina, Magda, and Tijana, who tried their best to be at the agreed locations at the agreed time, deserve credit for that. The hosts made an effort to get answers to all the questions that interested us, and which can serve us in further work in our schools and communities.

What I brought from the Czech Republic as experience and new knowledge is that it seems to me, that people who live in this country approach things and jobs in a more relaxed way than we do in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As far as I could notice in a short time after visiting educational institutions and local communities, education and the conditions for education seem to me to be identical in some phases in both countries, however, starting from casual dress, unlike the formal one, which is still tried to be maintained in BiH, to facilities for students and teachers when informing about the schedule of classes and extracurricular activities at school, to the proud presentation of Made in CR products, I saw that differences still exist. The schools have a wider network of sister schools from abroad than is the case in BiH. Students in schools in the Czech Republic travel a lot more outside the country on student exchanges and excursions. We obtained the above information through a conversation with the president of the student parliament, Karolina Viljinova, from Jiřího Orten Gymnasium, Kutná Hora.

According to what we learned from the conversation with Dana Vebkova, a professor of Czech language and history, who works in parallel in the municipal service for culture, education, and social policy, the experiences of municipalities with young people and encouraging activities aimed at their active inclusion in decision-making processes are in Kutna Hora, the same as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and young people must know when and to whom they can turn in their local communities to change things for the better.

A significant segment of the trip was meeting people from the Balkans, who live in the Czech Republic and gather at the "Lastavica" club, where we had the opportunity to meet with the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Czech Republic, Martina Mlinarević, who after presenting the project and its participants, congratulated the Association of Election Officials in BiH and AGORA CE for what they are doing for young people in BiH and the Czech Republic, and thanked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for supporting the project, inviting others to support this and similar projects aimed at young people and their empowerment and education to be proactive citizens.

Getting to know the historical sights of the Czech Republic, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a meeting with the Deputy Minister Mr. Jan Marian was a new experience and an opportunity to broaden one's horizons in the field of activity and development of the Czech Republic throughout history.

On the last day of our stay in the Czech Republic, in a pleasant conversation with the representatives of the Prague 6 district, we got to know the details of the local project that is being implemented under the name "The city belongs to Everyone", and we talked with the representatives of the NGO "Nesedím, sousedím" about their ideas and how citizens of all generations apply to projects that are implemented with the support of local communities.

The study trip to the Czech Republic was an excellent opportunity for representatives of schools and municipalities/cities from Bosnia and Herzegovina to hear more about different experiences and challenges related to the engagement of young people, about

their ideas and wishes, as well as models and possibilities of how to express, present and realize them, that is, that the community respects their position and opinion.

Given the fact that all participants of the Study Trip to the Czech Republic come from different environments, schools, and cantons in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the plus value of the project itself is the exchange of experiences of schools and local communities, because they all work according to different programs and models.

In a conversation with my colleagues from the Czech Republic and Bosnia and Herzegovina, I realized that together we can do everything and that it is important to inform students, children, and young people about their rights, the opportunities that are offered to them, so that when they grow up they will be the bearers of prosperity and progress regardless of whether they lived in small or large communities, regardless of whether they lived in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic or elsewhere.

To the implementers, patrons, and everyone participating in the project, who will help young people from Breza, Ilijaš, Jablanica, Kakanj, Konjic, Sarajevo - Center, East Sarajevo, Brčko District to become young heroes, I wish you good luck in your work on this and all other projects.