

Workshop: “Yes We Can- Together”

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Workshop content/theme

Life in a post-conflict society can be really hard and complicated especially if you end up living in a divided town, in a divided community. What can you do?- alone almost nothing. But with a little help from your friends lots of things can be achieved. How? If you are interested to learn more about youth activism, the ways of connecting broken social wounds, social inclusion and overcoming prejudice please join our session. This workshop taught about the alternative educational model in Bosnia and Herzegovina where students actively learn how to value diversity and difference by participating in a community service programme.

Aims

The aim of the workshop was to present a different educational model, which is offered in the United World College in Mostar (UWCiM) as a possible role model for making extra curriculum social activities a core part of the high-school syllabus in the region. Therefore the focus of the presentation was on different programmes developed to facilitate students' personal development through social voluntary work as well as their participation in local community life. Students tried to explain their personal experience of working with their peers with people with special needs, the elderly, Roma children, orphans, refugees.etc. and how this affected their perception of the social environment. The workshop also presented the UWCiM experience, which integrates students from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds within residential accommodation (since UWCs students are boarding student) and in the classroom set-up in the post conflict environment of Mostar.

Method(s)/Approach

The workshop was carried out in the form of an interactive oral presentation and the visitors were also given United World College in Mostar promo material. After a brief introduction by facilitators the visitors could ask questions about different aspects of life in the United World College in Mostar. A lively discussion was carried out beyond the planned time of the presentation since the participants, mostly teachers, wanted to find out more about the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme offered at the UWCiM and especially its obligatory extra curriculum activities focused on voluntary work in the local community.

Further tips, sources, resource material or links

For more information about obligatory extra curriculum activities, coined CAS (Creativity, Action, Service) within the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in United World College in Mostar please visit our web site www.uwc.ibo.org as well as the web site of United World Colleges international www.uwc.org and International Baccalaureate www.ibo.org

Impressions, Outcomes of the workshop

The United World College in Mostar “Yes We Can - Together” workshop attracted 13 participants, mostly teachers from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania. In a brief introduction about the UWCiM, the main reasons for founding this special type of boarding high school in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Mostar in particular were explained. Since the educational system in BiH is still mostly divided across ethnic lines the fully integrated school is a true alternative to existing models. The special emphasis was given to the CAS (Creativity, Action, Service) programme. The aim of this compulsory programme is to educate the whole person. CAS activities encourage students to develop their self-awareness, to care for others, and learn to cooperate with others in accordance with the UWC mission statement: *UWC makes education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future.* UWCiM students Marko and Emina than

shared their CAS experience with the participants emphasising how this experience affected their perception of social integration and inclusion.

Since most of the participants didn't hear about the UWC movement and International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme the workshop was also used for explaining its main features. This brought up a discussion about the problems in national curricula in most of the countries of Central and South East Europe which include too big size classes, too extensive a curriculum, lack of students interest in most of the subjects etc. The workshop participants also wanted to hear more about teaching History in UWCiM taking into account that most students come from post conflict areas.