

Melina Dzelovic,
on behalf of VoCE 2014-2018 / Summer Peace School Participants
Volksbund Berlin First World War Commemorative Ceremony
Berlin, Plötzensee Memorial
Saturday November 17, 2018

Good day to all! My name is Melina Dželović and I'm coming from Sarajevo, B&H. I am honored to be given the opportunity to speak at this gathering.

I am a psychologist but employed as an assistant project manager in the non-governmental organization "Education builds B&H", which takes care of children and young victims of war that happened in my country 23 years ago but also to other groups of children and youth who are in some way discriminated in our society.

My participation in VoCE Summer Peace School has been going on since 2014, when we started working on this great story in Sarajevo. At first I was thrilled to get to know my peers coming from Europe, the opportunity to travel and get to know countries and their history, but also to exchange experiences and opinions with others.

Talking about the First World War for us young people from B&H was mostly at the level of lessons from history classes. But to sympathize with the victims, to understand the terrible consequences of such conflicts, for that we did not need school classes, because unfortunately we felt it. Through peace school, we had the opportunity to get to know more about survivors' experience, with their struggles to cope with their traumas, but also with the great desire to offer the world something beautiful, pure and noble.

Stimulation of creative expression, through dance, acting, poetry - all of these ways helped us to understand what was left over as a hundred years ago. At the beginning of the project, I was very skeptical that we would achieve anything - it was necessary to explain to young students that it was not in vain to talk about something from the last century. In the end, history is a teacher of life. We all needed to "dig" and look for the past, in order to have capacities to face the present. Unfortunately, we live in a world devoid of conflict, human rights violations; Every day we are witnessing terrible violent acts that take place all over the world. As much as I would like to say that we need to, and we must stop it, I'm afraid that is not in our capacity. But when I say that we should work on relationships in our immediate surroundings, take care of the people around us, with whom we live, work, share the city, the street, the building, then I really think that this mission is not impossible at all.

This is precisely what we have gained from VoCE Summer Peace School and what we in the Association "Education Builds B&H", trying to encourage young people - sensitivity to their environment, family, friends, neighbors, giving a positive willingness to be there for someone.

I think that I speak on behalf of every participant in this project when I say that we close the Peace School with a full bag of amazing experience, with a lot of new things we learned, with people from different countries who became friends and with

whom we will be happy to meet in the future again.

It has been my honor to be here since the beginning of this whole story, since June 2014, share knowledge about the past, my personal experiences, meet people who are now migrating, refugees and others who are experiencing other similar terrible things. I really think that we all achieved a lot, and even those who attended in only one out of the eight VoCE Peace Schools that took place.

I believe that we will all bring in our common desire to make the world in which we live better, and that we will bring out the strength and the ability to participate in the construction of a better future.

I would like to point out that this kind of cooperation, the exchange of young people is very necessary, especially for our country, because it is a tremendous experience that comes when you get an opportunity to get to know someone from another country, to visit that country, and to go to those places where major historical reversals occurred.

Association "Education builds B&H" is very proud that it was part of this story from the very beginning, but also me and every member of the group from B&H.

Once again, many thanks to every individual who has contributed in any way from 2014 to the present day to implement and sustain this project, and to offer young people what will really be important to them.