

NARRATIVE REPORT ADOPT SREBRENICA 2023.



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SUBJECT: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ASSOCIATION ADOPT SREBRENICA DURING THE YEAR 2023

INTRODUCTION

The Adopt Srebrenica Association is an organization that has 18 years of successful activity behind. In the beginning, ADOPT represented a group of people from Srebrenica, of different ages, genders, ethnicities and religions... which, since 2005, has been formed as a kind of base for dialogue, the aim of which is to offer a "neutral" space (not only physical), where people from different backgrounds have the opportunity to talk about the common past, about war events and the consequences of war... to find the real truth through joint dialogue in a society where each side has its own version of events that rarely coincides with the presentations of other sides. Since 2016, Adopt has been formally registered in the Association, continuing to work with clear peace program goals.

The necessity of establishing such a group in 2005 stems from the consequences of the difficult and traumatic legacy of the war and the Genocide that took place in Srebrenica, which resulted in a deeply divided society, where members of others and others are considered enemies. Adopt represented a project in which, at least for the young generation, access and conversation with the "other side" would be facilitated, where the idea of a common, non-violent future would be built.

ADOPT Srebrenica, first as a project, was created through cooperation between the Alexander Langer Foundation from Bolzano (IT) and the Tuzla Amica Association from Tuzla (BiH), within which, in 2005, Dr. Irfanka Pašagić was awarded the Alexander Langer International Award.

ACTIVITIES IN 2023

Within the activities of the Adopt Srebrenica Association, we can single out two types of realized activities and activities that are in the process:

1. Continuous projects of the Association
2. Occasional projects of the Association

1. Continuous projects of the Association

Throughout the entire time period of activity, the most important focus of the Association is three Program projects, which are continuously worked on.

1. Documentation Center Adopt Srebrenica;
2. Work with young people from Srebrenica and the region;
3. International Memory Week;



- The documentation center represents a unique archival platform whose goal is to collect archival material related to pre-war Srebrenica. During the war and the Genocide, a large part of the population of Srebrenica left behind private archival material (documents, photo albums, video tapes...) by forcefully leaving their homes in 1995. A large part of the mentioned materials was destroyed or lost, and the owners remained in need of finding personal photos and documents from the pre-war period. The documentation center, in addition to being an archival platform, also represents a service to all those who are looking for personal materials. Until now, we have established a unique system and protocol within all archival procedures (locating, collecting, categorizing, archiving, publishing, etc.). Although the process itself in the work at the Documentation Center, due to the lack of financial resources, functions at a reduced intensity, the continuity of the activity continues. This year alone, the funds within the Documentation Center have grown by several hundred items, and the entire archive material numbers more than 5,000 items of archive material.

Unfortunately, last year our website where we publish archival material was the victim of a hacker attack, which made it inactive for several months. After a long and painstaking work, we managed to restore the page as well as all the data that had been removed.

It is also important to note that due to our activities through the Adopt Srebrenica Association, we are still facing various pressures, both political and social, as evidenced by the attack on our website.

- Work with young people from Srebrenica and the region:

Adopt has always represented a unique space of "free communication" among the population of different national and religious backgrounds. Adopt has nurtured its role for 18 years, and one of the most impressive ways is working with young people from Srebrenica, as well as the region. Unfortunately, due to the bad political and economic situation, young people here do not have enough opportunities to spend quality free time, and the influences of political and religious structures are mostly negative, which is why young people are exposed to the dangers of deepening social divisions. Through our activities, we managed to establish a structure where young people in our Association are offered a space to implement joint initiatives and gain new experiences through social activities and education. So far this year, we have organized more than 12 educational events for young people (workshops, lectures, panel discussions...) where the participants gained new knowledge and skills. The topics presented to young people are diverse and include: media, hate speech, democracy and human rights, social activism, culture, education... In addition to the above, 6 social activities have been organized so far this year where young people have worked to improve conditions within their community through volunteerism.



In this way, we manage to unobtrusively offer space to young people to get to know each other better and create connections through education and activities, regardless of their national or religious background.

Unfortunately, we have to point out here that due to financial conditions, we are unable to offer a center that would be open daily for young people. This would be particularly important because young people in Srebrenica do not have a similar opportunity, and we are one of the few organizations that works in a concrete way to bring young people together.



- The International Memory Week represents the traditional program of our Association, which this year had its jubilee 15th Edition under the slogan "Message to Human" and which was dedicated to the recently deceased friend of our Association, Dr. Irfanka Pašagić.

The program is designed to offer the population of Srebrenica diverse scientific, artistic and cultural content, which is especially important in recent years. The current local government does not have an understanding of the importance of culture in a society, which is why investments in this area are minimal and almost non-existent. Through the program of the International Memory Week, we provide a variety of content that is distributed over a five-day period. Also, one of the reasons for organizing the International Memory Week is to send a better image of Srebrenica. Unfortunately, the media is most interested in the days of commemoration in July, which is why only a war image is created about Srebrenica, while through the program of the International Memory Week we try to create positive news that comes to Srebrenica.

This year's International Memory Week had 8 program contents within 5 days of activities, including book promotion, photo exhibition, film promotion for young people, a play, concert, panel discussion and other promotions. We would like to point out that through various content, we provided an opportunity for young authors to present themselves, and we ourselves had several author's presentations and promotions - in front of the ADOPT association.





2. Occasional projects of the Association

Depending on the possibilities and interests, the Adopt Association realizes various activities in accordance with the goals and missions of existence. Over the years, these activities have been diverse, but always aimed at creating content that promotes common values.

Among the activities that have been implemented or are still in the implementation phase, we can single out the following:

1. Oral history program;
2. Program of theater workshops and performances for young people;
3. Photo exhibition "Landscape about man";
4. Photographic exhibition and publication on missing or murdered persons;
5. Cooperation with the public sector and non-governmental organizations;

The oral history program is an activity that is closely related to our ongoing Documentation Center project, but which has a more personalized approach to the intimate life stories of selected witnesses. We initially started this activity last year when we managed to record several video interviews with the residents of Srebrenica who shared some of their life stories. This was the initial activity, so that the very structure around this idea would be elaborated this year thanks to the project we have with the Alexander Langer Foundation, as the most important partner and friend of our Association, which is financed by the Autonomous Province of South Tyrol, Bolzano, but above all with friends from Italy, the most important of whom are the journalist Gabriele Santoro, then Silvano Moto, Laura Di Marco, and other individuals, with whose help a module related to this idea was created.

During the month of July, 11 interviews of people from Srebrenica who shared their life stories were collected, and the plan is to collect additional interviews.



The interviews were done as video materials that will be translated into Italian, and the content of the interviews will be transferred into a book that will be made by journalist Gabriele Santoro.

We deeply believe that the activity of oral history itself has a lot of potential for action in the future. First of all, because of the importance of preserving the testimonies possessed by the population of Srebrenica, and unfortunately here we are also in a race against time, because due to the death of many residents of Srebrenica, we were deprived of precious testimonies and experiences.

Program of theater workshops and performances for young people; Also thanks to the project we are implementing with the Alexander Langer Foundation, and funded by the Autonomous Province of South Tyrol, Bolzano, we managed to realize a set of theater workshops with young participants from Srebrenica and Bratunac, under the instruction of young academic actors Nikolina Gagić and Mirza Mujagić. Young people participated in several months of workshops and learned about acting techniques, and as a result of this work, the play "A Message to Human" was prepared, which was premiered as part of the Program of the 15th International Memory Week. Unfortunately, we have recently witnessed a series of aggressive and traumatic events in BiH, but also in the Balkans in general (murder at a school in Serbia, shooting of a teacher at a school in BiH, brutal femicide in Gradačac...). The young people used their talents and managed to create a socially engaged play that talks about these topics that are often pushed under the carpet in our society, and emphasized the importance of solving certain problems.

The plan is to perform the play at least once before the audience by the end of the year, and a video has been made that will be broadcast on social networks.



Photographic exhibition "Landscape about man"; Through work in the field, we managed to create a photographic exhibition "Landscape of a Man", which presents about thirty photographs taken in different cities in BiH: Živinice, Tuzla, Lukavac, Zenica, Kakanj, Srebrenica, Bratunac... The photographs present landscapes created by humans, such as industrial plants and factories that have a large and often negative impact on the human environment.



The idea was to present the details of the negative impact of man through photographs, but also to raise awareness of the importance of certain issues that are still underdeveloped in BiH, such as ecology, population migration, economy and the like. The exhibition was premiered as part of the Program of the 15th International Week of Remembrance, and the plan is to show the exhibition in Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje, but also in other locations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The photos and the exhibition were made by the activists of the Adopt Association, and it is also a representation of the expansion of the Association from a local to a national organization.



Photo exhibition and publication on missing or murdered persons; The idea is to create a set of photos of people who are family members of people who are considered missing or killed in the past war. Along with the photos, there would be an accompanying text with information as well as photos of the missing or murdered person. So far we have taken a certain number of photos, but in the coming period it remains to complete the planned set. After collecting photos and information, the plan is to create an exhibition that will be presented in Srebrenica and other communities.

The idea behind this activity is a problem that is still faced by the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Unfortunately, several thousand war victims are missing, and the topic itself is not sufficiently expressed in BiH society, which inspired us to increase awareness of the importance of these processes in this way.

Cooperation with the public sector and non-governmental organizations; In our many years of activity, we have managed to establish cooperation with numerous non-governmental organizations and organizations from the public sector. The cooperation itself is mostly program content. Most of our partners are long-term partners of our Association. We highlight the collaboration with the Alexander Langer Foundation from Bolzano; Autonomous Province of South Tyrol, Bolzano; By the organization Lilliput from Ferrara; ZfD Forum, Sarajevo; Heinrich Boell Foundation, office in Sarajevo; Association Forgotten Children of the War, Sarajevo; Youth Center Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje; Srebrenica Cultural Center; Association Sara Srebrenica; Association Srebrenica Wave, and many other organizations and individuals.



Among the public sector organizations, we single out cooperation and support from the Federal Ministry of Refugees and Displaced Persons, Sarajevo; City of Gracanica; City of Mostar and others.

CHALLENGES AT WORK

The Association Adopt Srebrenica faces many challenges in its work, and some of them have an impact on the quality of the execution of program goals. In general, our society is dominated by interpersonal division and political intolerance, which has a particular impact on organizations and individuals that work to connect people. One of the most significant problems is the problem of the lack of opportunities to find financial resources that would enable professionalization within the Association itself.

The association mainly functions on volunteer engagement and rarely part-time engagement. For this reason, we are in a position where only two people are currently actively involved in the work of the Adopt Association: Valentina Gagić and Bekir Halilović. Due to financial instability, we are often forced to find sources of income through other opportunities, which once again diverts the focus of Adopt and its numerous activities.

What we would like to add is certainly the importance of the support we receive from friends from Italy, of which the financial support we receive from Lilliput is certainly among the most significant. Thanks to the funds we receive from Lilliput, we manage to cover all the necessary costs that are essential for the organization to exist at all (rent, accounting, utilities...), and freely create key activities that contribute to improving the quality of life of the population in Srebrenica. Certainly, it is important to us that there are people who think like us, who share our values and who are ready to help us persevere on the path of building peace and unity in a multi-ethnic environment. Thank you so much.

Srebrenica, 13.9.2023.

