



PROGRAMMING

SUMMARY:

This interview describes the revival of the scouting movement in Bosnia, a tradition that was very popular prior to the war.

5. POST-CONFLICT PROGRAMS

RETRIEVAL OF PEACETIME TRADITIONS: SCOUTING MOVEMENT IN BOSNIA

“Understanding about NGOs is more developed in different parts of our country. In the East this kind of work is something new and so parents think, “Who knows what is happening in those organizations?” So it is more difficult to get their agreement.

It was easy to get parents to let their children become involved in scouting because it was a part of the country before the war. Especially those parents who had been scouts before. They let their children take part without any problem. It’s an organization that already has credibility and trust with the community.”

CARE Bosnia

INTERVIEW WITH DALIBOR GOLUBOVIC, A LEADER IN BOSNIA’S SCOUTING MOVEMENT

Q. Has scouting always been important in Bosnia?

A. Yes, we have a long tradition of scouting in Bosnia. It began in about 1920 with the start of the world scout movement. Yugoslavia was one of the founders of this. Scouting was very popular with young people. Camping, winter expeditions, competitions – there was always something going on, always interesting to be a scout. Before the war no one paid any attention to the ethnic identity.

Q. And during the war did scouting stop?

A. Yes, it wasn’t possible to have any activities in either the natural environment or in the schools. And a lot of the leaders left the country during the war. They either were in the fighting or they left.

Q. When did you start again after the war?

A. We started in 1995 to think about it and then in 1996 the leaders began to see if they could establish programs in the towns. They went to the schools – that is normally where we are based. They gave us classrooms to use. We have our meetings after school. That works well.

We had to begin all over again, to explain what scouting is and what it has to offer kids. Most of the young people who had grown up during the war didn’t know anything about scouts. It had been forgotten. They also didn’t have the experience of going in the natural environment or meeting other kids.

When we described what scouting stands for we emphasized that we do not think about differences. We work together; we don’t pay attention to religion or ethnic differences. We focus on skills, of being in nature and of making friends with young people from other places. At the beginning this was strange for them because with the war they hadn’t moved around. They were not accustomed to even leaving the street. Their life was very closed.

We made it clear that scouting is not involved in politics. The European Scout Association helped us a lot, especially with training. It had been almost ten years since we had scouts in Bosnia so things had changed. CARE also supported us.

Many people who had been scouts before the war came back, they wanted to help us. The group we lost were those who had been youth during the war so we had to develop some special training programs for them.

Q. Did you have any difficulties mixing the nationalities?

A. Well, at the local level this doesn't happen too much because it is quite segregated between the entities. But with scouting this doesn't matter. In some areas we do have mixing of nationalities, but that hasn't been a problem. Occasionally there might be a reaction to this but we always stress that we think about the scouting, not anything else.

Originally we had two scout associations, reflecting the two entities. One for Serbs, the other for Croats and Muslims. But then we began to discuss together and to negotiate and in 1998 we created a joint council. This was a big accomplishment. It allowed us to belong to the international association, to be part of that family. This has made more things possible, more connections with other countries.

Q. How is your program working now?

A. Very well. During the year there is a meeting every week. On the weekends we do skill training, nature training, picnics, competition, orienteering, first-aid, semaphore, mapping. We have a competition just about every month. This is a good time. Then in the summer we have camping, a special thing.

We only talk and think about now and the future, not about the past.