

Faith and Community: Dialogue

Final Report (template)

General Information

- A. Name of Recipient
IGOR LUKENDA
- B. State
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
- C. Project title
EXPRESSING FAITH IN ARCHITECTURE – introduction to other religious traditions
- D. Period
Action Plan should last 3 to 4 months – the beginning is in mid-June and the termination at the end of October.
- E. Financial award
1000,- \$
- F. Your contribution
1080,- \$
- G. Money spent (sum of awards and your contribution)
1500,- \$

About project:

- Explain the original plan of the project.

Goal of the project:

The idea of this project was inspired by initial situation in our society, as there is much ignorance about other religions. Consequently and unfortunately, this has created prejudice and negative attitudes towards adherents of other religions.

Therefore, the main goal of this project is getting to know customs of other religious communities, since this is one segment in complex process of introducing others and removing prejudice.

Main activities of the project:

Visits to cemeteries and religious houses for prayer with the goal to meet other religions and their customs, especially the customs related to burials and additionally religious opinions on death and dying, as it is component part of life and religious traditions. This was conceived as one whole-day activity in which youth from different religious communities and coming from different backgrounds would participate. Besides the visit to different locations, (at least three: Muslim graveyard in Gornji Šeher/Banja Luka, orthodox monastery in Krupa on Vrbas and Catholic Trappist monastery and cemetery in Banja Luka), theoretical part was also envisaged, and theory was supposed to be presented by lectures coming from respective religious communities. Also one meal for everyone was planned (or barbecue in the nature) and it is not at all, an insignificant event of the whole day destined for socializing and meeting, and evaluation by participants themselves.

Concrete timeframe for execution

9.00 – gathering all participants

9.30 – 10.00 – travel towards first destination – Krupa on Vrbas – orthodox cemetery and supplemental objects

10.00 – 11.00 – visit to orthodox cemetery

11.00 - 11.30 – visit to the next destination – Muslim graveyard in Gornji Šeher

11.30 – 12.30 – visit to Muslim graveyard

12.30 – 13.00 – travel to the site destined for lunch for everyone (it was planned to organize this in the courtyard of Catholic Trappist monastery in suburban area of Banja Luka)

13.00 – 14.00 – lunch break

14.00 – 14.30 – walk towards the Catholic cemetery in Trappist (situated on the hill above the monastery – wonderful view on Banja Luka)

14.30 – 15.30 – visit to cemetery

15.30 – 16.00 –return

- Describe and explain the results of project and future plans.

The whole action was implemented very well. Participants were pleased and the two-way interest was shown, by those who wanted to present their faith and tradition, and those who wish to find out more about it. Therefore, besides theoretical part, or, better to say, what has been planned for all participants to hear through questions and discussions, many private issues were explained to them related to life of religious dignitaries, religious communities and some details were explained that directly influenced creating of prejudice. (For example the issues of the personal forgiveness among Muslims or the burial customs that have no much to do with faith but that are practiced as part of one's religion).

The future plans are to continue, whenever it is possible, to encourage interreligious interfaith cooperation. Perhaps I should mention that, while working at the European Academy I have already applied this principle, and therefore in December 2008, we hosted one high representative of Islamic community who talked in one of his public lectures, about Muslims in the West. (more to find out on our webpage www.eak.ba). I certainly intend to continue this kind of work.

Program criteria

- In which way your project promoted the goals of the program *Faith and Community*?

As it has been stated in description of this project, the idea was to create interreligious socializing with introduction to diverse religious traditions. This is exactly one of the goals of the program *Faith and Community*.

Have you applied knowledge and ideas that you gained in the States during the realization of this project?

Of course, in the sense of introducing diversities through socializing. All communities, institutions and organizations that we had opportunity to meet while staying in the US, promote exactly these ideas and this was for sure very inspiring for me.

- How did this project contribute to your professional development?

One of the segments of my work is interreligious cooperation, through finding common interests in constructing one righteous society. With this project I gained new acquaintances and also knowledge that I will, for sure, use in my further work and professional development.

Results

- Who had benefits from your project and in which way?
 - Participants, both lecturers or audience only

- Through publication in media, certainly those individuals who were interested in this kind of cooperation.
- The institution of European Academy itself, organized within Catholic Church in B&H that shows in this way how much it is in favor of dialogue among religions.
- How many people were influenced by your project?

Directly 30 people, or in fact all who participated in implementation of the project. Indirectly, I hope more, for sure, but I cannot answer this question at this point.

- Write down the list of publications, articles etc. that resulted from your project?
 - Press Agency of Eparchy of Banja Luka – announcement on webpage
 - NATIONAL AUTHORITY OF PAPAL MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES B&H – publication on webpage
 - Catholic press agency of Bishop Conference B&H – announcement on webpage
 - Informative Catholic Agency (Croatia) – announcement on webpage
 - Catholic Weekly – publication of agency news
 - Radio Vatican – About happenings in Church – radio news and announcement on webpage
- Enlist potential contacts that could be established thanks to your project
 - Islamic community in Banja Luka- main *imam*
 - Orthodox Church in Banja Luka – priest in Krupa on Vrbas
 - Catholic church in Banja Luka
 - Trappist monastery in Banja Luka
 - Catholic schooling center

What did you learn?

- Explain what the success of your project was and what you could do in order to make this project even more successful.

I learnt a lot and it will certainly be reflected to my work. One of these things is that in my environment there is the need for sincere and open interreligious dialogue with the purpose of getting to know other religious traditions and also with the purpose of growth in one's own faith.

Project can be made better with improving communication among religious communities and uplifting this activity to one higher level by involving local community in implementation of the project. This is related to interconnecting of religious communities with local authorities by activating in this way local community to be involved and to financially assist this and similar programs. This is why the clear attitude has to be formed, that normal coexistence in one multicultural society is the only perspective with no other alternative.

Conclusion

- What would be your conclusion and your opinion about this project?

I consider this project fully successful. Goals that have been set are realized, and the so-called first step was made. I certainly expected that there would be more participants, but the facts do not discourage me, they rather direct me towards necessity for this kind of work in community. What delights me especially are participants who carry new experiences and unforgettable moments of this socializing and who became in this way, multipliers or promoters of multireligious society, the society that is ready to learn...

I am certainly grateful to Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of State Department and IREX, since they recognized my efforts and helped my hard work

