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*Hospitality is not just
a matter of generosity;
it is a moral duty.*

Pope Francis



*Gostoljubivost nije samo
stvar velikodušnosti;
ona je moralna dužnost.*

Papa Franjo



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O PATRIOTIZMU, NACIONALIZMU I KRŠĆANSKOJ SAVJESTI

Vladan Perišić je umirovljeni profesor filozofije i teologije na Pravoslavnom bogoslovskom fakultetu Sveučilišta u Beogradu, gdje je predavao filozofiju, teološku epistemologiju, ontologiju i patrologiju, a ranije i srednjovjekovnu te modernu filozofiju na Filozofskom fakultetu istog sveučilišta. Obnašao je dužnost dekana i bio predstojnik Katedre za patrologiju, a dugi niz godina predstavljao je Srpsku pravoslavnu crkvu u Svjetskom vijeću crkava. Kao protojerej-stavrofor Srpske pravoslavne crkve aktivan je i u ekumenskom dijalogu, osobito kao član Pravoslavno-katoličke radne skupine „Sv. Irenej“, a ujedno djeluje kao parohijski svećenik u Dubrovniku. Za ovaj broj Staza piše o suvremenim društvenim devijacijama koje nas otupljuju za solidarnost i umanjuju našu ljudskost.

Patriotizam bi mogao označavati ljubav prema domovini čijih smo neizbežnih mana svesni, a što nas podstiče da je uvek nastojimo učiniti boljom. Ali ne na račun drugih. A nacionalizam bi mogao označavati ljubav prema sopstvenoj naciji čije neizbežne mane pokušavamo da odstranimo kako bi bez njih zavredila još više naše privrženosti. Kažem da bi patriotizam i nacionalizam to „mogli“ biti. Jer najčešće nažalost nisu. Kod ljudi niskog stupnja kulture (a i inteligencije) patriotizam se obično izražava negativnim i čak neprijateljskim stavom prema drugim nacijama. Zar ljubav prema svojoj naciji ne pokazujemo time što neku drugu mrzimo? Obično onu nama najslićniju (uporedi nekada Judejce i Samarjane ili sada Ruse i Ukrajince, mada bi i Srbi i Hrvati bili odličan primer). Jer, naš nacionalizam je patriotizam, a njihov je šovinizam. Uostalom za sve naše mane, nedostatke i promašaje krivi su oni drugi. Nikako mi. Stoga je i normalno da ih mrzimo i nipodaštavamo. A da se

svojoj naciji i domovini (pa i državi) klanjamo kao idolu, kao zlatnom teletu. I da pri tom imamo svu podršku svoje Crkve koja je „čuvar tradicije“ i naš istomišljenik zadužen da nam umiri savest ako se ova slučajno probudi.

Za razliku od nas, Isus svoju domovinu nije idolatrizovao, nego je za njom plakao. Kao za onom koja je dostojna sažaljenja jer je očito skrenula na stranputicu, što je za njega značilo da je skrenula sa puta koji vodi ka Bogu. A to je opet značilo da je postala nepravedna (pravednost je svojstvo Boga), a često i nemilosrdna (milosrđe je svojstvo Boga). Sažaljevao ju je kao izgubljen slučaj i nije na njene nedostatke hteo da zatvara oči. Nije joj podilazio niti joj je laskao. Nego joj je, kao zabludeloj, proročki pretio („Jerusalime, Jerusalime...“). Čak je i njene najviše vjerske službenike, koji su je u tom zastranjenju zdušno podržavali, nazivao licemernom „pećinom razbojničkom“. Možda bi se moglo reći da je njegova ljubav prema (zabludeloj) domovini imala formu sažaljenja.

**„Isusova ljubav prema domovini
bila je ljubav koja se usuđuje
videti istinu.“**

Za razliku od Isusa naši domoljubi (srpski i hrvatski) svoje domoljublje ničim ne dovode u pitanje. Oni svoju zemlju i svoj narod, umesto da ga kad zastranjuje ispravljaju i vraćaju na pravi put, potpuno nekritički veličaju i uzdižu iznad svih ostalih, a uzdižu ga tako što ostale obezvređuju i nipodaštavaju. Potpuno zaslepljeni iracionalnim uverenjem da poseduju superiornu vrednost nad ostalima prostom činjenicom što su se slučajno rodili u jednom delu zemaljske kugle, a

Vladan Perišić



ne u nekom drugom. I koji je u trenutku njihovog rođenja slučajno imao baš onu kulturu i baš onu religiju koju su oni svojim dolaskom na svet zatekli. I koju sada nepromišljeno veličaju kao superiornu nad svima ostalima. Ispada da su ta nacija i ta religija samo čekale da se oni pojave kako bi celom svetu razglasili njihovu superiornost nad ostalim nacijama i religijama. Takvo ostrašćeno zagovaranje sopstvene nacije i nacionalne države koje ponekad ide i do nivoa religiozne ushićenosti, kao što to jevanđelja nedvosmisleno pokazuju, nema nikakve veze sa hrišćanstvom. Naprotiv, potpuno mu je strano. Da li ćemo to ikada shvatiti i prihvatiti izgleda da zavisi od naše spremnosti da se suočimo sa istinom i od toga da li našu savest uljuljavamo u nacionalnoj mitologiji ili nastojimo da je držimo trezvenom i budnom. U tome bi nam naša Crkva mogla, štaviše morala, biti od najveće pomoći. No, kako stvari stoje, teško da će od nje ovakve biti ikakve vajde.



ON PATRIOTISM, NATIONALISM AND CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE

Patriotism could be understood as love for one's homeland while being fully aware of its unavoidable flaws, a love that urges us to constantly try to make it better, but never at the expense of others. Nationalism, on the other hand, could be understood as love for one's own nation, accompanied by an effort to eliminate its flaws so that it might deserve even greater devotion. I say that patriotism and nationalism could be understood in this way, because unfortunately, they most often are not.

In people with a low level of cultural awareness, and often of intellectual maturity as well, patriotism tends to manifest itself as a negative, even hostile attitude toward other nations. As if love for one's own nation must necessarily be proven through hatred of another. Usually the one most similar to us. History offers many examples: the Jews and Samaritans, or today Russians and Ukrainians; Serbs and Croats would also serve as a striking case. Our nationalism, we insist, is patriotism; theirs is chauvinism. All our shortcomings, failures and mistakes are always someone else's fault, never our own. And so it seems only natural to despise and dehumanize the "other," while bowing before our own nation and state as before an idol, a golden calf. All of this often happens with the full support of the Church, which presents itself as the "guardian of tradition" and readily soothes our conscience whenever it threatens to awaken.

Jesus, however, did not idolize his homeland. He wept over it. He saw it as deserving compassion, because it had clearly strayed from the path, which for him meant turning away from God. And to turn away from God meant becoming unjust, since justice is a divine attribute, and merciless, since mercy, too, belongs to God. Jesus did not close

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his eyes to the shortcomings of his people. He did not flatter them or seek their approval. Instead, he confronted them prophetically, even with harsh warnings: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem..." He went so far as to call the highest religious authorities, those who actively supported this moral deviation, a "den of robbers." One might say that his love for a misguided homeland took the form of compassion rather than glorification.

Unlike Jesus, today's patriots, both Serbian and Croatian, never question their patriotism. Instead of correcting their nation when it goes astray and calling it back to a more just path, they uncritically glorify it and elevate it above all others, doing so precisely by devaluing and humiliating those

around them. Blinded by the irrational belief that they possess some inherent superiority simply because they happened to be born in one particular part of the world rather than another, in a context defined by a specific culture and religion that they merely inherited at birth, they proclaim this culture and religion as superior to all others. As if the nation and faith themselves had been waiting for them to appear, so that their supposed superiority could finally be announced to the world.

Such fervent advocacy of one's own nation and national state, which often reaches the level of religious exaltation, has nothing to do with Christianity. The Gospels make this unmistakably clear. On the contrary, this mindset is entirely

"Jesus' love for his homeland was a love willing to face the truth."

foreign to the Christian faith. Whether we will ever understand and accept this seems to depend on our willingness to face the truth, on whether we lull our conscience with national mythology or strive to keep it sober, alert, and awake. In this task, the Church could, and indeed should, be of great help. Yet, given the current state of affairs, it is difficult to expect much assistance from it.



WALKING TOGETHER: The Heart of Our Work at JRS Kosovo

At JRS Kosovo, we are a small team of five, working every day to support people seeking safety, stability and a new beginning. Each of us brings professional expertise, personal commitment and the dedication to accompany those in need. Our mission goes beyond procedures. It is about being present, listening, and walking together with the people we serve.

From Experience to Dedication

For Bernardete, the Project Coordinator, the work is a bridge spanning decades. Her dedication is not just professional, it is an answer to her own past. "Every day in my work, I am reminded of the period in 1998 when I myself was a refugee as a result of the war in Kosovo. As a child, two main things stand out from that time: the fact that I had not chosen to live far from my home, and the constant feeling of insecurity that accompanied us, as well

as the great human support I received back then. That support played a decisive role in building my life later on and left me with a strong sense of gratitude," she reflects. This personal history fuels her vision for the future of those arriving today: "It is precisely this feeling of gratitude that has inspired and motivated me to dedicate myself to working with refugees and supporting them through the integration process." To Bernardete, the path forward is clear: "I strongly believe that successful integration begins with listening, respect, and addressing individual needs, because only in this way can refugees feel accepted, safe, and become active members of the host society."

Healing Beyond Medicine

Kastriot, the team's physician, understands that healing often begins before a single prescription is written. He knows that for someone far from

home, being truly seen is the first step toward recovery. "Often, during activities related to this work, a sincere "hello" is enough to begin building a relationship with the people who have arrived and with whom I am in contact," he explains. His medical care frequently transforms into a profound bond. He shares the story of a young man from Palestine: "Throughout these years, I have many memories and special cases that have stayed with me. One of them involves a young man from Palestine who suffered a serious traffic accident and sustained severe injuries. He remained bedridden in the orthopedic clinic for nine weeks. During that time, I took care of him in every aspect, including food, hygiene, and visits. Even though he left Kosovo six years ago, he still writes to me and expresses his gratitude, saying that one day he hopes to invite me to visit Palestine."

The Impact Behind the Numbers

Even the world of numbers at JRS is deeply personal. Marigona, the Finance Officer, has discovered that a spreadsheet can be a tool for empathy when it is viewed through the right lens. "Working in finance often means dealing with procedures, figures, and compliance, but participating in activities with refugees has helped me see how every financial decision, budget line, or project directly affects people's lives," Marigona reflects. Her experience proves that every role is vital to the humanitarian mission: "Ultimately, this work has taught me that even roles that may seem "behind the scenes" play a crucial part in humanitarian work. Regardless of our position, our work has real impact when it is connected to people and their stories, and that is what makes this experience both challenging and deeply meaningful."

Resilience: A Shared Lesson

In her role as Communication Officer & Project Assistant, Erblina works closely with the people she serves and their everyday experiences. These encounters often invite reflection and shape how

she views both her work and life. "When I see what they face, I often reflect and realize that there is no point in complaining about things that once made me worried. This experience has made me stronger and has changed the way I view life," she reflects.

What Erblina values most are the simple moments of connection, moments that make the fatigue fade. "I feel truly happy when I see the smiles on their faces, their genuine joy, and the gratitude they express, even for the smallest things," she says. At times, these connections take on a deeper meaning: "I find it hard to put into words how it feels to hear words filled with kindness, but what touches me the most is when they say, 'You have become our family.'"

The Soul of Accompaniment

At JRS, accompaniment is at the core of what we do. It is about being present, offering support, and walking alongside people when the path ahead is uncertain. Orjana, the Country Director, explains how this commitment takes shape in everyday work. "In Kosovo, accompaniment is not an abstract concept. It happens in asylum and detention centers, in homes, in hospital corridors, and in moments of waiting. It means listening when words are heavy, staying present when solutions are not immediate, and choosing consistency over quick fixes. This kind of presence is demanding, but it is also deeply grounding. It constantly reminds me why JRS exists: to be with, rather than simply to do for," she says.

Reflecting on her experiences, Orjana notes that she is most deeply moved by the strength exhibited by both the individuals they serve and the team members who walk beside them. She emphasizes that this resilience allows the team to continue its work with consistency and compassion: "Even in a challenging context, we continue to adapt, to advocate, and to believe that dignity is never negotiable. Being part of JRS here is not just a professional role, it is a shared commitment to humanity, lived day by day."



PLESOM DO MIRA U GRADSKOJ GALERIJ BIHAĆ: Umjetnost za mir

Početak veljače se obilježava Međunarodni dan ljudskog bratstva, a mi smo ga u Bihaću obilježili izložbom „Plesom do mira“, umjetničkom inicijativom koja kroz ples i pokret otvara prostor za promišljanje o susretu s drugima i sa samima sobom. Kroz tijelo kao nositelja sjećanja, iskustva i emocija, izložba postavlja pitanje kako se mir gradi ne samo političkim procesima, nego i kroz male, tihe geste priznanja, slušanja i bliskosti.

Kroz umjetnički jezik plesa i pokreta tematiziraju se iskustva nasilja, gubitka, raseljavanja i borbe za dostojanstvo, ali i snaga, otpornost te mogućnost izgradnje mira kroz susret i zajedničko stvaranje. Umjetnost se ovdje pojavljuje kao univerzalni jezik koji nadilazi jezične i kulturne barijere, otvarajući prostor u kojem se različite životne priče mogu susresti bez potrebe za objašnjenjem ili opravdanjem.

Posebno mjesto u ovom procesu imaju korisnice kampa Lipa, koje su kroz plesne radionice sudjelovale u stvaranju izložbe. U sigurnom i podržavajućem okruženju, kroz pokret i kreativni rad, dijelile su svoja životna iskustva i emocije koje je često teško izraziti riječima. Njihove priče nisu ostale na margini, već su postale vidljiv i ravnopravan dio javnog kulturnog prostora, pretočene u završni plesni performans.



Ovakav pristup duboko je povezan s vrijednostima naše organizacije, koji u svom radu naglašava važnost pratnje, susreta i prepoznavanja dostojanstva svake osobe. Umjetnost se ovdje ne koristi samo kao sredstvo izražavanja, nego kao prostor priznanja i vidljivosti onih čije se priče rijetko čuju u javnom prostoru. Kroz ovakve inicijative, JRS BiH nastoji stvarati sigurne prostore u kojima ljudi u pokretu nisu svedeni na status ili potrebu,

Međunarodni dan ljudskog bratstva obilježava se 4. veljače, a proglasila ga je Opća skupština Ujedinjenih naroda 2020. godine. Ovaj dan podsjeća na važnost mira, dijaloga i međusobnog razumijevanja, utemeljenog na poštivanju ljudskog dostojanstva, solidarnosti i zajedničke odgovornosti, vrijednostima koje su u središtu rada JRS-a.

nego su prepoznati kao nositelji iskustava, snage i potencijala.

Radionice i priprema izložbe realizirane su u saradnji s djevojkama iz Plesnog kluba Virus, čime je ostvaren vrijedan susret između migrantske i lokalne zajednice. Kroz zajednički kreativni proces, ples je postao mjesto dijaloga, razmjene i razbijanja predrasuda, ali i podsjetnik da se povezanost gradi upravo kroz dijeljena iskustva. Dodatnu dubinu projektu dao je i Muzej ratnog djetinjstva, čiji dugogodišnji rad na očuvanju ličnih priča iz ratom pogođenih zajednica povezuje iskustva prošlih i sadašnjih prisilnih migracija, naglašavajući univerzalnost trauma, ali i važnost njihove vidljivosti i priznanja u javnom prostoru.

Završni plesni performans na suptilan, ali snažan način prenio je iskustva žena pogođenih sukobima, podsjećajući na važnost ženskih perspektiva u

procesima izgradnje mira. Kroz pokret, tijelo se pojavljuje istovremeno kao nositelj rana i sjećanja, ali i kao izvor snage, otpornosti i nade.

U duhu poruke Međunarodnog dana ljudskog bratstva, koji se obilježava 4. veljače i poziva na izgradnju kulture mira, dijaloga i međusobnog razumijevanja, „Plesom do mira“ podsjeća da se mir gradi kroz susrete i odnose među ljudima. Ovogodišnja tema, „Dijalog ispred podjela“, naglašava važnost slušanja, razgovora i prepoznavanja zajedničke ljudskosti, osobito u susretu s razlikama.

U tom vrijednosnom kontekstu, izložba „Plesom do mira“ dobiva dodatnu interpretativnu dimenziju. Kroz ples i pokret, ona otvara prostor susreta i međusobnog priznanja, pokazujući kako se ideja mira živi u konkretnim, svakodnevnim odnosima.



DANCING TOWARDS PEACE AT THE CITY GALLERY OF BIHAĆ: Art in the Service of Peace

In early February, the International Day of Human Fraternity was marked in Bihać with the exhibition "Dancing Toward Peace", an artistic initiative that uses dance and movement to foster reflection on encounters with others and with ourselves. Through the body as a carrier of memory, experience and emotion, the exhibition raises the question of how peace is built not only through political processes, but also through small, quiet gestures of recognition, listening and closeness.

Through the artistic language of dance and movement, the exhibition explores experiences of violence, loss, displacement and the struggle for dignity, while also highlighting strength, resilience and the possibility of building peace through encounter and shared creation. Art appears here as a universal language that transcends linguistic

and cultural barriers, opening a space where different life stories can meet without the need for explanation or justification.

A special place in this process belongs to the women from the Lipa camp, who took part in the creation of the exhibition through dance workshops. In a safe and supportive environment, through movement and creative work, they shared life experiences and emotions that are often difficult to express in words. Their stories did not remain on the margins, but became a visible and equal part of the public cultural space, embodied in the final dance performance.

This approach is deeply connected to the values of our organisation, which emphasises accompaniment, encounter and the recognition



Observed on 4 February, the International Day of Human Fraternity was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2020. The day promotes peace, dialogue, and mutual understanding through respect for human dignity, solidarity, and shared responsibility, values that are central to the mission of JRS in accompanying people on the move and fostering inclusive communities.

of the dignity of every person. Art is used here not merely as a means of expression, but as a space of recognition and visibility for those whose stories are rarely heard in the public sphere. Through initiatives such as this, JRS BiH seeks to create safe spaces in which people on the move are not reduced to a status or a need, but are recognised as carriers of experience, strength and potential.

The workshops and preparation of the exhibition were carried out in cooperation with the girls from the Virus Dance Club, creating a meaningful encounter between the migrant and local communities. Through a shared creative process, dance became a space of dialogue, exchange and the breaking down of prejudices, as well as a reminder that connection is built precisely through shared experiences. Additional depth was brought to the project through the involvement of the War Childhood Museum, whose long-standing work on preserving personal stories from war-affected communities connects past and present experiences of forced migration, highlighting the universality of trauma and the importance of its visibility and recognition in the public space.

The final dance performance conveyed the experiences of women affected by conflict in a subtle yet powerful way, reminding us of the importance of women's perspectives in peacebuilding processes. Through movement, the body appears simultaneously as a bearer of wounds and memories, but also as a source of strength, resilience and hope.

In the spirit of the International Day of Human Fraternity, marked on 4 February and calling for the building of a culture of peace, dialogue and mutual understanding, Dancing Towards Peace reminds us that peace is built through encounters and relationships between people. This year's theme, Dialogue over Division, emphasises the importance of listening, conversation and recognising our shared humanity, especially in encounters with difference.

Within this value-based framework, the exhibition Dancing Towards Peace gains an additional interpretative dimension. Through dance and movement, it opens a space for encounter and mutual recognition, showing how the idea of peace is lived out in concrete, everyday relationships.

SNAGA VOLONTIRANJA:

Iskustvo volonterke u JRS-u BiH

Eva ima 18 godina i dolazi iz Njemačke. Odlučila je volontirati u Isusovačkoj službi za izbjeglice u Bosni i Hercegovini jer se snažno poistovjećuje s njezinim vrijednostima, nadom, pravdom i zajedničkom ljudskošću. Za nju volontiranje nije bilo samo način da doprinese društvu, nego i prilika da bolje razumije migracije izvan statistika i medijskih narativa. Željela je vidjeti kako društvene, ekonomske i političke okolnosti oblikuju živote ljudi te što ljudska prava i odgovornost znače u svakodnevnim susretima.

Njezini dani u kampu Lipa razlikuju se ovisno o tome gdje je tog dana potrebna. Često radi s obiteljima ili samcima, vodeći jezične te kreativne ili psihosocijalne aktivnosti. Komunikacija se odvija na engleskom, ponekad i na francuskom, a često uz pomoć Google Translatea. „Kroz takve aktivnosti zaista upознаš ljude“, kaže Eva. „One otvaraju prostor za razgovor i odjednom to više nije samo aktivnost, nego pravi ljudski susret.“

Jedan takav susret posebno joj je ostao u sjećanju. Tijekom aktivnosti u maloj grupi jedan je korisnik



podijelio svoju životnu priču. Rekao joj je da je dio LGBTQ zajednice te da se u svojoj zemlji nikada nije osjećao sigurno ni prihvaćeno. Ono što je taj trenutak učinilo još težim bio je njegov strah da o tome govori drugima u kampu, znajući da bi mu to moglo dodatno otežati život. Eva se sjeća koliko joj je bio zahvalan, ne zbog savjeta ili rješenja, nego jednostavno zato što ga je netko slušao.

Taj susret naveo ju je na dublje razmišljanje o tome što volontiranje zapravo znači. Saznanje da netko mora skrivati tako bitan dio sebe, čak i dok živi u izbjeglištvu, snažno ju je pogodilo. „Samo slušanje bilo je važno“, razmišlja Eva. „I tada sam shvatila da sama prisutnost već može biti čin solidarnosti.“

Ono što joj je u volontiranju najvrijednije jest upoznavanje ljudi iz različitih zemalja i kultura te spoznaja da i male geste mogu imati veliko značenje. Unatoč nehumanim i nesigurnim uvjetima u kojima žive, mnogi ljudi i dalje pronalaze načine da zadrže nadu i stvore trenutke topline i povezanosti. „Ponekad je“, kaže Eva, „dovoljno samo slušati i to me jako nadahnjuje.“

Eva se osvrće i na česte zablude o ljudima u pokretu. Mnogi misle da je migracija uvijek stvar osobnog izbora, no razgovori u Lipi pokazali su joj mnogo složeniju stvarnost. Čak i kada su prisutni ekonomski razlozi, oni su duboko povezani s dostojanstvom, identitetom i dugoročnom sigurnošću, ne samo pojedinaca, nego i njihovih obitelji.

Jedna od stvari koja ju je posebno iznenadila jest način na koji ljudi u pokretu doživljavaju volontiranje. Mnogi ne mogu razumjeti zašto netko radi bez plaće. Za Evu je to otkriće dodatno osvijestilo koliko je volontiranje zapravo privilegij. Gledajući unatrag, svoje iskustvo opisuje kao godinu učenja – ne o tome kako davati odgovore, nego o snazi prisutnosti i slušanja.

THE POWER OF VOLUNTEERING: A Volunteer's Experience with JRS BiH

Eva is 18 years old and comes from Germany. She chose to volunteer with Jesuit Refugee Service Bosnia and Herzegovina because she strongly identifies with its values, hope, justice and shared humanity. For her, volunteering was not only a way to contribute to society, but also an opportunity to better understand migration beyond statistics and media narratives. She wanted to see how social, economic and political realities shape people's lives, and what responsibility and human rights mean in everyday encounters.

Her days at Lipa Camp vary depending on where she is needed. She often works with families or single men, leading language classes and creative or psychosocial activities. Communication happens in English, sometimes in French and often with the help of Google Translate. “Through these activities, you really get to know people,” Eva says. “They create space for conversations, and suddenly it's not just an activity anymore, but a real human connection.”

One such connection has stayed with her deeply. During a small group activity, one beneficiary opened up about his life. He shared that he is part of the LGBTQ community and that he never felt safe or accepted in his home country. What made the moment especially heavy was his fear of sharing this with others in the camp, knowing it could make his situation even harder. Eva remembers how grateful he was, not for advice or solutions, but simply for being listened to.

That encounter made her reflect on what it truly means to volunteer. Knowing that someone has to hide such an essential part of who they are, even while living in displacement, stayed with her. “Just listening mattered,” she reflects. “And that showed me that presence can already be a form of solidarity.”



What Eva values most in her volunteer work is meeting people from different countries and cultures and realizing that even small gestures can have meaning. Despite living in inhuman and uncertain conditions, many people still find ways to hold on to hope and create moments of warmth and connection. “Sometimes,” she says, “simply listening is enough and that inspires me.”

She also reflects on common misconceptions about people on the move. Many believe migration is a voluntary choice, but conversations at Lipa revealed a far more complex reality. Even when economic reasons play a role, they are closely tied to dignity, identity and long-term security, not only for individuals, but for their families as well.

One thing that surprised Eva was how people on the move perceive volunteerism itself. Many cannot understand why someone would work without a salary. For her, this realization highlighted how privileged volunteering actually is. Looking back, Eva describes her experience as a year of learning, not about giving answers, but about the power of being present and listening.

PUTOVANJE ZAVRŠAVA PONOVNIM SUSRETOM: Hrvatska premijera filma „Iza jednog osmijeha”

Nedavno je u jednom zagrebačkom kinu održana hrvatska premijera dokumentarca „Iza jednog osmijeha” scenaristice i redateljice Ene-Sanan Hdagha. Ene se članovi naših ureda diljem regije vjerojatno sjećaju kao angažirane i veoma suosjećajne volonterke, koja je između ostalog i svojim umjetničkim darom donosila osmijehe i ozarenost na mnoga lica. Ovaj film je dokaz kako su joj sudbine svih izbjeglice još uvijek jako bliske srcu te im nastavlja davati svoj doprinos na onom mjestu gdje najsnažnije mogu odjeknuti – preko velikih ekrana.

Njen film prati priču mladog Sirijca Khaleda na njegovom dugogodišnjem i opasnom putu izbjeglištva i konačne integracije u Njemačkoj. Khaleda je kao četrnaestogodišnjaka na put poslao njegov otac želeći ga zaštititi od još goreg zla koje mu se u rodnom gradu spremalo – prisilnog novačenja od strane islamističkih ekstremista. Njegov je put trajao četiri godine, pun opasnosti, strepnje, hladnoće, ogorčenosti i bijesa, ali i neočekivane pomoći od strane neznanaca. Taj put tek je djelomično završio konačnim dolaskom i ostankom na sigurnom mjestu.

Khaleda su na tom dugom putu najviše krijepili očevi savjeti koje mu je kao malenom dječaku pripovijedao neprestance ponavljajući kako su „svi ljudi jednako vrijedni, stoga u svemu i svakome traži ono dobro”. Te su ga riječi vrlo često izvlačile iz beznađa, pomagale da oprost, zaboravi i krene dalje. Stoga možemo i lako razumjeti kako se u Khaledu rodila želja da jednog dana postane medicinski tehničar, kako bi i sam mogao izravno pomagati ljudima. On je tu želju u međuvremenu i ostvario, u gradiću na zapadu Njemačke gdje danas živi i radi.

Iz njegove priče ostaje važna poruka, koja odjekuje onu s početaka Svetoga pisma – nije dobro da



čovjek bude sam. Njegovo putovanje u potpunosti završava tek u trenutku kada se naposljetku uspijeva, nakon dugog vremena čekanja i pošto je fizički put već bio odavno prevalio, ujediniti sa svojom obitelji u svom i njihovom novom domu u Njemačkoj. Khaled je, naime, najviše patio od samoće i nemogućnosti da u najtežim trenucima ima nekoga blizu tko bi ga savjetovao, možda samo saslušao. Zato je i snažna njegova poruka o važnosti, odnosno, hitnosti izgradnje zajedništva, napora prihvaćanja i odluke da se drugoga prije svega sasluša. Ta poruka spontano izbija iz čitavog njegovog svjedočanstva, a najbolje se vidi u trenucima filma u kojima je snimljen njegov ponovni susret s obitelji.

Da bi ova večer prošla i završila u opuštenom i ugodnom ozračju posebno su se pobrinuli naši volonteri koji su prije same projekcije dijelili karte mnogim uzvanicima. Za vrijeme projekcije organizirali su stolove za podjelu hrane, koju je donirao restoran Kabobgy, te tako nisu ni pogledali film, da bi nakon projekcije marljivo posluživali hranu i piće brojnim gostima. Njihova tiha i djelatna prisutnost bila je te večeri najkonkretniji znak one iste ljudskosti koju je i sam Khaled zadržao i u koju je, usprkos svemu, ustrajao vjerovati.

THE JOURNEY ENDS WITH A REUNION: Croatian Premiere of the Film "Behind One Smile"

Recently, the Croatian premiere of the documentary "Behind One Smile" by screenwriter and director Ena-Sanan Hdagha was held at a cinema in Zagreb. Members of our offices across the region probably remember Ena as a dedicated and deeply compassionate volunteer who, among other things, used her artistic talent to bring smiles and brightness to many faces. This film is proof that the fates of refugees remain very close to her heart, and that she continues to contribute to them in the place where they can resonate most powerfully – on the big screen.

Her film follows the story of a young Syrian, Khaled, on his long and dangerous journey of displacement and his eventual integration into Germany. Khaled was sent on this journey as a fourteen-year-old by his father, who wanted to protect him from an even greater evil that awaited him in his hometown - forced recruitment by Islamist extremists. His journey lasted four years and was filled with danger, fear, cold, bitterness, and anger, but also with unexpected help from strangers. That journey was only partially completed with his final arrival and stay in a safe place.

What sustained Khaled most along that long road were his father's words of advice, which he had told him repeatedly since he was a small boy, constantly emphasizing that "all people are equally

valuable, therefore in everything and in everyone seek what is good." Those words often pulled him out of despair, helping him to forgive, forget, and move forward. It is therefore easy to understand how in Khaled the desire was born to one day become a medical technician, so that he himself could directly help people. In the meantime, he has fulfilled that wish in a small town in western Germany, where he now lives and works.

From his story remains an important message that echoes the words from the beginning of Holy Scripture – it is not good for man to be alone. His journey is fully completed only at the moment when, after a long period of waiting and after the physical journey had long since been completed, he finally manages to reunite with his family in his and their new home in Germany. Khaled, in fact, suffered most from loneliness and from the inability, in the hardest moments, to have someone nearby who could advise him, or perhaps simply listen. This is why his message about the importance – indeed, the urgency – of building community, of making the effort to accept others, and of deciding above all to listen to one another is so powerful. This message emerges spontaneously from his entire testimony, and is most clearly seen in the moments of the film that show his reunion with his family.

Our volunteers made a special effort to ensure a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere throughout the evening. Before the screening, they distributed tickets to many guests. During the screening, they organized food distribution tables with food donated by the Kabobgy restaurant, so they did not even watch the film themselves, and after the screening they diligently served food and drinks to numerous guests. Their quiet and active presence that evening was the most tangible sign of that same humanity which Khaled himself preserved and in which, despite everything, he persisted in believing.



STVARANJE SIGURNIH PROSTORA:

Razgovor sa kulturnom medijatoricom – JRS Srbija

Možeš li nam reći nešto više o sebi, kako si postala kulturna medijatorica i kako je izgledao tvoj profesionalni put do ove uloge?

Ja sam iz Ukrajine, a u Srbiju sam se preselila 2016. godine, kada sam se udala ovde. Godinama se bavim konsaltingom, uglavnom za farmaceutske industriju. Pre početka rata napisala sam i krenula sa izdavanjem knjige. Ali od prvih tužnih vesti iz Ukrajine počela sam da razmišljam kako bih mogla da pomognem svojim zemljacima sa onim što imam, znam i umem. S obzirom na to da sam i sama imala iskustvo adaptacije u Srbiji, znala sam sa čime će se suočiti i znala sam kako neke prepreke mogu da se prevaziđu. Pored toga, imala sam iskustvo rada sa izbeglicama iz Donjecke i Luganske oblasti u okviru volonterskog projekta kompanije u kojoj sam radila. Uspela sam da okupim ljude koji su raspoloženi da pomognu Ukrajinacima i zajedno smo volonterski pružali pomoć u adaptaciji, potrazi za poslom, učenju srpskog jezika, prevodima, potražnji smeštaja i slično. Dok se nisam pridružila JRS timu, nisam ni razmišljala o tome kako bi se moja pozicija zvala.

Na kojim sve aktivnostima trenutno radiš sa ukrajinskom zajednicom u Srbiji?

Svake nedelje pravim plan aktivnosti, a uvek je potrebno ostaviti prostora i za nepredvidljive situacije. Redovno imamo konverzijski klub na kojem proučavamo ne samo jezik, već i kulturu, istoriju, tradiciju i geografiju Srbije i Zapadnog Balkana. Osim toga organizujemo umetničke radionice kako za decu, tako i za odrasle, izlete u prirodu, posete muzejima, slavimo ukrajinske praznike. Ponekad se skupimo radi druženja, jer je ljudima potrebno da pričaju i na svom maternjem jeziku i podele svoj bol sa nekim ko ga razume. Nepredvidive situacije mogu uključivati hitne slučajeve kao što su poruke: „Molim za pomoć,

potreban mi je pedijatar koji govori ukrajinski jezik.” Ili „Treća banka je odbila da mi otvori račun, gde sada da idem?” Uvek odgovorim na sve pozive i trudim se da nađem rešenje.

Kako korisnici reaguju na umetničke radionice? Da li vidiš razliku u njihovom izražavanju ili otvaranju kroz umetnost?

Umetničke radionice su vrsta antistresa. Korisnici su često pod velikim stresom, ali se polako opuštaju i ponovo se vraćaju svojim hobijima. Umetničke radionice su prilika za priču kroz rad i zabavu. Nekat pravimo nakit, nekad slikamo, a sve to uz podršku i puno razumevanja.

Koji su najčešći izazovi sa kojima se suočavaš u radu?

Trudim se da budem uvek dostupna, strpljiva i uslužna, ali ne mogu uvek rešiti sve probleme, poput pronalaska posla u njihovoj struci. To ponekad dovodi do nerazumevanja, što predstavlja izazov. Posebno me raduje kada neko prevaziđe strah i počne da govori srpski, čak i sa greškama. Ipak, mnogi gube motivaciju za dalje učenje, jer žele da sačuvaju nadu da će se jednog dana vratiti kući. To je izazov – motivisati ih za učenje, a istovremeno poštovati njihova osećanja i planove za budućnost.

Da li postoji neki trenutak koji ti je ostao posebno urezan u sećanju, bilo težak ili lep, koji bi želela da поделиš?

Raduje me kada neko bude prihvaćen na posao u svojoj struci. Često delim oglase za posao, ohrabrujem osobe i svaka zahvalnost me posebno dirne. Bilo je i teških situacija. Jednom mi je jedna mlada izbeglica ispričala da su svi njeni prijatelji i poznanici iz detinjstva i mladosti poginuli u ratu. Ja

sam se zaledila, nisam bila spremna da se suočim sa takvim bolom i usamljenošću. Taj trenutak bio je duboko potresan, ali me je to iskustvo naučilo koliko je empatija i lična podrška važna u radu sa izbeglicama.

Koliko je važno poverenje u radu sa izbeglicama i kako ga gradiš?

Poverenje je izuzetno značajno. Nemam recept, osim biti iskren, otvoren i fer svaki dan i sa svima.

Koliko je važno da korisnici zadrže svoj kulturni identitet, a koliko da se upoznaju sa lokalnim kontekstom?

Upoznavanje sa lokalnim kontekstom pomaže im da se snađu u svakodnevnom životu i da izbegnu nesporazume. Na konverzijskom klubu radimo kroz primere iz svakodnevnog života – objašnjavamo značenje reči i izraza koji zvuče slično kao u ukrajinskom, ali imaju drugačije značenje na srpskom. Na primer, u ukrajinskom jeziku reč „vrač” je dobar sinonim za „lekar”, dok u srpskom jeziku nema isto značenje – pa je moj zadatak da unapred pojasnim razliku i zašto ne bi trebalo da se obraćamo tako lekaru u Srbiji. Takve situacije koriste se za učenje, često kroz humor, jer greške pomažu da se znanje bolje pamti i primeni u praksi.

Šta su najveće prepreke za zapošljavanje izbeglica iz Ukrajine u Srbiji?

Moj lični utisak je da poslodavci često nisu spremni na dodatnu papirologiju ili kulturološku raznolikost, a razlog odbijanja gotovo nikada ne saznamo jer preko 80% prijava ostaje bez povratne informacije. Posebno teške prepreke postoje za lekare. Smatram da bi situacija mogla biti znatno bolja, posebno s obzirom na manjak lekara u ruralnim



sredinama, ukoliko bi postojale određene olakšice.

Šta si naučila kroz rad sa ovom zajednicom?

Najglasniji u traženju pomoći često nisu oni kojima je ona najpotrebnija. Zato stalno učim da pažljivo slušam i pratim i one koji čute, kako slučajno ne bih propustila one kojima je podrška zaista najvažnija.

I za kraj, da li si uspela da objaviš svoju knjigu?

Hvala na pitanju! Jesam! Proces izdavanja sam usporila jer sam svoj fokus privremeno preusmerila na humanitarne ciljeve, ali nisam odustala. I prošle godine sam, uprkos teškim i rizičnim okolnostima tokom rata u Ukrajini, ipak izdala svoju prvu knjigu na ukrajinskom jeziku. Promocija ove knjige mi je veoma važna, a verujem da može poslužiti i kao inspiracija za izbeglice da ne odustaju od svojih snova, čak i u teškim vremenima.

CREATING SAFE SPACES:

A Conversation with a Cultural Mediator – JRS Serbia

Can you tell us more about yourself, how you became a cultural mediator, and what your professional journey toward this role looked like?

I am from Ukraine, and I moved to Serbia in 2016 after getting married here. For many years, I worked in consulting, mainly for the pharmaceutical industry. Before the war began, I wrote a book and started the publishing process. However, from the moment the first tragic news from Ukraine appeared, I began thinking about how I could help my fellow citizens using what I have, know, and can do. Since I myself went through the process of adapting to life in Serbia, I understood what challenges they would face and how some of those obstacles could be overcome. In addition, I had experience working with refugees from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions through a volunteer project within the company where I worked. I managed to bring together people who were willing to help Ukrainians, and together we provided voluntary support in adaptation, job searching, learning the Serbian language, translation, finding accommodation, and similar needs. Until I joined the JRS team, I never really thought about what my position would be called.

What kind of activities are you currently working on with the Ukrainian community in Serbia?

Every week I create an activity plan, always leaving space for unexpected situations. We regularly organize a conversation club, where we explore not only the language but also the culture, history, traditions, and geography of Serbia and the Western Balkans. In addition, we organize art workshops for both children and adults, excursions into nature, museum visits, and we celebrate Ukrainian holidays. Sometimes we simply gather to socialize, because people need to speak their mother tongue and share their pain with someone who understands it. Unpredictable situations can include urgent messages such as: "Please help, I need a pediatrician who speaks Ukrainian," or "The third bank refused to open an account for me – where should I go now?" I always respond to all calls and try to find a solution.

How do participants respond to the art workshops? Do you notice any difference in their expression or openness through art?

Art workshops function as a form of stress relief. Participants are often under great stress, but gradually they relax and reconnect with their hobbies. These workshops offer an opportunity for conversation through creative work and enjoyment. Sometimes we make jewelry, sometimes we paint – all with support and a lot of understanding.

What are the most common challenges you face in your work?

I strive to always be available, patient, and helpful, but I cannot solve every problem, such as finding employment in a person's profession. This sometimes leads to misunderstandings, which can be challenging. I am especially happy when someone overcomes their fear and starts speaking Serbian, even with mistakes. However, many people lose motivation to continue learning because they want to preserve hope that they will one day return home. The challenge is motivating them to learn while respecting their feelings and future plans.

Is there a moment, difficult or beautiful, that has stayed with you and that you would like to share?

I am happiest when someone gets a job in their profession. I often share job postings and encourage people, and every expression of gratitude deeply touches me. There have also been very difficult moments. Once, a young refugee told me that all her friends and acquaintances from childhood and youth had been killed in the war. I froze – I was not prepared to face such pain and loneliness. That moment was deeply upsetting, but it taught me how crucial empathy and personal support are in working with refugees.

How important is trust in working with refugees, and how do you build it?

Trust is extremely important. I don't have a specific

formula – other than being honest, open, and fair every day and with everyone.

How important is it for users to preserve their cultural identity, and how important is it for them to become familiar with the local context?

Getting to know the local context helps them navigate everyday life and avoid misunderstandings. In the conversation club, we work through examples from daily life – explaining words and expressions that sound similar in Ukrainian but have different meanings in Serbian. For example, in Ukrainian the word "vrach" is a common synonym for "physician," while in Serbian this word means "a witch doctor". My task is to explain this difference in advance and why it should not be used when addressing a physician in Serbia. Such situations are used as learning opportunities, often through humor, because mistakes help knowledge stick better and be applied in practice.

What are the biggest obstacles to employing refugees from Ukraine in Serbia?

My personal impression is that employers are often not ready for additional paperwork or cultural diversity, and we almost never find out the real reason for rejection, as over 80% of applications

receive no feedback. The obstacles are especially significant for physicians. I believe the situation could be much better – particularly given the shortage of physicians in rural areas – if certain facilitations existed.

What have you learned through working with this community?

Those who ask for help the loudest are often not the ones who need it the most. That is why I constantly learn to listen carefully and pay attention to those who remain silent, so I don't overlook the people who truly need support.

And finally, were you able to publish your book?

Thank you for asking! Yes, I was. I slowed down the publishing process because I temporarily shifted my focus to humanitarian goals, but I did not give up. Last year, despite the difficult and risky circumstances during the war in Ukraine, I published my first book in Ukrainian. Promoting this book is very important to me, and I believe it can also serve as inspiration for refugees not to give up on their dreams, even in difficult times.

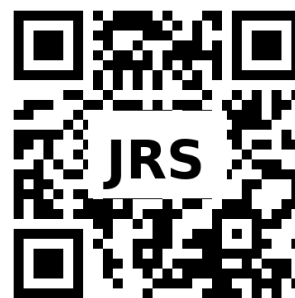




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