



GPKT Phase II – Education Committee Report No. 15

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Education Summer Camp a Huge Success

Following the previous successful camps implemented in the last two years, the GPKT Education Committee convened a four-day Education Summer Camp 18 - 21 May in Ohrid, Macedonia. Forty-five students, English teachers and school Directors representing the primary schools Musa Zajmi, Thimi Mitko and Dragi Popovic from Gjilan/Gnjilane, 15 Nentori from Presevo, Branko Radicevic from Trgoviste, Toli Zordumis, Koco Racin, Naim Frasheri and Bajram Shabani from Kumanovo attended the camp.



The camp commenced with team building exercises for the students and teachers to break the ice among the participants, as the students, all between 15 and 16 years old, were attending the event for the first time. The interactive activities were lead by freelance education trainer Jenny Dempsey. A special session for the English teachers aimed to share experiences and methodologies for teaching English and focused on the use of new technologies in the classroom. Dictation activities designed to test the students' skills in memorizing and communication were quite popular and particularly useful for encouraging communication among participants from different ethnic groups.

The second day focused on raising awareness about children's rights, and was aimed at building friendships and breaking down prejudices among communities. The trainers highlighted the children's rights convention and emphasis was placed on a number of articles and the use of quotes such as 'If children live in peace, they learn to believe' for starting points in building healthy relationships among people. While students were reminded that rights are the same for all children, they were also taught about sharing responsibility for ensuring equality among their peers. Activities included theatre performances, with each school performing a drama in English.

On the third day students, teachers and school Directors had the opportunity to visit the old town of Ohrid and St. Naum, which they found to be both interesting and fun. As in the past, social activities were arranged in the evening and this year participants celebrated the birthdays of Milena, a student from Trgoviste and Blerta from Gjilan/Gnjilane.



At the end of the camp day all the students received presents and GPKT *Education Summer Camp* t-shirts. Certificates of participation were awarded to each participating school and teacher. To continue to build upon the success of the camps, students and



teachers completed questionnaires and provided useful feedback on the camp. The most popular aspect of the Education Camp was the opportunity to make new friends, with many students noting that they would like to have more time with their peers from different schools. Most participants noted that they hope to participate in similar camps in the future. The teacher's feedback was equally positive about the activities and the organisation in general. One of the teachers from Serbia wrote: "I think it was a wonderful way to bond people together."

Another teacher remarked, "I have enjoyed every single camp and training that has been organised and I think that they really make a difference in terms of bridging students and teachers, thus contributing to multi-ethnic co-operation. The training workshops keep teachers up-to date with modern trends of teaching." The teachers themselves were very active and took the lead in implementing the activities and managing the camp, which is a good indicator that their capacities to implement joint cross-border and multi-ethnic activities has improved - an important goal for the Education Working Group.

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