

Vacation from War

Steps toward the Concrete Utopia of a Peaceful World

Letters to the donors NEUM 2008

Hi,

My name is Maja. I'm 18 years old and I just finished the third grade of grammar school. I live in Serbia in a small village near Sombor, Klajicevo. After highschool I want to study ecology. I really, really love animals and I want to do something nice for them, to help them to survive in this cruel world. I also play volleyball in our local team, the "Volley Stars", we have training five times a week.

I came here to Neum, Bosnia, together with about 90 teenagers from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. We have a great time here. Twice a day we go to the beach and we have all kind of games (kicker, table tennis ...), it's really great! In the hotel our team organizes also karaoke parties and a Hawai- pool party. Two times a day we can choose among different workshops, some of them are about war and peace, some about racism, fear and conflicts. But we have also drama, music, sports and art workshops.

One day we had an excursion to Dubrovnik. It's one of the oldest and prettiest towns of the Balkans. We spent there a whole day and explored the city by a "Dubrovnik rally". We had a list of the places we should find out and a map of Dubrovnik. We were splitted in mixed teams (from all towns) and visited the fortifications and the port, the Roland, the Orthodox and the Catholic cathedral, the Synagoge and the Mosque. It was a wonderful day.

I'm really glad to be here! I met some great new people and made a lot of friends. I also learnt a lot, mostly about peace and that we all should live together, no matter of the colour of our skin, faith or nationality. This is really a great place and a great project!!

I hope that I will have the chance to come here again.

Thank you, Maja (Serbia)

Dear Benefactor,

.....the workshops are very interesting. We learned about **tolerance**. In Dubrovnik we saw the exhibition of War Photos from former Yugoslavia. But the most important thing is, we learned how to make peace and that we all are living under the same sky. Now we feel stronger to fight against prejudices, ours and those of other people in Serbia.

Thank you for your donation, Marina (Sombor, Serbia)

Hello,

I'm Bojan from Vukovar (Croatia). I'm 17 years old and I'm very glad to spend a wonderful time with many young people from Bosnia and Serbia. Serbes and Croats are living together in Vukovar after hard times in the war. There are always tensions and there are often conflicts. But things are getting better. People are spending time together. Of course there are men that can't stand Serbs or Croats (vice versa). That's unsain. Unsain is blaming someone for things he didn't do and doing stupid differences.

Here in the camp in Neum we don't watch the nationality, we watch people's souls. We judge those people. It's great that we are spending all the time together here in Neum, Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims – and no incident at all

Thank you for your donation and all you did ensuring these vacations for us. It's really great what you are doing, facilitating connections and relationship between young people, whose fathers fought in a war not long ago.

Greetings from Bojan, Vukovar (Croatia)

Hi,

My name is Ermin. I'm living in Gornji Vakuf –Uskoplje (Bosnia). I'm very grateful to have the opportunity of coming here to Neum. In my town the situation is not good: My town is divided in two parts. In one sector Muslims are living, in the second Christian people. But, Thanks to God, there is the youth centre near the street dividing the two sectors. In this center we play together or we can do workshops, no matter of which religion we are, because in the end we are all human beings. We are smiling in the same language.

I like very much the camp in Neum and all the activities. But the most important thing for me is the fact that I met a lot of new young people, and now I have a lot of new friends!

Thanks to all of you, Ermin (Bosnia)

Dear,

My name is Majda, I live in Gornji Vakuf – Uskoplje.... I've just finished the high school with excellent grades. I would like to go to the university, but my parents can't afford that for me and my brother.

I would like to thank you for this trip to Neum. It's my first time to go to the seaside. The camp is great and I have the chance to meet people from different cultures, religions and nations. We have a lot of sections here in the camp and they are very useful.

My town is divided in two parts, a Bosnian and a Croatian part and people don't communicate between. Young people want to have friends in the other sector, but our parents don't give us the chance – because of the war.

Once again I would like to thank you for this great experience. I hope that one day in my life I will have the chance to meet you personally. Thank you for the best time in my life!

Majda (Bosnia)

My dear Friend,

My name is Bozana. I live in a small town in Bosnia, Bratunac. In my live I didn't have the chance to meet young people from different nations of former Yugoslavia. But this summer, thanks to you, I came here to Neum with my friends from **Srebrenica**. I wish to thank you for this great gift, really I couldn't imagine anything better. Beside that I came here to forget my usual life. Maybe you heard of the terrible life conditions in Bosnia after the war. I had to leave my house with my parents and my brother and go to Bratunac. 13 years after our lifes are totally different from before the war.

The 2 weeks will help me to forget my problems and I hope that I will get more similar chances in my life.

Thanks, Bozana (Bosnia)

Dear Donor,

I live in Tuzla (Bosnia). In this town there are many refugees from Srebrenica. But our society every day does things which help us to forget the war.

I spent 2 weeks in Neum and I had the chance to meet young people from other towns and other countries. We had many workshops where we learned about the other cultures and about tolerance. But we also had fun....I hope that all of us will stay in contact afterwards.

I want to thank you. You gave us the chance to be together and to make new friendships!!

Donja (Bosnia)