



Human Rights Education for Active
Citizenship in the Western Balkans

Human Rights School for Youth, Kovacica, January 2012 Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia held a Human Rights School for Youth (The School) between January 20 and January 26, 2012 at hotel Relax in Kovacica.

Forty secondary school students who were chosen from 125 applicants, came to Kovacica from secondary schools in Novi Pazar, Novi Sad, Belgrade, Nis, Sivac, Senta, Zaječar, Cacak, Kragujevac, Uzice, Pozega, Ruma, Petrovaradin, Knjazevac, and Kraljevo.

The aim of the school is to introduce secondary school students with the theory of human rights and its ideas, principles of democracy, tolerance, solidarity, non-violent communication and to develop and improve participants' critical thinking skills.

On the first day at Basic level of The School, which lasted between January 20 and January 26, Pavel Domonji, Chief of Staff of the Provincial Ombudsman was lecturing on human rights concept and its development, human rights and democracy. The same day Deputy Ombudsman Eva Vukasinovic talked about the protection mechanisms at the national level about the rights of marginalized groups, and national minorities. The second day psychologist Tamara Tomasevic talked about Communication models - a speech that leads to violence, or connecting, about Listening skills and Empathy. The third day the lecturer Boban

Stojanovic presented lectures on Gender, sex and sexual orientation, LGBT human rights and mechanism of homophobia. During the fourth day the lecture Denial of the reality/truth or facing with it: the responsibility of society and the individual held Nebojsa Tasic. The same day secondary school students Sara Velimirovic, Jelena Bjelica and David Djokic presented the work of Youth Groups of Helsinki Committee for Human rights in Serbia and talked about youth activism in general. And the last day was the European Union day, where politicologist Milos Ciric were lecturing on EU history, system and values and Serbia's integration to EU.

This is an open-concept teaching where along with theoretical lectures students were introduced with other teaching methods such as watching films and documentaries, attended forum theater on daily basis. After the lecture Facing the past/truth participant watched the documentary The Good Father - A Daughter's Indictment by Yoash Tatari.

One of the participants, Asja Lazarevic from Belgrade, describes her stay at school in Kovacica: *„Time I spent at Human Rights School meant a lot to me. Not only because I've learned many new things and upgraded my knowledge, but mostly because of people I've met there. These few days we lived together and in the end we parted eager to meet again as soon as possible. The knowledge I've gained at School was given by the excellent professors, lovable members of the organization team and of course other participants. I came back home feeling a bit tired, but fulfilled, more open and tolerant young person, motivated to change the Serbian society together with my new colleagues and friends”.*

Author:

Jelena Dzombic

Project Coordinator