



UWC-IB Initiative in Bosnia and Herzegovina



UNITED WORLD COLLEGES

# Newsletter 12

The United World College in Mostar  
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**UWCiM Enrolling its Fifth Generation**

**Hosting High Profile Austrian Visits**

**“Community Care Day”**

**UWCiM Alumni: “Learning It the Hard Way”**

## Headteacher's editorial

The autumn term is always a long one, stretching out as it does, from the last of the dog days in August to the frozen nights of December. The induction of new students at the Kravica Falls now seems like a distant memory, but whatever the outward signs of predictability with which we organise our College life, the ghost in our machine can always throw up a few surprises. Our latest (pleasant) surprise has been the decision of the Executive Committee to agree to the enrolment of a fifth generation of 80-100 students in September 2010. The various provisions and conditions which are attached to this decision need not concern us in this editorial, but the decision is proof of the goodwill of so many people and organisations towards the College, and also justification of their efforts to support us. Beyond doubt the greatest challenge is finance. The average per capita cost of a scholarship is 10,000 Euros per annum, and this has to pay for tuition, all academic costs, catering and accommodation. When the College is at its full capacity of 200 students (as it was between 2007 and 2009) the annual budget is two million Euros. National Committees notwithstanding, the bulk of this money has to be sought through private or institutional donations. The task of raising money is a hard and often thankless one, not least because the recent and ongoing recession has created in its wake a less philanthropic zeitgeist. A commitment to the future is of course a sine qua non. Why should anyone invest in a project which is contemplating closure? Therefore the recent decision has been made in the confidence that our positivity will create further positivity, and create its own virtuous circle. The College cannot be separated from the political realities in BiH and Mostar itself. This country has swallowed a huge amount of investment and aid since the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords. Despite visible signs of rebuilding and renovation in infrastructural civil engineering and

construction programmes, the soul of the country is still divided. Why should this impact the funding for the College? Firstly, no funding comes without strings, and the ability of the College to generate reform, especially in education, is paramount. This is a tough assignment in a country which has shown itself to be remarkably conservative, and whose very political structures and personalities are resistant to the changes we hope to bring. Secondly, there is some disagreement or at least confusion about the role and character of the school. I am constantly having to fence questions about why are we here and what we are hoping to achieve. My answer to these and other similar questions is a simple one. We are a school first and foremost, and not a political institution. Therefore our 'product' is the hearts, minds and attitudes of the students who are educated here and then graduate to become our alumni. In a country which is in so much need of ethical leadership and international values, not to mention modernisation and reform, these young people can and will in time make a difference. The measurement of this will takes a long time even if it is possible. Schools can make changes beyond the individual lives of their students, but those changes will inevitably take generations.

Thirdly, the pessimism which pervades ideas about the future of this country is spilling over into our future as well. This is not pessimism about the College itself, but about the degree to which it is relevant now that the world's gaze seems to have shifted to other regions. We have to fight this pessimism as well since it is misplaced. We can and must be realistic, but pessimism borders on defeatism. What is the price of a unique and successful College, transparent in its values and practices, ethical in its ambitions, and true to its promises? Considering the avalanche of money which has fallen upon this little country (more in real terms than the post Second World War Marshall Plan for Europe), the costs of maintaining this College are trivial. But I wish to return to the theme of the ghost in our machine. We do not have to be dualists to see the irony of an outwardly successful school with a troubled history of raising money. If we have been able to do so much against such a background of insecurity, then how much could we be capable of doing if we had greater certainty about our future? Having demonstrated that the soul of the institution which is alive and well in the daily lives of most of its students can look after itself when the body is ailing, we look forward to a day when the body can also be healthy. *Mens sana in corpore sana!*



UWCiM Headteacher Paul Regan with students

## Former High Representative to BiH Supports Integration in UWCiM and Gymnasium Mostar Dr. Wolfgang Petritsch Visits UWCiM

On 6 and 7 November the United World College in Mostar (UWCiM) hosted an influential Austrian diplomat, former High Representative (HR) to BiH (1999-2002), Dr. Wolfgang Petritsch. His two-day visit to UWCiM was organised in cooperation with Austrian UWC Network.



Group photo with Dr. Petritsch (from left): Paul Regan, Ankica Čović, Dr. Lamija Tanović and Bakir Krpo

Dr. Petritsch's first official visit to Mostar after his mandate provoked a huge media interest since he is still considered to be one of the most successful HRs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. "I sincerely hope that the local politicians will recognize the project of the United World College in Mostar as an excellent example on how things can be arranged and how it is possible to live together. This College and Gymnasium Mostar are the special institutions in Mostar which

bring the hope that all differences and diversities can be mutually appreciated and respected," said Dr. Petritsch to the press. As part of his busy schedule, on Friday Dr. Petritsch visited the Roma slum on the outskirts of Mostar to witness their poor living conditions. Later on he visited educational service programme for Roma kids and youth organised by UWCiM students. On Saturday, 7 November, Dr. Petritsch shared his opinion on current political situation in BiH with UWCiM students on an open plenary

moderated by UWCiM headteacher, Paul Regan. In a vivid discussion joined by the Chair of UWC-IB Initiative in BiH, Dr. Lamija Tanović, the students enjoyed elaborated observations from the top expert on the Balkans, Dr. Petritsch, and useful political insights from Dr. Tanović. During the visit Dr. Petritsch used the occasion to visit the new UWCiM library to which he donated his autographed book. During his visit to Mostar Dr. Wolfgang Petritsch was accompanied by Ms. Anna Hausmaninger from the Austrian Ministry of Education which is providing UWCiM with Austrian secondment English A1 and French teacher.



Sharing brief UWCiM history with Dr. Petritsch

**"Local Support is Crucial"**  
Dr. Lamija Tanović, the Chair of the UWC-IB Initiative in BiH, used the opportunity to invite domestic authorities and business structures to support UWCiM. "We honestly believe that all our results and accomplishments in the past three years is more than sufficient proof that our Initiative is truly worth supporting. We are a long term project and I sincerely hope that the local structures and international institutions interested in BiH progress on the way towards EU will recognize our efforts and financially support us. With their support we will hopefully avoid constant uncertainties about the continuation of our work in full capacity," said Dr. Tanović to the press.



Tour through Mostar with UWCiM students

**Meeting with Austrian Students**  
Dr. Wolfgang Petritsch used this opportunity to meet two Austrian students, Schirin Mona Schenkermayr and Verena Bachl, who shared their impressions about the life in UWCiM. Schirin's text about her UWC experience was published in the largest Austrian daily newspapers "Der Standard". The hope is that the article will attract more Austrian students to apply for UWC scholarship via Austrian UWC network which altruistically invested a lot of efforts in helping UWCiM survive.



Plenary discussion with UWCiM students (from left): Dr. Tanović, Dr. Petritsch and Mr. Regan

UWC-IB Initiative in Bosnia and Herzegovina and students of the United World College in Mostar wish Happy Holidays to all our friends, alumni, partners, supporters and donors. May New Year 2010 bring you a lot of happiness, success and joy.

Deepening Cooperation with Austrian UWC Network

## Dr. Franz Fischler's Annual Visit to UWCiM

The visit of the Austrian delegation was a great opportunity for them to learn more about the organisation of UWCiM, its mission and aims and, particularly, its service programme.

Dr. Franz Fischler, the Chair of the Austrian UWC Network, led a big Austrian delegation visiting UWCiM on Thursday, 19 November. Joined by the Austrian Ambassador to BiH, H.E. Dr. Donatus Köck, the representative of ERSTE Foundation Mr. Robin Gösejohann and eminent representatives of the leading Austrian and German media, Dr. Fischler once more used the opportunity to express his full support to the work of UWCiM and promote its special mission in BiH. "Hopefully, I'll come again next year and I hope that the school will be working in full capacity by then. A project like this one is a true path to EU for the whole of BiH," said Dr. Fischler to the local media. The Austrian visit started by guests attending the UWCiM students' ser-

vices at the Centre for People with Special Needs "Los Rosales" and the orphanage "Egyptian Village". Later on Dr. Fischler gave a very interesting and relevant lecture entitled "Climate change and the upcoming summit in Copenhagen" provoking a very vivid discussion with UWCiM students. In his lecture Dr. Fischler emphasized that the whole human kind is responsible for making an action against global warming. "The fight against climate change and global poverty are won or lost together," concluded Dr. Fischler. Within the visit the Austrian delegates were given a chance to look around the College facilities, visit some lessons and have lunch with students in the school's canteen. Austrian and German journalists were also given a small student guided tour around Mostar. This was a good opportunity for them



Dr Franz Fischler visiting UWCiM's IB lesson

to find out students' impressions about the life in the divided city and their perception of the College's mission in bringing young people together through the education process. During that time Dr. Fischler visited a student service programme in a refugee camp in Tasovčići, a small village close to the nearby town of Čapljina. There he was able to witness the miserable living conditions of the refugees and some of the students' activities developed for the children living in the camp. The visit to Tasovčići was suggested by Ms. Barbara Lichtner, UWCiM's English A1 teacher and the programme



(from left) Austrian Ambassador to BiH H.E. Dr Donatus Köck and Dr Franz Fischler

supervisor from Austria. "The service in the camp is very demanding emotionally and all the students participating in it are doing their best to organise educational activities and games to cheer up the children and develop personal bonds with them," explained Ms. Lichtner the purpose of the service in the refugee camp. Overall, the visit of the Austrian delegation was a great opportunity for them to learn more about the organisation of UWCiM, its mission and aims and, particularly, its service programme. This information will be beneficial to all students applying for UWC scholarships within this year's selection process in Austria which is starting at the moment.



Dr Fischler's lecture on climate changes to UWCiM students

Study Visit to Slovenia for BiH Education Ministers

## Contemporary Trends in Education from the First Hand

Within its constant efforts to tackle education reform in BiH, the UWC-IB Initiative in BiH organised a study visit to Slovenian Gymnasia for BiH educational ministers. The study visit entitled "Contemporary Trends in the Development of Education in Slovenia" took place from 15 to 18 November and it gathered representatives of five education ministries (the Ministry of Civil Affairs BiH, the Ministry of Education of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, the Ministry of Education of Tuzla Canton, the Ministry of Education of Posavina Canton, and the Ministry of Education of Una-Sana Canton).

The programme of the visit included a visit to the Ministry of Education of Republic of Slovenia where the ministers learned how the education reform process was organised in Slovenia during the 1990s and what its main focus was. Slovenian educational experts also shared their experiences in transferring some of the International Baccalaureate methodology to Slovenian national curriculum, especially concerning the national baccalaureate. At the Slovenian Institute for Education and Examination Centre BiH ministers learned more about constant education practice monitoring in Slovenian schools as well as the process of adoption and implementation of contemporary teaching trends in arranging the lessons. The ministers were introduced to a concrete teaching practice in Slovenian gymnasium during the visit to Ptuj School Centre and Second Gymnasium in Maribor where they attended some of the lessons. The feedback from the study visit was extremely positive and all the ministers emphasized the importance of constant exchange of experience in educational set-ups in the region. This was the second study visit to Slovenia organised by the Initiative's Centre for Professional Development of Teachers for BiH education ministers and it certainly gave contribution to cooperation between the two countries in the educational field.

"The experience that the representatives of Slovenian Education Ministry and the Education Institute as well as teachers and headteachers in their schools shared with us can be an important role model for the education reform in our country," said Vanja Ibrahimbegović, the Development Director of the UWC-IB Initiative in BiH. The participants were very satisfied with what they saw during the visit, especially with the recently renovated Second Gymnasium Maribor, one of the best secondary schools in Slovenia.



Visit of education ministers to Druga gymnasium in Maribor



Headteacher of Druga gymnasium Ivan Lorenčič with participants of study visit

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Intercultural Challengers in Mostar

# “Fair of Resemblance”

The winners of the UWC-IB Initiative in BiH and the Slovenian Centre for European Perspective (CEP) joint project “Intercultural Dialogue in BiH Schools” are students from Gymnasium “Vaso Pelagić” from Brčko. At the ceremony held on 20 November in Mostar their project “Fair of Resemblance” was declared the best among a strong competition of eleven final high school projects coming from gymnasia in Banja Luka, Kakanj, Modriča, Mostar, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Vlasenica, Višegrad and Žabljak-Usona.



Winning team of Gymnasium “Vaso Pelagić” from Brčko

Members of the “Vaso Pelagić” Gymnasium group Mirela Ivkić, Ismet Bahor, Ena Merić, Radana Perkanović and Darija Žilić mentored by teacher Sanela Fejzić and their project were very convincing to the committee and

deserved the award in the form of a language course in an EU country including the enrolment fee and accommodation with a host family. The prize was conferred by CEP Programme Director, Andreja Dolničar Jeraj and the representative of the language school Education First

in Slovenia, Urška Kačičnik. The awarding ceremony programme was moderated by UWCiM students Goran Simić and Jelena Radmanović and joined by UWCiM headteacher Paul Regan and Elmaja Bavčić from the UWC-IB Initiative’s Development Office. Besides the awarding ceremony, the CEP and the UWC-IB Initiative also organised two-day workshops and lectures on intercultural dialogue for all the finalists at UWCiM. During the workshop students were presented with some basic concepts of intercultural stereotypes and communities that were followed by discussion on intercultural practice in everyday life. Presentations were followed by the “Building Bridge” workshop. The participants were supposed to build a bridge between two groups in a short time with simple tools such as scissors, glue and a ruler. At the same time, they had to present their mental models, compare and establish them as well as reach an agreement on how to participate. The participants visited cultural sights in Mostar, including the Turkish House and the famous Old Bridge. The event was a great opportunity for all the students to meet their colleagues from other parts of BiH and to make new friendships. “Intercultural Dialogue in BiH Schools” is the first project of the UWC-IB Initiative for students organised in cooperation with the CEP, which is a long term partner in organising study visits for BiH educators in Slovenia.



One of the selected final presentations

## Hosting the US Embassy Initiative International Education Week in UWCiM

Within the tenth annual International Education Week, UWCiM hosted the presentation of the Office of Public Affairs of the United States Embassy in BiH on Monday, 16 November.

The Mostar presentation was the first one in a series of events organised by the US Embassy countrywide aiming to promote the benefits of international studying. During his presentation for UWCiM and Gymnasium Mostar students, the Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer, Mr. Roger Webb, explained that this joint initiative of the US Department of State and the US Department of Education is meant to attract students all around the world to study, learn, and exchange experiences in the United States. “We are here to promote the US academic programmes that prepare Americans for a global environment but also to attract future leaders from abroad to join,” said Mr. Webb. Within the presentation, students were informed about the application process for US universities, available scholarships, and they heard testimonials of BiH citizens who used their chance to study in US.



Mr. Roger Webb during his presentation

### Post-conflict transformation in Balkans

## Experiential learning for US students in UWCiM

This is the second year of our established cooperation between UWC in Mostar and the SIT Study Abroad program in the Balkans. SIT (School for International Training) Study Abroad has more than 60 programs across the globe and across the academic disciplines. It offers undergraduate students from the United States the unique opportunity of a fifteen week long semester abroad, based on academic and experiential learning away from the traditional campus environment, aiming to foster critical thinking and a more complex view of the world.

In the Balkans, the program’s theme is post-conflict transformation, with a focus on Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Students live with local families in Zagreb and Belgrade, study the local language, have lectures with local academics, meet local students and visit non-governmental organizations (NGOs) Through this, students deepen their understanding of post-conflict transformation in the Balkans and explore issues such as post-conflict dynamics of peace building, reconciliation, and collective memories. They also explore the complexity of international intervention (or lack of) with a critical eye.

During our time in BiH, it was only natural for us to reach out and establish our collaboration with the UWC, allowing our students to visit the school, meet with the UWC students and learn about and from their experiences, challenges and aspirations. We share world views with UWC as the role of education

*It is our hope that UWC will continue to contribute to further studies about peace and conflict and the role of education in transforming societies.*

in social change and transformation. During the last four weeks of the semester, SIT students conduct independent study projects (ISPs) on a theme at a location of their choice. In Spring 2009 semester, one of our students studied the contribution of the UWC to educational and social transformation in. We appreciate the openness of UWC’s staff and students who opened their doors and shared their knowledge and experience with our students. It is our hope that UWC will continue to contribute to further studies about peace and conflict and the role of education in transforming societies. **Orli Fridman, Ph.D., Academic Director, SIT Study Abroad: Balkans**



Lively discussion of UWCiM and US university students participating in World Learning SIT Study Abroad



Impacting Environmental Awareness in the Local Community

# “Community Care Day”

Nice, warm and sunny day dawned on 14 November - a perfect opportunity for Mostar citizens to go out for a walk and catch some fresh air. For most of them it should have been just another Saturday, a day off work and spending time with family and friends.

However, the day was anything but an ordinary November Saturday! It was a “Community Care Day” organised by UWCiM’s Ecology group. The community ecological action started on the Spanish Square at 10 AM sharp with a big promotional campaign for the use of eco bags instead of plastic ones. For this occasion we made 200 linen bags with the logos of the Initiative and UWC spreading a simple message “I Care for Environment” in the local language. We also made promotional flyers containing the information about the bad influence of plastic bags on environment and the extremely long period of their decomposition. The action was an enormous success! We ran out of bags in less than an hour and a lot of young people who came to take the promotional linen bags joined the subsequent cleaning actions organised the same day on several locations in Mostar. Students from other Mostar high schools also accepted our invitation to join the cleaning actions so we were very proud of the number of people who supported our “Community Care Day”.

We were divided into three groups by locations to clean. It was agreed that places for cleaning should be “Northern Camp” - a place where we play rugby every Sunday; “Little Stairs” - one of the paths toward our Sušac residence; and around the College building. Each group had a leader and someone who was in charge of collecting the waste on piles. While we were cleaning we shared experience with lots of young people from Mostar and made new friendships. This was a great experience for all of us and we were very happy to hear that our environmental action made them feel “a part of something greater” as they put it. Our Ecology Group supervisor Valentina Mindoljević later informed us that many teachers from other schools called to ask how they could join our future eco projects and establish a long lasting cooperation in environmental issues. To conclude, our “Community Care Day” was greatly received by the local community, the media and Mostar citizens. This made us feel proud and eager to arrange more similar events in the near future, especially now when we are taking part in the world’s competition for the best environmental campaign.

*Andelka Zoranović, UWCiM student, BiH*



“Community Care Day” promotional action on the Spanish Square



Cleaning actions within “Community Care Day”



# “Global Environmental Debate”

Besides the “Community Care Day” we also organised the “Global Environmental Debate” where UWCiM students, divided in two groups, exchanged arguments in a heated discussion about the urging topics of today’s world: Global Warming and Fighting Poverty.

The main idea of the discussion was whether the United Nations should focus on making a protocol for reducing carbon dioxide transmission or if it should pay more attention to fighting poverty. Both groups were very persuasive and they prepared strong arguments to defend their standpoint. The first team, arguing in favour of a focus on supporting global warming actions, stated that the UN should pay more attention to environmental issues because the climate change poses a great danger not only to humans but life on Earth in general. “It’s possible that some continents may disappear in the future because of the rising sea levels; this could lead more people to starvation caused by natural catastrophes such as floods, earthquakes, strong winds, etc...” was their main argument. However, the opposing team debating for more UN’s attention directed to fighting poverty argued that there is not enough scientific evidence of the global warming effect and its correlation with carbon dioxide transmission. “The UN should focus on visible, provable and concrete problems; daily starvation of the people in the Third World countries certainly is such a problem,” they concluded. This debate was recorded and sent to Copenhagen where the UN climate Conference is taking place. The debate was part of our efforts to emphasize the problems of today’s world in our College community.

I am very proud of our students who joined high schools worldwide in discussion and action concerning climate change by participating in the UN Foundation’s Global Debates. This year students were required to argue the significance of their very own Climate Change Action Plan and we managed to perform it through a debate, education and practical actions in the local community.

*Valentina Mindoljević, Ecology Group Supervisor, Croatia*

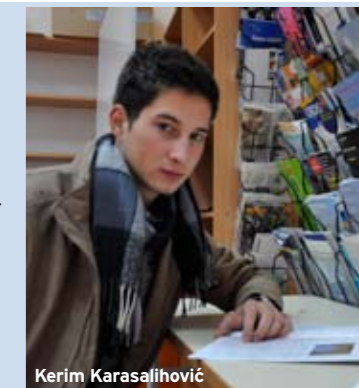
Reflections on My Educational Experience

# Advantages of My New School

A huge benefit of UWCiM is the presence of students from different countries, different backgrounds, religions and cultures. It can be hardly put in words what this means for my personal development.

My name is Kerim and I come from Olovo, a small town in Central Bosnia. Before coming to UWCiM I attended a Gymnasium curriculum organised in the education centre “Musa Ćazim Ćatić” in Olovo. I must say that I was very happy in my previous school and with my life in Olovo. I had great friends and classmates, I was an excellent student and had good relations with most of my teachers. But now, looking back, I can hardly compare that experience with what I have found coming to UWCiM. Those two experiences are so different that you could hardly say that we are discussing two high schools in the same country. But I’ll give it a try anyway! Firstly, at UWC everyone chooses six subjects to study intensively during the two years of International Baccalaureate Programme (IB) having in mind her/his future career. In my previous school I had 13 subjects instead! I was not very interested in some of them so I studied them only superficially but got excellent marks anyway. Something like that would be impossible in UWCiM. We are here to learn the matter and show our knowledge on the final exams, and not to just to get an occasional good mark. Secondly, in my previous school, as in many schools around BiH, most of the students have no chance to be noticed and express themselves in anyway or implement their ideas within the school environment. There are always some exceptional supportive teachers, I had them in my school as well, but they are so rare that they can hardly make a difference. At the end of the day, they have to assess and discipline more than 30 students in the class-

room and that can’t be an easy task. Here in UWCiM students are constantly encouraged to develop all their skills and potential not only in classroom but also within various extra curricular activities. Besides that, I have the freedom to express myself and my ideas without fear of being judged in any way. I am also free to contact any of the teachers if I have problems or issues arising from the subject they teach. Another huge benefit of UWCiM is the presence of students from different countries, different backgrounds, religions and cultures. It can be hardly put in words what this means for my personal development. This gives me a great possibility to learn about the world first hand and to improve my ability to communicate with people regardless of our differences. I never seriously considered this aspect of learning while attending my previous school. This is not an issue in the BH education system - unfortunately. Living with all these people in our boarding accommodation, sharing the happy and sad moments away from the parents is also a great way of becoming independent and mature at age 17, which is not bad at all, most of the time: ) And then we come to the issue of language skills and studying in the world’s most popular language - English! The confidence to communicate in English on the academic level after graduating from UWCiM is also an enormous advantage of



Kerim Karasalihović

my new school. And not only that - many opportunities for university education abroad is a completely new concept for UWCiM students coming from BiH and the region. The great thing is that we can get full scholarship to study in the United States which was literally impossible for most of us before. So my philosophy is to study abroad and get a good education, since I’ve already got a chance to do so, and then come back to give contribution in further development of my dear and suffering country of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I am really happy I got accepted to UWCiM since it gives me a unique opportunity to put my life on a higher level and make a better future not only for me but for my country as well. I recommend everyone to apply to this school and make education standards of our country significantly greater.

*Kerim Karasalihović, UWCiM student, BiH*

## Comparative Analysis of German High School and IB DP Curriculum

### Not so Different

In this article I’ll try to compare the UWCiM IB curriculum to the curriculum of my previous school in Germany. First of all, in Germany, we have to study 13 subjects. The most important subjects are three languages and Mathematics, which are taught with four lessons a week. But we also have Physical Education, History, Geography, etc. Visual Arts and Music appear only once or twice a week in our schedule. You don’t have higher levels or standard levels and the amount of lessons we have in each subject is determined by the government. Freedom to choose my IB subject and extra curriculum

activities within the CAS programme was truly refreshing, I must admit! In Germany teachers have to stick to a strict syllabus but in the end it is their decision what exactly they will teach us. If the teacher taught only 50 percent of the syllabus at the end of the year it didn’t really matter for student’s final grades. There are no real guidelines or criteria on how the teachers score the students. A large part of the final grade consists of the oral work usually submitted during the lessons. So while you score well with teacher A, teacher B might give you a totally different grade for the same work. I must say that I prefer the IB external assessment system and strict guidelines in evaluation of student’s work. The average class size in most German schools is 35 students and it is more up to the student to try to find out the answer rather than the teacher providing them with the notes needed. For example, in Mathematics we were not just copying notes into our notebooks, but we were encouraged to do



Rony Agyman with his UWCiM colleagues during the local language course

research to gain new mathematical skills. It was not only about knowing how to do something (e.g. how to calculate correctly), but the emphasis was put on knowing why something was like that and why a certain formula was used. This was, I think, the closest link of the German system to the IB. In general, I would describe the IB Diploma Programme as a much more focused and more academic curriculum with fewer subjects but a deeper knowledge. The final grades are deserved

after important exams at the end of the two year course. To conclude: Germany provides its students with a time-consuming and all-subject-including curriculum that requires student’s curiosity just like the IB; but the IB does it in a much more structured way allowing student’s initiatives and independent projects to be developed on the way.

*Rony Agyman, UWCiM student, Germany*

International Theatre Project in Krzyzowa, Poland

## Exploring the Work of Ernst Barlach

As a member of the youth theatre group of Mostar's Youth Cultural Centre „Abrašević“ I got a chance to participate in the international youth theatre project from 9 until 16 November in a small, but very famous, village in Poland - Krzyzowa. Krzyzowa, once a German village, was a place where on 12 November, 1989, the Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki and the German Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl held a historic reconciliation meeting. On that meeting it was decided to redevelop the property and give it to the international youth meeting centre.

The reason for travelling to Poland was participation in the theatre project with our colleagues from the youth theatres “Melchiorgrund Theatre” from Germany and “Suha Reka” from Kosovo. Our project in Krzyzowa was supported by Georgian musicians, few Polish professional actors and a mime teacher. During the seven days in Krzyzowa we devised a play based on the motives taken from the Ernst Barlach's only novel “The Good Times” (Die Gute Zeit). The reason for choosing this piece for our play is an interesting personal

story of this German artist (mainly a sculptor), who changed his position from the enthusiastic supporter of German military dominance and expansion to an ardent pacifist, and consequently, forbidden artist in Nazi Germany. We truly enjoyed our intensive rehearsals and adapting Barlach's work to the theatre play. The youth resort in Krzyzowa offered us great inspiration and perfect working conditions. Lots of new friendships and valuable contacts were made along the process and we came very near to the final stage of our theatre production.



Final performance of theatre play in Krzyzowa



Intensive rehearsals for the play “The Good Times”

After this exchange in Poland, our work is still in progress but after the fourth performance it's safe to say we are slowly getting there. Each time the play looks more interesting and appealing. The changes of the scenes, improving the choreography and costumes added a new value to our performance. But for me the best part was to see my colleges constantly improving their acting skills and

how we have all grown together in this process. Being part of something like this is truly rewarding and I cannot wait to give the final performance of “The Good Times” play in Mostar sometime in April. It will certainly add to Mostar cultural scene now when we have both Mostar theatres closed down due to financial crisis.

*Nada Trbonja,  
UWCiM student, BiH*



Internal Professional Development of UWCiM Teachers

## “The Experiential Learning”

The International Baccalaureate Programme is demanding for both students and teachers. One of the ways to meet its standards is through continuous professional development of the teaching staff. Many of our teachers attended the workshops organised by the IBO, but as of this year we decided to implement internal professional development programme in order to maintain the quality of teaching, improve the performance, and help our students become lifelong learners and strengthen the bonds between different areas of knowledge as well as among staff members. The topic of our first internal workshop that was held on 23 November was “The Experiential Learning”. Such an approach to teaching encourages the student to learn from direct experience, through reflection and conceptualising to action and onward to further experience. The method itself describes the requirements of IB teaching and aims to achieve some of the main expectations in learner's profile like inquiry, thinking, reflection, risk-taking and communication. Experiential learning is also in the very core of the CAS Programme where students turn their plans into concrete experience and through the process of observation and reflection gain knowledge to apply it in new situations and close the circle of learning again. The internal teachers' workshop itself was organised on the same basis. After the brief introduction about the method and different learning styles, the teachers were separated into working groups. Four UWCiM teachers (Selma Sarančić - Biology, Martina Talić - Spanish, Irena Vasilj - Visual Arts, Valentina Mindoljević - Physics) prepared brief lessons in their respective subjects using the experiential learning approach and then the other teachers were fully introduced to the concept of such teaching. They were all encouraged to outline the lesson in their area and use it within the programme. The evaluation and the feedback of this professional training were positive and for many of us it was strengthening the methods we already use in our daily work. Most of all, the workshop made excellent team building and induced sharing of experience and discussion among staff members. Additionally, I have been invited by the Pedagogical Institute in Mostar to hold similar workshops for teachers of the national curricula on the cantonal level. This is also one step forward in recognition of our academic standards and integration of our College in local education environment.

*Valentina Mindoljević,  
UWCiM Physics teacher and  
Director of Studies, Croatia*

Second Year Students' Variety Show

## Two Hours of Sheer Fun!

As a rather new teacher at this school, I haven't really had many opportunities to attend any of the “Variety Shows” regularly organised and staged by our students. My primary motivation and reason to go to the November's show organised by our 2nd years was, of course, to show support and appreciation for the extra time and energy they must have invested to organise such an event. Even more, organising it in the most challenging phase in their two UWCiM years, the notorious THIRD TERM, truly deserved my admiration!

What I certainly did not expect is to spend two hours of pure fun, entertainment, and continuous hearty laugh. Even if the objectivity of opinion here might be debatable, I must express, first of all, my gratitude, and secondly, my admiration! Each and every act performed was the result of great creativity and, sometimes less, talent, and it was pure joy to watch and listen to them all. I must admit that the ones that were the most surprising for me were the imitation and theatre skits which were simply hilarious! Their sense of humour and, most importantly, self-irony and jokes at their own expense, were evidence of their ability to be self-critical and to laugh off the pressure and stress of sometimes extremely tight schedules and demanding academic tempos. One such performance was given by Lara and Jasmin, who adapted one of the catchiest Black Eyed Peas songs to the lyrics written by them, expressing their frustra-

tion with too much homework and constant pressures of various deadlines. Another dose of humour was provided by the guys who showed us on stage the way they perceive the purpose of their social bonding and off time - the UWCiM parties: it doesn't matter where you are or who you are with, as long as you're uninhibited and relaxed, and discharge the over-the-week accumulated stress. And, of course, the Back Street Boys and Pussy Cat Dolls performances swept me off my feet. Besides these laugh-your-head-off parts, I enjoyed the choreographies of the contemporary and step dance routines craftily put together by the girls. As dance is one of my personal passions, so to see them perform to the equally well chosen music made me sigh with regret for not having had the opportunity to pursue my passion through high school and later. Finally, you can guess what the last, but never the least, act was - the icing on the cake indeed: the unavoidable, tumultuous, stress-defeating “Kamate”!  
*Ilvana Čišić, UWCiM English A2 teacher, BiH*



Hilarious student acts: performing, acting, imitating and singing



Life in Divided Cities

# Learning It the Hard Way

In the summer of 2008 I had to make a choice which has potentially changed my life. I had received my exam results and was presented with a choice of two universities. One, based in southern England, was a comfortable haven both in terms of my studies and socially. The other was in a place as foreign as Mostar yet close enough to be inside my own country. Being an UWCiM student, the choice in my mind was pretty simple. I was to throw in my lot with this foreign place, utterly change my course of study and have another adventure.

**N**orthern Ireland is no stranger to division and, like Mostar and BiH in a larger sense, it has had a difficult decade. Arriving from the airport to the city centre, the painful past of Belfast is played out with Republican or Unionist hues on the murals which defined the 'Troubles'. Britain may be western and wealthy, but the divisions were, from my experience, far more pertinent than those I saw in Mostar, namely because of my nationality. A brief history of the area will tell you that hatred and anger are as entrenched here as any other place where ideas of pride, history and heritage have been confused with nationalism. I was not prepared for what I was to experience in Belfast, but I will say that Mostar armed me with the wit, knowledge and devotion to impartiality to be able to deal with it and furthermore to thrive. Those of you reading this will undoubtedly have some foundation in the history and demographic situation of Mostar, so I'll not recount that old 'two sides, old bridge' adage. Belfast presents a different issue, which as I understand is more akin to the situation in Israel/Palestinian Territories. Whereas Mostar sits atop a valley bed intersected by the emerald Neretva, Belfast has no such natural division, and as such the areas in conflict are more often than

not separated by a 10 metre high concrete wall. Checkpoints puncture these walls at regular intervals, and often a no-man's land of rubbish heaps and grassy patches flank each side of the wall, so as to make the division even more obvious. These areas are littered with beer cans, smashed glass and occasional remnants of a Molotov cocktail, seared grass and blackened tarmac, which are lobbed over these 'peace walls' on to remind neighbours of where they stand. Outside Belfast, divisions follow a sporadic pattern of enclaves or patches of Republicans encircled by Unionists or vice-versa. Monuments to defeated peace stand out on the edges of Belfast like the gnarled iron rods protruding from the crumbling concrete walls opposite the Gymnasium. Mostar showed me what anger

and frustration and war can do to a society. I was aware during my time there that I was distinctly not part of the problems which the UWCiM was set up to tackle. In Belfast, despite what I said, I was British in a place where Brits are not always welcome. No amount of distancing yourself from nationalists of all stripes or arguing against conflict could change where you were born. This was the final lesson which Mostar had taught me, even after I had left that second home of mine a long time ago. But Mostar had also taught me that where you are born, your faith, creed or ethnicity is not the most important factor about who you are. No matter what was shouted at you down the street, or what was whispered behind you in a bar, if your mind was set to it you could show who you really were and what you



(on the left) William Wyeth with a friend in Belfast



Mostar's war division line: 2003

really thought. Anger works on fear; fear of the other, fear of the future, fear of the past. Mostar taught me that if you can stand up to those who promote anger, like the two-thousand-plus people in Belfast who protested against the murder of two soldiers and a policeman in March of this year, then there is still hope. The UWCiM has been around since 2006 and has been working to a similar goal for three years now. I hope at its tenth anniversary the school will be able to summon two thousand people to reinforce the call, which I had learnt, to fight anger.

*William Wyeth,  
UWCiM Alumnus 07-09, UK*

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