

# World View Trip: Lessons from Abroad

North Carolina education administrators travel to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia on study visit to meet peers

In June 2013, a contingent of North Carolina educators and education administrators traveled to and met with peers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia under the auspices of a WorldView study trip - an international program for educators that was sponsored this year by UNC Center for European Studies. The group of twenty-two educators was comprised of superintendents, community college educators, elementary



*Left to right: Jill Irwin-Hartle, Maxie Johnson, Jacqueline Olich, Sandra Haddock, Rosemary Nye*

teachers, high school teachers, a counselor and a media resource specialist. The North Carolina Principal of the Year Steve Wray and the North Carolina Teacher of the Year Maxie Johnson, among others, participated in the study visit. Dr. Neil Bolick, World View's Associate Director, was the group leader. Dr. Jacqueline Olich, CSEES Associate Director and Adjunct Assistant Professor of History, was the faculty area studies expert.

In Croatia, Dr. Kresimir Krolo, a University of Zadar sociologist and former Junior Faculty Development (JFDP) Fellow at the University of North Carolina, provided a sociological and cultural overview of the three countries since the breakup of Yugoslavia. "Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina were a part of Yugoslavia but also maintained separate cultural social entities," Krolo told the group. Twenty years after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Slovenia is experiencing a political crisis stemming from an economic crisis, Croatia is undergoing a period of re-traditionalization, and Bosnia and Herzegovina's political institutions are blocked. Dr. Katarina Ott, Director of the Institute for Public Finance and Professor at the Faculty of Mathematics at Zagreb University provided the group with an economic outline and discussed Croatia's July 1 entry into the EU. The economic crisis, Ott argues, is not global; it disproportionately impacts Europe and the United States but we locate ourselves at the center of the world. In the 1990s, too much of Croatia's GDP was spent on war. Ott draws a direct line between the moral and political deficits brought about by the war and today's corruption, organized crime, and troubled judiciary system.

The study visit provided opportunities to reconnect with other leaders in the region with UNC Chapel Hill ties. UNC Chapel Hill graduate Ken Palmer, Deputy Director, Programmes at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), hosted the group in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has been working on primary and secondary school curricular reform since 2002. Palmer and his colleagues discussed their efforts to expunge offensive or hate speech from history, literature, and music with the North Carolina educators.

In Sarajevo, the delegation visited the well-respected non-profit organization—Obrazovanje Gradi BiH or Education Builds Bosnia and Herzegovina that began caring for war orphans in 1994 and also now advocates for children with special needs and Roma. Executive Director Jovan Divjak explained that the non-profit also strives to help promote education more broadly in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Divjak, an ethnic Serb, commanded the Bosnian army's defense of Sarajevo against invading Serbs. "I identified myself as a Bosnian, not as a Serb," Divjak explained. Divjak has won many international and national awards for his humanitarian work, including the French Legion of Honour, Order of Lafayette, Sixth of April Award of Sarajevo, the International League of Humanists Plaque and the Plaque of the Sarajevo Canton. Educators also got a chance to visit Dubrovnik, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, encircled by medieval walls and containing a harmonious collection of white-marble renaissance buildings. After leaving Sarajevo Dubrovnik, the group traveled to Mostar for a meeting with OSCE mission officials and then to the United World College.

During the Study Visit educators learned about differences between Bosnia, Croatia, and Slovenia's integration into the European Union and economic development. This Study Visit was intended to be a unique



*Left to right: Neil Bolick, Jacqueline Olich, Kresimir Krolo, Katarina Ott*

that travel abroad changes our lives for the better. International travel also helps us help our students understand the world in more complex ways— and to understand their place in this world.

The ideal candidate is an educator who is committed to global education. World View considers international travel to be an essential aspect of being well-educated in the 21st century and seeks candidates who have not yet had an opportunity to travel abroad. World View's Study Visit to the Balkans is open to any full-time educator, yet priority will be given to educators who are part of one of World View's partner schools systems, schools, or colleges. Secondary priority will be given to educators who have not traveled internationally in the past. Participants of all other past World View Study Visits may submit an application, but will be placed on a wait list.

and challenging professional development opportunity—not a tourist trip! To prepare for the Study Visit, participants were required to attend a day-and-a-half seminar on Europe and the EU (March 20-21, 2013) in Chapel Hill. Following the Study Visit, participants came back together for a follow-up workshop in August 2013.

Every summer World View leads 10-13 day study visits to a country or region of the world where few North Carolina educators have traveled before. The goal of the Study Visit is to help educators become leaders for global education by looking beyond the borders of North Carolina and experiencing a culture, country, and people different from their own. From our own experiences, we understand

