



news from Novi Most New Bridge

Spring 2021

pioneering youth work in Bosnia and Herzegovina

@novimost   

This New Bridge is being prepared as the anniversary of lockdown rolls around. Depending when and where in the world you are reading this your current situation may vary, but it's unlikely it has returned to what was normal. It's been a year of change for our team members in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A time for the team to improvise and innovate; a time to look for new ways to achieve the same aims as before. But despite all the upheaval some things have remained the same. Here Ivica, team leader in Čapljina, tells the encouraging story of how they have still been welcoming new young people into Novi Most activities this year.

"A couple of years ago I was chatting with a friend, a local business owner, who asked me how we advertise the work of Novi Most in and around Čapljina. I replied that apart from when we were first setting up, we've never really advertised but we have always had a steady flow of young people come through our doors and engage in the activities we provide. My friend was bemused and asked how? I explained that it has simply been by word of mouth. Young people like what they do with us and then go and tell their friends. Over the past couple of months we've had several new people come to various activities, all of whom have come on a friend's recommendation. It is an encouragement that this is the case, that the young people we work with enjoy and value Novi Most. We count it a privilege to get to know people in this way and it often allows us to form good friendships with them and we are able not just to offer some fun activities but also a place where they can feel welcomed, accepted and valued."

A NEW LOOK FOR NOVIMOST.ORG

Much like the young people who recommend our activities to their friends, we love it when you share good news stories from Bosnia and Herzegovina with friends and family. We hope our new look website will make this easier.

Katie co-ordinated the update to our website from lockdown. She explains some of the motivation behind the project.

"2020 vision? 2020 was not the year many of us anticipated it to be, with many disappointments and failed plans, but one thing we did manage to do was revamp our website. We felt it was time to make a site that reflected who we are today, was more user-friendly and more streamlined when it came to getting people to interact with us. We've also got some funky new ways to give online. We would love to know what you think!"

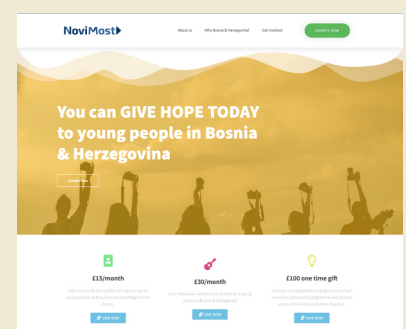
THE POWER OF WORD OF MOUTH



We are grateful for your faithful support and giving, which enables our important work with young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue.

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BUKA VESELA - AN ALBUM OUT OF LOCKDOWN

On the 13th March 2020, Matt sat in a meeting with the Jajce team where they discussed the impending lockdown and the suspension of their normal activities. Obstacles can also be opportunities, and Matt saw lockdown as and opportunity to start recording an album he and Budo had been writing.

Like many of us, Matt discovered that life in lockdown could still be very busy, with Zoom calls and making videos for online church services. But in the weeks that followed the songs started to take shape. By the summer the album was finished. However, with playing live still not an option Matt and Budo decided to make music videos for all the songs so it could be released online. It was a simple idea but also a massive undertaking!

On the 13th March 2021, Matt sat with the Jajce team in Dina's apartment as they gathered to watch the video for the Buka Vesela launch premiere on YouTube. How did it feel to see this lockdown project finally released?

"It was great to celebrate together. I don't know how many times I'd heard these songs but to know people were hearing them for the first time was special. We've had a good response from people in the church and the local community. Now it's time to finish the English translations of the songs and to start recording them!"



Buka Vesela means 'joyful noise' – the sort described in Psalm 150. The album features 10 new songs whose lyrics are inspired by the Psalms and whose music is inspired by the Balkans.

THE SITUATION IN SARAJEVO

The situation with the pandemic continues to vary around Bosnia and Herzegovina, with different restrictions in place in different parts of the country. Sarajevo is perhaps the hardest hit city, so our team there have faced the biggest challenges. Here Katie explains how it's been:

"The first few months of 2021 in Sarajevo have been quite different than expected. Living next to two Olympic mountain ranges, the winter months are normally spent with young people skiing and snowboarding, building their confidence and skills through these activities. In January, Beki managed to take a small group of guys up to the mountains for some good boys' time. In February, we were hoping to have a long weekend where the older youth would be teaching the younger ones how to snowboard, but COVID...!"

Unfortunately, over the last month or so, Sarajevo has become the COVID hotspot in the country and the city has gone back into lockdown with schools returning to online learning and extra-curricular activities cancelled. Before lockdown came into full effect, we did manage to have a couple of in person meetings with the older youth, events which they largely led and planned themselves to reach out to their friends. It has been really encouraging for us to see them grow and step out in leadership in this way."



RECORDING A CONCERT FOR RADIO

It's been over a year since the team in Jajce have been able to organise a concert for their music students. However by the time you read this they will have finished recording their students for Radio Jajce. The local radio station asked them to make a series of programmes highlighting their work in the community. So there will be a concert series featuring over 25 pieces of music, involving 30 young people, and interviews with the young people about their experience of learning music with Novi Most. This project marks a couple of encouraging firsts: a first recording studio experience for the music students, and the first time the team will have advertised that they teach music in the ten years they have been in Jajce!

All the recording was filmed so there is a good chance there will be a concert video up on YouTube after the radio broadcasts.



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