



news from Novi Most spring 2022 **New Bridge** ▶

pioneering youth work in Bosnia and Herzegovina

*Sarajevo meets
Mostar on and
off the pitch.*

@novimost   

Novi Most has been doing youth work in Bosnia and Herzegovina for more than twenty years. In that time many generations of young people have come through the doors to be part of activities. Some have connected for just a short time, others have spent many years in regular contact with our team. But it is the nature of youth work that young people grow up and move on. There is a constant challenge for our team, to be ready to connect with the next group, as well as keeping the connections that have already been built. As we begin this New Bridge we will see how both of these things are happening right now in Sarajevo.

Beki is Novi Most Director and our man in Sarajevo. He is also a football fan. *“For a year now, I have been actively playing football with older youth almost every weekend. This is a great opportunity to stay in touch with them, but also to meet new people and build new relationships. Through football I have had the opportunity to meet new people and invite them to some of our church and Novi Most activities. Football has also created the opportunity to go on trips together. We have already been to Mostar. We had a wonderful time with young people there, on the pitch and in the church. In June we have been invited to go to Croatia for a tournament. Sport is definitely a great tool that if used properly can connect people and teach them good values.”*

At the same time Beki is beginning to work with a new group in Sarajevo. *“This winter we had a wonderful opportunity to organise a small winter camp for children aged 10–16. Twelve children were thrilled to have the opportunity to learn to ski or snowboard, but also to be able to spend time together in games, worship and Bible lessons. This camp on Jahorina, a mountain just outside of Sarajevo, created an opportunity for us to start working with a new group of children in our Youth Club. We are excited for all that is ahead of us.”*

We asked a couple of this new generation how the camp was for them.

Emma: *This is my first time going to camp. It was great to learn to snowboard, even though I fell over a lot. We played various games, hung out and sang together.*

Aron: *I had a great time at camp. I like the house and that we could hang out, play and snowboard on the mountain. I did better with my snowboarding this year, I learned to turn left. I love when we sing to God and learn about God.*

RESPONDING TO WHAT IS HAPPENING IN UKRAINE

None of us on the Novi Most team is going to claim to be a geopolitical expert, but we want to give you a sense of how the Russian invasion of Ukraine has been felt in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For many people watching the images on television and social media it brings back painful memories of seeing their hometown similarly destroyed or their loved ones killed. Many know what it is to be a refugee; they know the suffering of war. The church in Capljina is connected with Ukrainian missionaries in Croatia, and Ivica organised an offering which they have given to support the work they are doing welcoming Ukrainian refugees at the Croatian border. Novi Most Director, Beki is looking at how Novi Most can best help the people we are working with in BiH to support relief efforts for Ukrainian refugees.



*A great way to
stay connected.*



*Happy to be together... and
to be up in the mountains.*



*Sarajevo
City Hall
lit up as
a sign of
solidarity
with the
people of
Ukraine.*

Photo: klix.ba

ROYAL RANGERS IN MOSTAR

For the past couple of years, Novi Most has been partnering with the local church in Mostar to run Royal Rangers. Indira explains what that is and how it is helping.

We decided to start the Royal Rangers programme (a Christian scouts) in Mostar because we realised that this programme agrees with our vision as Novi Most. We want to guide young people in their physical, psychological, social and spiritual growth so that they grow into mature and independent people. We use Royal Rangers to do this by organising hikes and trips; and by learning about nature and society, and how to get along with each other.

Although we started the programme during the pandemic, we have been blessed because not only have the children who first started coming stayed with us but others joined too. We like this programme because it has a mentoring character and gives young people the opportunity to serve and show their leadership skills. Last year we had a camp where 6 young people were trained as scouts and young leaders and they could immediately serve at a summer camp at Boracko Jezero. This year, due to the short school holidays, we did not organise a winter camp, but we organised a weekend in the mountains with 16 young people. We see that our young people are learning to work with each other, to accept their differences (like ethnic and social differences), and learning to serve society.

The main Royal Rangers programme happens on Saturdays, but on Wednesdays we have craft with the girls, where they can express and develop their creative side. In addition to helping their creativity, we also have time to spend in conversation and counselling. And while the girls are doing their activities the boys are also having a social activity. We see changes in their behaviour and it is obvious how much it means to them to be part of a group that encourages them to succeed in every area of life.



Indira with Royal Rangers on their winter weekend.



IT'S NOT ALL EASY

As well as the encouraging stories, there are also hard situations that this work uncovers. There are three sisters, aged 9, 11 and 14, who come from a dysfunctional family. When they started coming to Royal Rangers they lived with their grandmother; their mum and dad were taking drugs and didn't really care about them.

Towards the end of last year, the mum wanted the girls back and they went to live with her. Their dad is now abroad, and their mum continues to live quite a messy life while the girls are with her. They are struggling at school, but are regular on Saturdays, and sometimes come to the Wednesday group. The situation is not easy but their mother encourages them to come to our activities. Pray for them.

HOW DARE WE?

"How dare we" is a Novi Most principle that says: *how dare we dream dreams for young people that we are not prepared to dream for ourselves.* To hear how this has influenced our team in Jajce, and the way they work with musical young people, watch Matt's "How dare we" vlog at youtube.com/wedoadventure



Enjoying Royal Rangers' activities in Mostar.



MORE THAN LANGUAGE LESSONS

Becca talks about the influence of English in Capljina.

Since the beginning of our work in Capljina, one of the key activities we have provided for young people has been English lessons. These can be structured courses where there is an option to sit an exam at the end of the course and receive a certificate from Cambridge University. Or we also offer more informal, conversation type sessions where people can practice and improve their communication skills. Sometimes we work with small groups, sometimes one to one.

Danijel comes for help with his English homework. Despite English being his least favourite subject at school he appreciates learning in a fun way and being encouraged for small steps of progress. The smile on his face is priceless when he gets a better than expected grade at school and his efforts pay off.

But for Danijel coming to Novi Most is about so much more than learning English. It's a place where he's seen and heard. It's a place where he feels he can bring his friends but also make new friends, people he otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity to get to know. It is a place where he can learn and grow in many more ways than he thought when he arrived for his first English class.



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