

Educating to civil courage

Interview to Svetlana Broz

Q: How is your work with Gariwo Sarajevo developing?

We have reached more than 90,000 youngsters from all Balkans regions with our programs which deal with how people can behave as human being even under inhumane circumstances. Now we are developing new plans and in particular our NGO wishes to focus on educating the educators because we alone can't really reach all young people but just a part.

Q: And what are your expectations?

We plan to create a centre for civil courage from where to spread this kind of education through the teachers we train because it would be necessary to reach and extend our influence over millions people. What we expect is public support to this project.

Q: Who are the Righteous you consider as the most important nowadays for the rebuilding and reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and why?

The ones who risked their lives when human life was extremely cheap, during the war period. They are the moral heroes who should be teachers of ethics for the whole humankind.

Q: Are some of them particularly popular among young people?

Yes, in particular people know about the winners of the Dusko Kondor award which we established 3 years ago after our colleague's political assassination. We have awarded 14 people uptil now and young people have learnt to know and appreciate them.

Q: What do you personally wish to pass on to the young generations, what is your message for them?

My message is that we all have a possibility of choice also under extreme circumstances basing on our moral and knowledge. The task of my NGO is that to educate the young people to be aware of this possibility.

Q: Is it possible today to overcome the ethnical/religious divide in Bosnia or do people still define themselves according to their ethnic or religious belonging?

We have a problem with many politicians and clergymen in Bosnia. They stress the importance of ethnical and religious identity and young people nowadays are very confused because what was little important before the war, religion and ethnicity, is very very important after the war.

Q: How would you assess the results of your work over the years?

In 9 years we reached lots of people in the Balkans, who have become aware of civil courage. We reached lots of positive results therefore. For example the students of our civil courage courses have founded their NGOs and political parties. Of course though there is still much more we want to achieve.

Q: What are the major difficulties you meet in your work?

We were struck by the political killing of Dusko Kondor, one of our teachers who educated so many young people to resist negative authorities. In Bosnia there are still too many individuals and institutions who take advantage of their position to commit violations, abuses and put the other people's lives in danger. We reach thousands people and we have many enemies.

Q: Do you feel you are threatened by any violent groups?

As our friend Dusko Kondor became a target, in a way we are also threatened, but we won't give up. We want to continue Dusko's work, to create a critical mass of responsible individuals.