



Global Kids, Inc.

2013 American Youth Leadership Program – Bosnia and Herzegovina

Sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, United States Department of State

Global Kids, Inc. (GK) is a grantee of the U.S. Department of State's 2013 American Youth Leadership Program (AYLP) to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through AYLP-Bosnia, youth and adult educators from the United States will participate in a 10-month program aimed at investigating the role of the media in shaping community, national, and global issues. GK and its partners will connect 20 diverse youth and adults from New York City with their peers in Bosnia and Herzegovina in a way that demonstrates the power of peer-to-peer citizen diplomacy, the importance of intercultural understanding, and the influence of the media in conflict, peace building, and social justice. For each participant, the program involves pre-departure training, a three-week experience in Bosnia, and a follow-on project. In addition to Global Kids' program to Bosnia and Herzegovina, other AYLP exchanges are taking place in Cambodia, Paraguay, Peru, Samoa, Singapore and Malaysia, and Uganda.

Program Details

Global Kids will implement AYLP-Bosnia in partnership with Global Youth Connect, a U.S.-based human rights organization, and the Center for Peacebuilding, an organization that works with young people to nurture trust and mutual understanding in Sanski Most, Bosnia. AYLP-Bosnia will develop a cadre of youth from NYC high schools who, along with adult participants and staff, will travel to Bosnia in July 2013 to explore its recent history and contemporary issues and develop skills in media literacy, leadership, peer education, and cross-cultural communication. In collaboration with their Bosnian peers, youth participants will engage in local service-learning activities and conduct social media projects to advance dialogue and community building. The program will encourage participants to reflect on the role they can play in creating positive change through a wide range of mediums, harnessing the power of technology and social media to report and share views. Through AYLP-Bosnia, young leaders will develop the skills to become both competent citizen diplomats and insightful citizen journalists at home and abroad.

Goals and Objectives

The overarching goals of the AYLP are to:

- 1) Promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of the partner country.
- 2) Prepare youth leaders to become responsible citizens and contributing members of their communities.
- 3) Spark an interest in learning about foreign cultures among American youth.
- 4) Develop a cadre of Americans with cultural understanding who are able to advance international dialogue and compete effectively in the global economy.

Based on the broader AYLP goals and aligned with GK's mission, AYLP-Bosnia will:

- Educate American youth about the conflict in Bosnia and the efforts to rebuild peace and prosperity among ethnic groups in the region by visiting the country, discovering its sociocultural heritage, and interacting with local peers.

- Train diverse teams of youth in Bosnia and the U.S. with the skills to promote international awareness, civic participation, and peaceful conflict resolution; foster understanding on the role of the media in peacebuilding and intercultural dialogue; and develop skills in digital and social media for positive community development.
- Train U.S. and Bosnian youth workers/community members in GK's interactive methodology, which promotes youth development, positive leadership, appreciation of diversity, civic participation, global awareness, media literacy, and critical thinking.
- Further GK's mission to prepare urban youth to become global citizens and community leaders by providing them with opportunities to travel abroad and share their knowledge and experiences with their peers.

Global Kids and the Balkan Region

For over 22 years, GK has pioneered the integration of global education, youth development, and civic participation to develop informed and engaged youth leaders from underserved communities. GK youth develop the skills and knowledge they need to promote democratic values, intercultural understanding, citizen diplomacy, and global competency in our rapidly changing world. Despite attending many low-performing schools situated in economically challenged neighborhoods, through their participation in GK, these youth become excited about world affairs, as well as the important role of the United States in the international arena.

GK has chosen to focus its program on Bosnia and Herzegovina because it serves as a valuable case study for youth to explore the impact of war and peacebuilding after ethnic conflict, the importance of diplomacy and U.S. leadership in brokering peace agreements, and the role of the media in shaping global and local perceptions. Although 17 years have passed since the end of war in Bosnia, the country remains ethnically divided, politically stalled, and economically depressed. These challenges prevail not only in Bosnia but throughout the globe, and through this program, a corps of American and Bosnian youth will become equipped with the knowledge, skills, and cross-cultural perspective to understand and act collectively on these issues.

GK has direct experience working with young people affected by conflict, particularly in the Balkans. From 1996 to 2002, GK youth leaders traveled to Croatia to conduct peer education workshops with displaced and local Croatian, Bosnian, and Serbian youth in community centers and refugee camps. Further, through GK-led professional development workshops and curriculum support on peacebuilding, democracy, youth empowerment, and civic engagement, Croatian youth workers began to shift from psychosocial post-war counseling to more holistic youth development.

Program Timeline:

- December 2012: AYLP-Bosnia applications published and recruitment begins
- January-February 2013: Applications received; participants interviewed and selected
- March-June 2013: Training sessions, workshop development, and trip preparation
- Late June-July 2013: Travel to Bosnia and Herzegovina
- August 2013: Program debrief and sharing of experiences with home and school communities
- September-December 2013: Participants' follow-on projects planned and implemented

For more information about the AYLP- Bosnia and Herzegovina program please contact Associate Director of Programs, Tene Howard and Assistant Director of Programs, Angela Marshall at aylp@globalkids.org.