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## Eco-Centre|Eko Centar - Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013 summer global internship

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with our director Ada...



This sophomore summer I went to Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina for my environmental studies internship through the Center for Global Education. I was assigned the internship site Eko Centar in Blagaj, a beautiful town near Mostar. First of all, I was really excited that I got accepted into this program. I've heard so many good things about it before I applied for it. Since this program was getting increasingly competitive every year, I felt exceedingly fortunate that I stood out as nine of the interns. Luckily, not only was I assigned an internship site that was related to my major but also was I able to work with another environmental studies major, Yao Yang, from CSBSU.



# visit eco-centre | eko centar

Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013 Summer Internship  
Visual Project of Chendan Yan

Now after seven years, the bar area is protected very nicely by all the pomegranate trees from sunlight and rainfall. Eko Centar has become a very nice gathering place for the local community. Our coworkers use the abundant pomegranate fruit every year to make juice concentrate to serve the guests at the Eko Centar.



Camping in Stolac



FOUR NEW BORN KITTENS!!



Kravice Waterfall



Now two months have gone by in a blink of an eye and I'm back to Shanghai, I still couldn't believe how amazing my experience in BiH was. Sometimes when I wake up in the morning, I feel I can still jump out of the bus instantly and grab the 7:45 bus heading to Blagaj with Yao. We would get off the bus a few bus stops earlier and get fresh chocolate or cherry pastries from the local bakery. Then we would walk twenty minutes along the Buna River to Eko Centar, greeting local people on our way and picking fresh cherries from the tree. Once we got there, we opened the bar, unlocked the multimedia center, the workroom and prepared food for the shepherd dogs (Dolly and Box) and Herzegovinian donkeys. Simply sitting on the bench and looking around at the Eko Centar was an enjoyment for a kid growing up with the hustle and bustle of the Chinese cities like me.



Dolly



Mai Choua Yang  
Environ Studies - Japanese  
Class of 2014

Hannah Peine  
Nursing  
Class of 2014

Chendan Yan  
Environ Studies - Philosophy  
Class of 2015

where you can: see different indigenous animals, taste homemade beverages and learn about the eco system in Blagaj, and a lot more....

Before our arrival in Mostar, Sanja, our local coordinator who was a CSBSU graduate, told us that simply our existence there would really make a difference to the local community. At that time, I could not believe that I as an ordinary individual could have such a big influence to a foreign town where people speak a foreign language that I barely understood. When we were making the poster for the Eko Centar and adding funny words and pictures, I saw our coworker Sanel's face full of smiles and surprise. He was intrigued by every little detail on the poster and laughed at every single thing. Our coworker would show every guest this poster we made and bragged about how wonderful his two Asian volunteers were.



WE ROCK!

At the end I realized that it wasn't about power of the individual but about the universal goodness in human that is beyond any form of media for communication. Because regardless of where we are from and what we speak, we share the ability to love, understand, and appreciate. What really amazed me was that we became so close to the coworkers and volunteers even though we could barely understand each other. And ironically, we both got most attached to Almir, a senior employee at the Eko Centar who spoke no English at all.

The Eko Centar of Blagaj was inaugurated in 2007 with the aim of contributing to nature conservation and increasing environmental awareness. It is a project under the non-profit organization Novi Val. Nine years after it was established, the youth club Novi Val started the project entitled "Eco development in rural areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia." Within this project, Novi Val is carrying out activities through several programs: protection of the white vultures, development of cattle farming, protection of the indigenous Tornjak dog species, protection of the Velez Pramenka sheep, preservation of biodiversity, protection of cultural and historical monuments of Blagaj, as well as educational and eco tourism programs.



Our view from the apartment



The Mostar old bridge at night



GREEN VULTURES



LOCAL FOOD MARKET IN BLAGAJ

The location before the Eko Centar was built used to be a karstic river valley abandoned as a dumpsite. Around seven years ago, Ada and ten other volunteers started building the Centar a little by little from hand, piling up bricks and planting pomegranate trees for the bar area. They built the small bar, the tables and the benches, the donkey stable and the resting space for shepherd dogs.



Traditional Bosnian Food

