



**TRUST-BUILDING FOR
SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND
RECONCILIATION HAS
TO START IN SCHOOLS.**



WHO WE ARE

Nansen Dialogue Centre (NDC) Mostar is an independent non-governmental organisation that encourages democratic practices and promotes dialogue among different ethnic groups as a tool for prevention and resolution of conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Founded after the war by citizens striving to rebuild the social fabric of their city, NDC Mostar began in 1995 through an educational programme of the Nansen Academy in Lillehammer, Norway. We are registered as an independent local organisation since 2001 and remain a member of the regional Nansen Dialogue Network.

We work in a particularly complex political environment, highly influenced by prejudiced media rhetoric. Our work is mainly focused on the Herzegovina region of the country, and especially those communities, which are marked by the “two schools under one roof” phenomenon, the most visible symbol of ethnically divided schooling system in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

BY CREATING SPACES FOR DIALOGUE, BUILDING TRUST AND PROMOTING ACCEPTANCE OF DIVERSITY, NDC MOSTAR ENDEAVORS TO BE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTOR TO PEACE, RECONCILIATION AND SOCIAL COHESION PROCESSES AMONG SCHOOLS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN B&H.

By creating spaces for dialogue, building trust and promoting acceptance of diversity, NDC Mostar endeavors to be a significant contributor to peace, reconciliation and social cohesion processes among schools and local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



WHAT WE DO

We adopted a 4-year Strategic Plan in 2018 after extensive interviews and consultations with partners, donors and stakeholders (school directors, teachers, government representatives and students). The Strategy builds on our track record and enables us to translate our vision into practice through these objectives:

- Fostering trust and constructive relationships between students, parents, teachers and school officials of different ethnicities through integrated education programmes in primary/secondary schools
- Enhancing social cohesion through implementing jointly prioritised community projects. NDC Mostar works in partnership with and in accordance with the needs of local communities
- Enabling policy dialogue on integrated education between relevant authorities and educational institutions



INTEGRATED EDUCATION

Our integrated education programme addresses the lack of opportunities for meaningful interaction between pupils of different ethnic backgrounds. It is based on two complementary components: the Nansen Model of Education, and Peace Education, which have been designed according to the specificities of the communities in which we work. We implement our Peace Education programme in communities that are primarily mono-ethnic but have minority groups. These activities rely on innovative teaching methods related to reconciliation and dialogue. They help in combating stereotypes and equipping pupils with the knowledge and skills required to be active citizens. In communities marked by the “two schools under one roof” phenomenon, we are creating opportunities for integrated education through our Nansen Model of Education. This model brings together pupils and students who would not otherwise have the chance to interact and learn with and from one another. They build their critical thinking and communication skills as well as their understanding of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity.

THROUGH THIS PROGRAMME, SCHOOL CHILDREN DEVELOP INTERCULTURAL AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS WHILE TEACHERS ARE SUPPORTED IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHEN THEIR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION SKILLS.

All our education activities are implemented jointly with local teachers and become an integral part of the participating schools. Our long-term school partners in Mostar, Stolac and Prozor-Rama report a great appreciation for the pedagogical quality of our programmes and their contribution to a positive school environment.





SOCIAL COHESION


While building trust and tolerance has to start in schools, we know that lasting peace can only be sustained if local communities enjoy social cohesion and work together towards a shared future. This is why our programmes enable students and their families, teachers and other community members to take common action around shared priorities, which often include:

- Refurbishing school infrastructure
- Rehabilitating community spaces
- Supporting sport and cultural activities started by youth

These activities create an enabling environment for dialogue by ensuring that entire communities experience the benefits that diversity and joint work can bring.

OUR PROGRAMMES ENABLE STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES, TEACHERS AND OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO TAKE COMMON ACTION AROUND SHARED PRIORITIES.





NDC MOSTAR AIMS TO CONTRIBUTE TO REFORMS TO THE EDUCATION SYSTEM SINCE THESE ARE A PRECONDITION FOR PEACEFUL DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT AND BETTER PEDAGOGICAL OUTCOMES.

POLICY DIALOGUE

To overcome ongoing divisions and improve below average student results, it is vital to establish open policy dialogue on integrated education between relevant authorities and educational institutions at all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, repeated unsuccessful reform efforts show that there is no simple solution. We are convinced that overcoming these challenges requires an incremental dialogue process with broad participation of diverse actors (teachers, administrators, officials, parents and communities) and impartial facilitators with accepted credibility and expertise.

We have steadily built our expertise in integrated and peace education and have created strong relationships with educational stakeholders and relevant institutions. Since our work shows that progressive change is possible and meaningful, we will share our experience and results with key actors and decision-makers and bring them together jointly to identify long-term and systemic solutions. Our field experience, strong partnerships, technical expertise and objective approach will inform policy briefs and shape advocacy actions with civil society partners, academia and think-tanks.



HOW WE WORK

Our facilities provide a neutral and open space where different actors can meet face-to-face in truthful and honest communication. Our impartial and constructive approach helps us forge long-term partnerships based on trust and expertise with diverse local and international stakeholders.

With key values of long-term commitment, impartiality and integrity, NDC Mostar believes that dialogue is the most suitable approach to empower people who live in conflict situations. As a team, we strive to embody the values of tolerance and diversity and we are proud to put our mediation and education background in service to communities that we are part of.

WITH KEY VALUES OF LONG-TERM COMMITMENT, IMPARTIALITY AND INTEGRITY, NDC MOSTAR BELIEVES THAT DIALOGUE IS THE MOST SUITABLE APPROACH TO EMPOWER PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS.





WHAT WE HAVE ALREADY ACHIEVED

To contribute to peaceful and democratic development, NDC Mostar has already managed to:

- Develop and successfully implement unique curricula for integrated education through weekly extracurricular classes in 10 schools in Herzegovina Neretva Canton
- Coach students, teachers and parents in implementing joint activities in schools and communities
- Successfully implement over 40 projects in the last 3 years involving several thousand primary and secondary students, teachers, school directors and local authorities
- Establish itself as a trusted peacebuilding actor, through establishing strong relationships with local actors. Our constructive and even-handed approach to engaging diverse education stakeholders resulted in formal recognition through a memorandum of cooperation with the Cantonal Ministry of Education

We're planning to continue our long-term programs in Herzegovina and to expand them to Central Bosnia and the entity of Republika Srpska.



HOW YOU CAN BENEFIT FROM OUR WORK

Students

NDC Mostar programmes provide you with the space to develop your creativity and critical thinking skills as well as with the opportunity to create new friendships and learn from interactive extracurricular activities such as video production, ecology or IT as well as study trips and international exchanges. Our classes and activities will support you to feel more confident and help you access interesting mobility and creative opportunities.

Teachers and schools

NDC Mostar offers you professional development in multicultural education, inclusion and reducing biases. This opens the doors for your further professional growth and helps you to create appropriate and customized materials and approaches for your students. Our programmes also benefit participating schools more broadly since they come with opportunities to upgrade infrastructure, IT equipment and learning materials including establishing Nansen classrooms.

HOW YOU CAN BENEFIT FROM OUR WORK

Parents

We provide your children engaging extracurricular classes that allow them to learn with growing autonomy. Our classes promote inclusive, versatile and critical communication and thinking. The pedagogical quality of our programmes will benefit your children's personal development and boost their chances to succeed in school and professionally. Parents additionally have the opportunity to attend workshops to improve their communication skills and learn about what their children have learned.



Local communities

Our work in schools helps your youngest generation to develop new skills while our work outside of schools contributes tangibly to local development through the rehabilitation of community spaces or the organisation of youth-led sports and cultural activities. You can count on NDC Mostar to be local and reliable partners that will work with you for the long-term.



TESTIMONIALS

I find the NDC team as an enormous support in non-formal education of our teachers and students. This group of enthusiastic, brave and open-minded people has great insight into all relevant issues and problems of our educational system and they have struggled in a caring and honest way to fit in and to help. I was honoured to work with them, first as a teacher visiting Norway, later as a teacher advisor organizing seminars and workshops. I was also given the opportunity to unite with my colleagues from other pedagogical institutes and Ministry of Education in the same mission-to empower our young ones to recognize and prevent terrorism and radicalism. And not to mention they can always make a joyful atmosphere.

Marija Čavar, teacher advisor at Mostar Department of Education

Peace education is very important to us because it is a process that will encourage us to have the best possible relationship. Our goal is to teach our students skills which will help them overcome everyday life challenges, as well as to improve their attitudes, knowledge and peacebuilding skills.

Dijana Miličević, Mostar Construction High-School teacher

This is a fantastic project, in my opinion. Students from “two schools under one roof” can finally get to know each other, which was previously impossible due to the current political situation. The program covered topics critical to understanding “others and different”. We discussed stereotypes, peaceful conflict resolution, and other topics. More specifically, everything that informal education has to offer. Unfortunately, the formal education does not allow us to do so because we are divided, not only physically, but also in all other ways.

Seid Subašić, Mostar High-School of Mechanical Engineering and Traffic student

NDC has been a long-term partner of the Ministry of Education and we appreciate everything they do for our students and teachers. NDC has successfully implemented a number of projects in all schools where the problem of “two schools under one roof” is presented. It’s great honor for me to attend the opening of Nansen classrooms throughout Herzegovina, which will be a place for our children to socialize and work to promote peace and a common future for all.

Rašid Hadžović, Minister of Education of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton



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