



News

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NEWS

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Three-weeks program in September 4-22, 2017

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Three graduate students in the Graduate Program in Japanese Language Pedagogy travelled to Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), a country in Southeast Europe, to teach Japanese language and culture in September 2017. In BiH, there are many people who are interested in Japanese language and culture (especially popular culture such as Anime!). The University of Sarajevo and Japan Embassy in Sarajevo requested Sophia to offer Bosnians with the opportunity to understand better about Japan.



Since Sophia University and the University of Sarajevo signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2015, the two institutions have been actively collaborating. Already in 2014, a group of Sophian students learning in the Department of Education visited BiH and discussed with Bosnian students issues of their common concern - “living together.” In spring of 2016, Dr Larisa Kasumagic-Kafedzic, an associate professor of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Sarajevo, was invited to teach intercultural education at Sophia.



She participated in a major symposium at Sophia discussing the past, present and future of BiH. At the conference room, an exhibition was held to present art works of students of the University of East Sarajevo and a Bosnian artist Muha whose work was inspired by Japanese classics. In 2016, Sophia sent the first batch of graduate students of the Japanese language Pedagogy course to teach Japanese in BiH. They were sent within the framework of Sophia’s research scheme that encourages innovation in teaching.

Three graduate students were indeed quite innovative. They designed curriculum that took full consideration of interests and needs of learners as well as their living contexts. They offered 6-level courses this year. As a unique attempt, they offered two beginners’ courses, one where participants learnt Hiragana which is a Japanese letter system and the other where they did not. Those who are interested in only basic oral communication could choose the latter. In total, some 80 participants benefited the three-week program. The program was evaluated by professor Koyanagi of Japanese Language Pedagogy and professor Komatsu of the Department of Education at Sophia. Participants of the program appreciated the opportunity to learn Japanese language and culture, and expressed their interest to



continue learning. They hoped that Bosnian universities would offer a degree program in Japanese language and culture in future.

During their stay in BiH, these students participated and presented their teaching methods in a seminar at the Faculty of Philosophy that discussed the integration of intercultural learning in language teaching. Development of intercultural understanding is indeed what Sophia promotes – as expressed in its motto “Men and Women for Others, with Others.” Respecting learners’ diverse backgrounds when teaching Japanese language is indeed a reflection of this spirit.

In order to reach out to the residents of BiH in a wider area, three students also organized “Japan Day” event at the University of East Sarajevo located in Republika Srpska to introduce basic Japanese language and cultural activities. The room where the full-day event took place was fully packed with some 50 students and faculties of the University.

Sophia continues to assist the development of Japanese language program in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the years to come.



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