

KOSOVO

GENERAL DIRECTOR OF RADIO AND TELEVISION OF KOSOVO (RTK), MR. AHMETXHEKAJ, ON OPENING OF REGIONAL OFFICE OF RTK IN MITROVICA

On March 12, 2023, the Regional Office of Radio and Television of Kosovo (RTK) was opened in Mitrovica, the second branch office in the country after the first one in Prizren. The General Director of RTK, Shkumbin Ahmetxhekaj, stated on this occasion that the inauguration of the office in Mitrovica is a very important step for improving our access and collecting quick information about the events of different ethnic communities. He stated:

"This is an important day for RTK because after Prizren, we have reached the day we have been waiting for a long time- the opening of our regional office in Mitrovica. This office is of particular importance, also since the region covers a great ethnic and cultural diversity of Kosovo. Therefore, it is important for the public broadcaster to be as close as

possible to the citizens with all developments, in a political, social and cultural way."

Mr. Ahmetxhekaj highly appreciates the continuous assistance that JICA and the Government of Japan have given to RTK and Kosovo. He emphasized that it was important for the partnership between RTK and JICA to continue.

"Of course, this day would not be possible if we did not have our partners from JICA who have continuously helped us, not only in this project, but ever since the establishment of Radio and Television of Kosovo in 2000. This is the culmination of what we see as important for the further expansion in the regions of Kosovo"

"Besides the opening of the office, JICA has also helped during the last three years with staff training, enabling journalists, pro-

duction engineers and all other directions in RTK to have training in Japan. This is a proof that our partnership with JICA is exceptional and, as such, I really hope it will continue", said Ahmetxhekaj.

The staff consisting of journalists, cameramen and editors, who will be a part of this office, will cover the entire region of Mitrovica, including the municipalities of Skenderaj, Vushtri, Mitrovica Jugore, Mitrovica Veriore, Leposaviq, Zubin Potok and Zveçan.

JICA and RTK partnership started from 2015 to 2018, with the RTK Capacity Development Project implemented as Phase 1. The project supported capacity building of staff members and renovation of RTK equipment needed for better implementation of programs.

This cooperation continued in Phase 2. JICA builds RTK capacity by establishing Regional Offices in Prizren and Mitrovica, developing the internal criteria for fair and unbiased program production and the effective utilization of the digital archive system.



RTK General Manager SHkumbin Ahmetxhekaj



RTK Studio, Mitrovica Branch Office



"Project for Modernization of Public Urban Transport in the City of Belgrade", page 2



Opening ceremony for "Competitiveness and Quality Management" in BiH, page 3



Counterpart training organized in Japan, page 5



Interview with President of JUDO Federation of BiH, page 6

WORKSHOP ORGANIZED BY “PROJECT FOR MODERNIZATION OF PUBLIC URBAN TRANSPORT IN THE CITY OF BELGRADE” AT AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN BELGRADE

On February 13, the project team of “Project for Modernization of Public Urban Transport in the City of Belgrade” conducted a workshop for elementary school pupils on the importance of public transportation with a board game. Through the game, pupils learned the importance and efficiency of public transportation in the society. The project team also organized similar workshops in March at other schools in Belgrade.

Promod: <https://www.jica.go.jp/Resource/project/english/serbia/006/index.html>

Project for Modernization of Public Urban Transport in the City of Belgrade | Technical Cooperation Projects | JICA



Workshop for the elementary school pupils

JICA CHAIR - VOICE OF THE COUNTERPART

At the beginning of 2022, the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade joined the Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA) initiative to participate in a series of lectures about the modernization of Japan that were perceived as very beneficial to our students. In this way, our fruitful collaboration began straight after the long period of isolation in

the whole world caused by the pandemic.

During the past year, several online lectures were given by renowned professors from Japan, including Dr. Takahara Akio (JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute), Prof. Matsuda Koichiro (from Rikkyo University), Prof. Aizawa Nobuhiro (Kyushu University), and Prof. Shiraishi Takashi (GRIPS:National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies). The topics were related to modern Japanese history, politics, economy, international relations, and all these different subjects were brought closer to our students in Serbia, who study, not only the Japanese language, but also the culture, history and literature of Japan. In addition, our students had a rare chance to have a discussion with the distinguished professors on the significance of Meiji Revolution, the legacies of Edo period, the beginning of Westernization in Japan, the concept of democracy, the Japanese Constitution and much more.

JICA Chair program has opened a wide source of information, perspectives, learning material and connections for the students of Japanese language and culture in Serbia. As faculty members, we are especially grateful for this opportunity and looking forward to developing this successful cooperation furthermore.



Associate professor Divna Trickovic, PhD
Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade



Teaching assistant Vesna Kuraica, MA
Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade

SMALL SCALE FOLLOW-UP HAND-OVER OF EQUIPMENT

On February 22, the hand-over ceremony for the Small Follow-up Project (SFU) “Capacity development and technical assistance



Mr. Ueki, handing over the equipment to the Principal of the Primary School

for educational system in the field of raising awareness about natural disasters in Bosnia and Herzegovina” was organized at the Primary School (PS) “Alija Nametak” in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This Project was initiated by Mr. Bakir KRAJINOVIC from Hydro-meteorological Institute of Federation of BiH, and the President of JICA Alumni Association in BiH. In 2021, JICA supported 5 primary schools in BiH, and this year PS “Alija Nametak” in Sarajevo and PS “Soko”, in Grbavica were selected to receive the equipment.

Primary schools and Meteorological society in Bosnia and Herzegovina have received meteorological station, geographical wall maps, globes and educative posters. In addition, educative workshops were organized in targeted schools for teachers.

The hand-over ceremony was attended by Ms. Naida HOTAMUMINOVIĆ, Minister of Education of Canton Sarajevo, Ms. Nerminka HADŽIĆ, Principal of the PS “Alija Nametak” together with teachers and pupils, Mr. Bakir KRAJINOVIC, President of JICA Alumni BiH, Mr. Masahiro UEKI, Chief Representative of JICA Balkan Office and other esteemed guests.

The purpose of the project is to raise awareness of the pupils about the climate change and natural disasters and that pupils learn in a fun and interactive way about disaster risk reduction together with their teachers.

OPENING CEREMONY FOR “COMPETITIVENESS AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT” IN BIH

On May 11, the opening ceremony of the “Competitiveness and Quality Management of SMEs in Bosnia and Herzegovina” for managers and entrepreneurs of SMEs was held in Sarajevo, at the School of Economics and Business (SEBS), University of Sarajevo. The course is planned to be conducted from May 12 to July 9, 2023, with a series of lectures, namely ‘Management in Japan’, ‘Total Quality Management’, ‘Digital Transformation in Business’ and others.

The teaching team consists of highly qualified Japanese professors, trainers from Bulgarian University of National and World Economy (UNWE), who underwent specialization in Japan, as well as lecturers from the SEBS, with extensive practical experience. With this course, JICA assists managers of SMEs and entrepreneurs who are interested in Japanese business management, to take their active role in contributing economy of BiH and jobs creation in the constantly changing business environment.



Opening ceremony at the University of Sarajevo

In line with the Japanese Government Policy Towards Western Balkans “The Western Balkan Cooperation Initiative”, in this program, JICA works together with European Cooperating partners, namely the University

of National and World Economy of Bulgaria (UNWE), with funding support by the Bulgarian Development Aid (BDA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

NORTH MACEDONIA

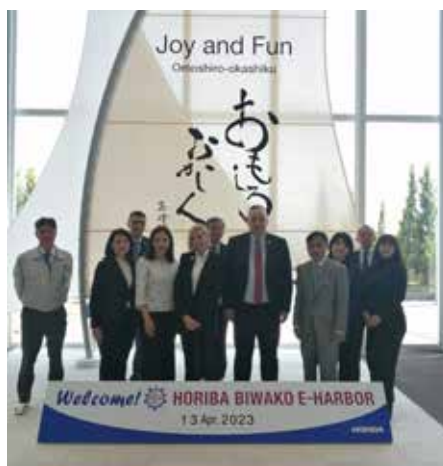
COUNTRY FOCUS TRAINING PROGRAM ON QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS ORGANIZED IN JAPAN

From 9 to 27 April, Country focus training course “Quality Management and Competitiveness” was organized in Japan. Five professors of Faculty of Economy, University of Ss Cyril and Methodius from Skopje, who are teaching at the Professional Business course in Japanese Management since 2019, were invited to participate in this program.

From 9 to 27 April, Country focus training course “Quality Management and Competitiveness” was organized in Japan. Five professors of Faculty of Economy, University of Ss Cyril and Methodius from Skopje, who are teaching at the Professional Business course in Japanese Management since 2019, were invited to participate in this program.

During 17-day training course, the participants visited 24 companies in Kansai area (Hikone, Omihachiman, Otsu and Kyoto), Tokyo and Nagasaki. The companies organized tours of their facilities with an aim to introduce their manufacturing and sales to the training participants, after which, they discussed about the

characteristics of management, HR and marketing that they had been implementing. After the training course, the professors will include the examples and case studies into their lectures to the fourth generation of Professional Japanese Business Course “Quality Management and Competitiveness”.



At Horiba Biwako in Otsu

Doris Lukesevic, Program Officer, JICA Balkan Office:

As a Program Officer in charge of KCCP and Country-focused training courses for North Macedonia at JICA Balkan Office, I accompanied the participants to this training course and had a chance to experience first-hand how one training is organized by JICA domestic office, implementing party and also join the site visits. It was a unique opportunity to visit renowned manufacturing companies started more than 150 years ago as small family businesses, as well as large corporations and tourism associations, in three Japanese regions (Kansai, Kanto and Kyushu), also having a chance to compare their management style, marketing and HR strategies. I hope that the professors will share their knowledge and experience from this training course with their students and colleagues and enrich the content of the Professional business course for the future generations.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

COUNTRY FOCUS TRAINING PROGRAM FOR PROJECT FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN SARAJEVO HELD IN JAPAN IN MAY

From May 15 to 26, JICA organized country focus training program in Japan for seven participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a part of the project activity “Project for Formulation of Sarajevo Public Transport Management and Operation Capacity Development Plan”. Participants were from different counterparts’ organization, such as Ministry of Transport of the Canton Sarajevo, the Public Transport Corporation of Sarajevo Canton (GRAS), Centrotrans company, Faculty of Traffic and Communications.

The goal of this year’s training program

in Japan was that participants learn and understand the overall flow of public transport policy and management and its real implementation in Japan.

They had an opportunity to visit Takamatsu city, which is like Sarajevo, considering the population and area of the city, Sapporo with long history of tram transportation, and Tokyo as incredible metropolitan city with great infrastructure and spectacular model share of public transport.

Participants were very curious to learn more about the strategy planning and devel-

opment of public transport, management of bus transportation and payment with the IC cards, public transportation, and urban mobility, “park and ride” system and promotion of the utilization of public transportation in Japan.

Petrovic Ana, Program Officer, JICA Balkan Office:

It was a great opportunity to visit three different parts of Japan, Shikoku, Hokkaido and Tokyo and learn about their difference and uniqueness. Tokyo is a vast city with huge population that mainly use well organized and planned public transportation with new vehicles and high-end technology while in smaller cities focus is mainly on good and regular maintenance of vehicles and station although they are not brand new. Nevertheless, common for all of them is great information system and well-directed orientation towards the user of public transport services as well as dedication to disabled people and their easy use and access of public transportation.



Site visit

COUNTERPART TRAINING FOR PROJECT FOR DIVJAKA KARAVASTA NATIONAL PARK ORGANIZED IN JAPAN

From May 22 to June 4, the counterpart training was held in Japan as a part of the Project for Capacity Building for Improving Ecosystem-Based Management on Divjake-Karavasta National Park (DKNP) in Albania. The representatives of the National Agency for Protected Areas (NAPA), Regional Agencies for Protected Areas Fier, Shkoder, Lezhe, the Ministry of Environment as well as representative Fier Prefecture had a chance to acquire their technical knowledge, obtain information and ideas to improve ongoing Project and to rethink about the future steps after the project completion.

Hokkaido was a great choice for experiencing and seeing various types of protected areas such as wetland, lake, tidal flat, National Park, Ramsar Site. The participants had a chance to visit the Sorabetsu Plain area that is under Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Due to similar undergone formation process and coastal dune

forest as in DKNP in Albania it was very fruitful experience. The visit to Kushiro Shitsugen National Park, the largest wetland in Japan which serves as habitat for many wild animals including red-crowned cranes, highlighted importance of the nature preservation and restoration of the wetlands.

Ms. Natasa Bogojevic, Program Officer, JICA Balkan Office:

It is amazing how many stakeholders are included in nature and biodiversity conservation in Japan. For example, 132 people are involved in Kushiro Marche Restoration Council. They are all working on restoration of the river shape in its original meandric shape as well as on the forest restoration by planting! Figures of the numerous relevant parties are impressive and there is an impression that the voice of every citizen is embedded in implemented activities.



Obihiro Forest

WESTERN BALKANS

STRENGTHENING AND EXPANDING THE MENTORING SERVICE FOR SMES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS INVITATION PROGRAM HELD IN JAPAN

JICA continues to support Western Balkan countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) in maintaining and strengthening mentoring service for small and medium enterprises with an Invitation Program to Japan, which was organized from May 15 to 27, this year.

Participants were officers from counterpart institutions, who are providing mentoring service in above mentioned countries, aiming to expand their knowledge and practice by following Japanese model of support to small and medium enterprises (SME).

In that regard, participants had an opportunity to learn more about SME support that Japan, provides through different institutions at local and national level such as Chamber of Commerce in Hachioji, Nagano and Tokyo, Tochigi Yorozu Centre, Japan Finance Corporation, Adachi City government etc. To collect more information from the users of SME support, the group visited few companies and discussed with the owners and employees who shared their experience of developing and leading company, overcoming challenges and the support provided by Japanese

institutions.

In the feedback session with the representatives of JICA Headquarter, participants shared their impressions how important it was to have a complete system of support to SMEs on state, prefectural and local level. Finally, participants concluded that even though the system of support in Western Balkan countries is different from the one in Japan, some good examples of Japanese model can be applied.

“So much can be learned from Japan, the culture that fascinates you with its achievements and kind and committed people, at every step. I had the opportunity to see in practice how the KAIZEN, Japanese business philosophy of constant improvement is applied in all segments of everyday life, which is really an amazing experience for me”. -Sonja Skarep, Project Assistant.



Site visit for the representatives of counterpart institutions

VOICE OF THE COUNTERPART: INTERVIEW WITH MR. CRNOGORAC, PRESIDENT OF JUDO FEDERATION OF BIH

In May 2023 JICA Balkan dispatched for the second time Mr. NISHIMAKI Yuto, Japanese volunteer in Judo, to Bosnia and Herzegovina. On that occasion, we interviewed Mr. Branslav Brane Crnogorac, the President of Judo Federation BiH and BiH Judo National team selector.

How did you start with Judo sport and why?

Our Judo club was watching the movie „The Saga about Judo” (Sanshiro Sugata). It is a story about the founder of modern Judo and the way he developed Judo. In 1967, that was the first movie of Kurosawa. At that time, I was attending Judo school, but that movie motivated me to continue. Judo is my great love.

What does Judo teach us?

Judo teaches us not only defense and attack, but also how to get up after an attack. Judo is full of benefits, teaching us about love, forgiveness, dedication, modesty, friendship, respect, sincerity, self-confidence, kindness. That's very important for children, for instance. It is good for building self-confidence.

I would like to tell you one story about the origins of judo, which has been instilled in my memory. It is the story about a physician who lived in China and learned a skillful bare-handed fight, called Tess. On one occasion, he watched a mountain storm break a thick century-old oak tree. He noticed a gentle thin willow, bending supple, successfully resisting centuries-old gusts of wind.

Then he conceived the personal principle of bare-handed combat or the principle of permissiveness *yu* which teaches that when the enemy is pulling us, we must push back and never resist brute force. Judo is really a mental training of the spirit.

What is the attitude towards Judo as a sport today in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

It is the most successful Olympic sport in BiH. Although the sports are highly valued, there is still a lot more that state can do for Judo and other sports. However, the talents do not have good conditions for practice and are not adequately supported. Their results exceed expectations when compared to the conditions. If you look at

the Wall of Fame at the Olympic Committee, 7 out of 12 medals belong to Judo athletes.

What are your future plans for judo promotion?

We promote Judo in schools and organize the world championships. We had both the World and the European Championships in 2022 and 3 European Cups. I received the Order of the Rising Sun from the Emperor of Japan through the Government of Japan. All the awards that I won, do not belong only to me, but to all my associates and athletes. Among them, I would like to emphasize two athletes Amel Mekić, European Champion for Seniors in 2011 and Larisa Cerić, vice-champion of the world for seniors.

What are the impressions of Judo athletes in BiH during the visit of Judo volunteers from Japan?

Through these trainings our athletes gain new knowledge and experience from the Japanese experts that will help them on their development path and during competitions on the Judo scene, especially at international Judo competitions.



Larisa Cerić (European champion ship Judo 2019 silver, BiH), Yuto Nishimaki (Judo JICA Volunteer), Mr. Branslav Brane Crnogorac, (President of JUDO Federation of BiH)

VOICE OF THE COUNTERPART: JOCV ACTIVITIES IN CHILD'S HEART

Charity organization "Decije srce" (Child's Heart) was founded 22 years ago with an aim to bring back smiles to children and persons with disabilities, as well as their caregivers in Serbia and Montenegro, back then. "Decije srce" involved professionals who educated volunteers, pupils, students and others who wanted to help people. Today, we grew into an organization which supports 1,200 families which takes care of children and persons with disabilities on daily basis. We have invented tools for assessment of functionality of children with disabilities which are now used as official tools in the social welfare; we created didactic material and manuals for the course attendees. Re-

public Institute for Social Welfare accredited 7 programs for education of staff who work with children and adults with disabilities.

Cooperation with JICA began in 2019 with an aim to improve the work of the organization "Decije srce" in terms of internal work organization and marketing. First JICA volunteer helped us overcome the cultural gap between Serbian and Japanese people. Now, with the new volunteer Toshi (Mr. Arai), we create operational and functional plans to establish better cooperation with organizations in Japan which support children and persons with disabilities and to initiate exchange and friendship between people in Serbia and Japan. Toshi has recognized our faults and

potentials and have started creating new activities. Together, we introduced activities at cafe and working center „Zvuci srca“, which employs persons with disabilities, such as organization of gatherings of employees of Japanese companies at our cafe and preparation of website in Japanese language.

We hope to accomplish some of our plans during Toshi's stay in Serbia and raise awareness that children and persons with disabilities want to make friends, travel and enjoy life like everyone else in the world.

*Author: Mr. Goran Rojević,
Director of organization "Decije srce"*



At the café "Zvuci srca" with JICA staff, volunteer and visitors from Japanese school in Switzerland

FAREWELL MESSAGE BY MS. TERASAWA AKIKO

Hello! I am Akiko Terasawa. I have been staying in Serbia for about 2 years, and I am leaving for Japan in August. I have worked at Vojvodina development agency in Novi Sad. My volunteer activities consist of improving the 5S system of food companies, which is originally a Japanese system to increase production efficiency and, also engaging in the project of exporting Serbian premium food products to the Japanese market. My job is checking if Serbian products meet Japanese food sanitation standards. Finally, on June 8, we did the final event of my activity "Vojvodina premium food for Japan" where we invited the Japanese community to taste amazing products produced in Vojvodina. Regarding my impressions of Serbia, I was really surprised to find that Serbian people are always helpful and friendly. I really appreciate all Serbians who made me feel at home here. Dovidjenja!



JOCV Terasawa at "Vojvodina premium food for Japan" event

INTRODUCTION OF MR. KATO SHINICHIRO, EXPERT ON SME PROJECT

Dobar dan!

My name is Shinichiro Kato. One year has passed since I came to Serbia from Miyazaki, Japan, with my family. This is our first time to be in Serbia and first time to stay in Europe. We have enjoyed staying here because of hospitality of people, rich culture, and delicious food.

Previously, I have worked in Japan, South-east Asia, Middle east, and Africa more than twenty years as an expert and an adviser in the field of international cooperation. I specialized in Industrial human resource development, small and medium enterprises development, and regional cooperation.

In Serbia, I have been engaged in JICA Technical Cooperation Project "Strengthening and Expanding the Mentoring Service for Small and Medium Enterprises in the Western Balkans" as JICA Expert for Regional Cooperation Enhancement since June 2022. This cooperation aims to establish the mentoring service (management guidance services) implementation structure in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and North Macedonia and to strengthen the regional cooperation for improving the competitiveness (management and production capabilities) of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in each country.

There are a lot of challenges to achieve the goal of this mentoring cooperation. However, I believe we could overcome those challenges together with all parties in each country with our joint efforts.



Mr. KATO Shinichiro