

CROATIA

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They accept international volunteers as well. I think support from foreign countries to humanitarian institutions like Suncokret and

Nexus is important in times of economic crisis in Croatia itself. The existence of these organizations and peace organizations like AWCC is necessary for development and maintenance of civil society and democracy in Croatia. Merely their existence doesn't mean much, but people need to act together for renewing their society. People tend to get easy parts like fashions from outside countries but don't know how to deal with essential part. I know this because it happened in my country, and I realized that moral decadence and ignorance are the main enemies of civil society. Economic development is important but only with moral development.

As I mentioned above, I visited one hotel for displaced people. They are Croats from a town called Vukovar. There is no major war in Croatia, where one-third of the territory has been occupied by Croatian Serbs with the help of Serbia. In coastal towns like Zadar and Sibenik, they are sometimes shelled by Croatian Serbs from the mountain side. For almost two years, displaced Croats have been living in camps, hotels and other accommodations with no place to go back. Many Croatian Serbs had the same fate and fled to Serbia. In the hotel, all of them looked healthy and there was almost no complaints about basic necessities. The hotel



Men resting near TCCS trucks.

COURTESY PHOTO

provides food and shelters for free, and several times in a week, volunteers from Suncokret visit and do activities with children and others.

Children explained how Croatian Serbs, Croats and other minorities had lived peacefully and friendly before the war began. Only by talking with these children, one can be sure how stupid and senseless the reasoning of the war is like ancient hatred or historical antagonism. People should not forget about what happened in past atrocities because it's going to be a lesson for younger generations. At the same time, there is forgiveness, and agony and antagonism may disappear as time passes by. Many people in ex-Yugoslavia, mainly those in cities, have the

sense of tolerance and civility, but others have not. Then, people who tried to seek or maintain power exploited the situation and manipulated those who have not. Ex-Yugoslavia was a mixture of many nationalities but also that of modern and primitive societies.

I had a good time with these displaced children. I asked what they wanted the most now. They all said in one voice: peace. They wrote some messages for people in the United States. They need some supplies for school so that they could continue to study. They are eager to know about other people's cultures and want to be friends with American people. They want western countries to

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