

SUCCESS STORY

“Peer Gynt from Kosovo” a play about youth involved in violent extremism



Photo: PEER GYNT from Kosovo, a play that portrays the youth involved in violent extremism.

During last decades the people of Kosovo have undergone a difficult period of armed conflict, circumstances which have influenced radicalism, hatred and non-tolerance among different groups, which

consequently can affect the appearance of elements of terrorism. The geo-strategic position of Kosovo presents a risk for spreading the syndrome of terrorism, particularly the one with religious fundamentalism basis.

The presence of a significant number of Kosovar youth fighting in Syria and Iraq, or the overall growth of political violence and hate speech on social media, indicate that lack of hope among many young people is not producing only criticism and useful activism to improve such circumstances any more.

Multimedia realized a play about a failed dream. PEER GYNT from Kosova is a story that comes through a young and naive boy, PEER - the protagonist of the play, covering his life experiences from pre-war Kosova until today. PEER, led by a dream for a better life, tries to find happiness by immigrating in Europe. He soon gets involved with a group of criminals and finds himself locked behind the bars in Europe. One story leads to another, but PEER is continuously involved with the wrong guys. His life takes a different path, far away from what he dreamt of as a young boy. His experiences throughout the play, are a reflection of lots of young desperados from Kosova, leaving their country with full of hopes and dreams for the ‘paradise’. Reality is harsh, and most of them deal with isolation, away from their home, their dreams turning into a nightmare.

The play portrays another very important issue in our today's society-the religious radicalization of Kosovo's youth. Most of the so called "holy warriors" fighting in foreign religious wars, have been radicalized from Europe, while in prison. The audience (mainly high school students) was involved in an interactive conversation about the radicalization and the story in general. Most of the reaction by the audience was positive, some were hesitating to tackle this issue, and few of them even left the play without comments, nor reaction (Hani Elezit show). The most positive feedback was from teachers and school directors, emphasizing that this play raises awareness among the youth about radicalization.

The performance was presented to several municipalities in Kosovo, such as in Suhareka/Suvareka, Hani Elezit/Elez Han, Ferizaj/Urosevac, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje and Prishtina/Pristina.

Margaritë Daka a high school student from Suharekë/Suvareka points out that "there are several choices in our life and we must choose the right one."

Peer Gynt from Kosovo" shows have been very well received so far and we can clearly see that the messages are being delivered successfully. Young people in the audience do watch the play with curiosity and engage in the debate after the play, where issues connected to the play are discussed. From the post-show questioners that we have collected, it is clear that young people do appreciate that the approach to the issue through theater is very useful and much more productive.

Peer Gynt, condemned to live in freedom, personifies the destiny of our youth, whom in order to survive is forced to hit the road, even to the frontline in Syria, to eventually return to his homeland with a mountain of despair on his shoulders. It should be mentioned that the situations which Peer Gynt goes through are quite illustrative for a large number of our young people, who see Europe as a survival shelter.

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