

Editor's Note:

OPEN WORLD PROGRAM

Building the bridge between USA and countries of Eurasia

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Abstract

This Editor Note is aiming to promote the efforts of the Open World Program in its mission to enhance understanding and capabilities for cooperation between the United States and the countries of Eurasia by developing a network of leaders in the region who have gained significant, firsthand exposure to America's democratic, accountable government and its free-market system (www.openworld.gov). The text written in this article is based on the facts about the program, obtained from Mrs. Milena Otašević, former Program Coordinator of the Open World Program in Serbia and personal experience of Ivan Mihajlović, Editor in Chief of SJM, who had opportunity to be included as participant in this program during the year 2014. The goal of this text is to give additional acknowledgement for this noble intention of the United States Congress, which is the founding institution of the Program and to familiarize the opportunity to be included in this program initiative to wide SJM audience.

Keywords: Open World Program, United States Congress, international cooperation

1. BACKGROUND OF THE PROGRAM

Open World Program is designed to enhance mutual understanding and

cooperation between the countries of the Europe - Asia (or Eurasia - as pronounced in the Open World Mission Statement) and USA by providing local leaders an

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opportunity to meet with their American counterparts and exchange thoughts and ideas on the most important issues (www.openworld.gov).

Open World Program is the only exchange program within the US legislative branch and receives annual funding from US Congress. Thus nominating as well as participation are free for the participants. Program management is done by Open World Leadership Center at the Library of Congress - an independent federal agency ruled by the Board of Trustees that is headed by Dr. James Billington. Another important partner of the program is American Councils for International Education. American Councils, is a non-profit educational, training and consulting organization, provides administrative and logistical support to the Open World program on a contractual basis.

Open World Program is designed for young leaders of Eurasia - representatives of different government bodies, NGOs and scholars. The program is mainly for the candidates who being rather young have already proven to be professionals in their field, displayed strong leadership skills and are interested in studying American experience and maintaining professional and personal contacts with their American counterparts after the return to their countries of origin. The idea behind the Open World program, presented by its founder is given in following citation:

"Since 1999, Open World has brought more than 17,000 young leaders to the United States from the countries of Eurasia. Through Open World, mayors, legislators, judges, civil servants, educators and entrepreneurs from across the former Soviet Union have come to know the real America. And whether the ideas they take home are practical, such as publishing city council meeting times in the local paper, or more abstract, such as understanding the importance of judicial impartiality to the rule of law, the net effect of Open World is to strengthen the democratic process in their countries." (Billington, 2014).

The biography and most important publications of Dr. James H. Billington is available at following web page: <http://www.openworld.gov/board/dr-james-h-billington>.



Figure 2. Dr. James H. Billington, Librarian of Congress and Founding Chair of the Open World Board of Trustees



Figure 1. The official logo of the Open World Program

2. OPEN WORLD LEADERSHIP CENTER

The Open World Leadership Center administers the Open World program, one of the most effective U.S. exchange programs for countries of the post-Soviet era. Begun as a pilot program in 1999 and established as a permanent agency in late 2000, the Center conducts the first and only international exchange agency in the U.S. Legislative Branch and, as such, has enabled more than 17,000 current and future leaders from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan to meaningfully engage and interact with Members of Congress, Congressional staff, and thousands of other Americans, many of whom are the delegates' direct professional counterparts.

Since its 1999 inception, the Center has awarded grants to 61 organizations headquartered in 25 different states and the District of Columbia. These grantee organizations host delegations themselves or award subgrants to local host organizations to do so. By 2010, almost 800 local host organizations—including universities and community colleges, Rotary clubs and other service organizations, sister-city associations, and international visitor councils and other nonprofits in all 50 states and the District of Columbia—had conducted Open World exchanges for the Center. Some 6,500 American families have hosted participants in more than 1,900 communities around the country (<http://www.openworld.gov>).

3. OPEN WORLD PROGRAM IN SERBIA

Until the year 2015, the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade played a great role in the Open World program, including:

- Participating in the Open World selection process;
- Assisting with program design and planning;
- Facilitating visa processing for program participants;
- Playing a key role in developing the Center's parliamentary program and helping to organize and participating in alumni events;
- Working with Serbian civil and governmental organizations.



Figure 3. US Embassy Belgrade supports the Open World Program

The activities of the Program in Serbia are also sustained by the support of the American Councils. This support includes:

- The American Councils Washington, DC staff assists in planning, making participant travel arrangements and advising hosts on

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Figure 4. American Councils is important partner of the Open World Program

procedures and cross cultural differences;

- The American Councils Belgrade staff assists with forming and placing delegations, organizing and conducting pre-departure orientation, and selecting and training English-speaking Serbian facilitators to accompany delegations and handle all logistics.

- Both the Washington and Belgrade offices handle all logistics, organize conferences and orientation programs, as well as produce and provide program materials.

From the year 2015, the role of the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade become even larger, because all Program activities are now delegated directly to them and not via cooperation with American Councils for International Education.

3.1. Goals of the Open World Program in Serbia

Serbia joined the Open World Program in 2012. Main goals of the program in Serbia are:

① To develop a mutual understanding between the people of two nations by giving Serbian leaders an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the functioning of democratic institutions and political systems in the United States of America, and work with their American colleagues involved in similar/parallel areas of responsibility.

② To give Serbian leaders an opportunity to see with their own eyes how their U.S. colleagues work and solve problems similar to theirs. This program is divided into three main themes, each of which have specific

sub-themes: rule of law, accountable governance and social services, as well as, cultural groups.

③ To create the possibility for cooperation and form partnerships between the participants of the Open World program and their colleagues in the USA and Serbia.

4. ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE OPEN WORLD PROGRAM

During its existence the program have made tremendous results in connecting the people of the countries of Eurasia and USA. Some of the achievements can be advocated with following facts:

- Since its founding in 1999, the Open World program has sent over 20,000 participants to the U.S;

- Of these, 1,407 have been judges and legal professionals, and more than half have been federal, regional, or local government officials;

- Open World started with Russia, and expanded to include Georgia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 2007;

- Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan joined in 2008;

- Since 2003, the Open World program has sent over 500 cultural leaders to the U.S;

- More than 7,000 families and over 1,500 host communities in all 50 States have hosted Open World participants;

- 51 U.S. Senators, Representatives and State Governors and 107 Federal and State Judges have hosted Open World participants;

- The average age of participants is 38;

- Approximately 48% of participants are women.

4.1. Achievements of the Open World Program in Serbia

The program activities in Serbia started in 2012. During that year 114 participants were included in the program activities (49% women). In next year, 2013, 55 people participated (62% women). In the year 2014 there were 83 participants. This makes a total number of 252 participants in three years. The average age of the participants was 37. Participants included representatives from all levels of government (from deputies to representatives of local governments), representatives of federal ministries, educational institutions, NGOs, independent institutions ... Groups from Serbia visited 27 different federal states of the USA.

5. OPEN WORLD PROGRAM - FROM THE FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Following text will present the Open World program from the experience of Editor in Chief of Serbian Journal of Management, who was one of the Serbian delegates in 2014. He was selected to be one of the participants in the program in the period from 30 April to 12 May 2014 (<http://bussol4you.blogspot.com/2014/05/open-world-usa.html>).

In the framework of this program a group of six representatives of the Faculties of Technical Sciences from Serbia was formed, which represented our country in the United States, during the professional program "Development of technology to create new work places". Facilitator of the group was Miss Tijana Hrkalović from the US Embassy in Belgrade. Besides Professor Ivan

Mihajlović, from Technical Faculty in Bor, members of this group were Slobodan Tabaković - Faculty of Technical Sciences in Novi Sad, Saša Adamović - Singidunum University, Branko Koprivica - Faculty of Technical Sciences in Čačak and Tamara Čolić - Technology Transfer Center, University of Belgrade.

The official program of the visit began on May 1st 2014, when the delegation had a meeting in Washington with Mr. John O'Keefe, executive director of the Center for Leadership of the Open World program and former US Ambassador to Serbia.

Then the delegation was addressed by Dr. Samuel Potolicchio, head of the Global Leadership department from Georgetown University. Professor Potolicchio spoke on the topic of American federalism.

The discussion then continued on the topic - E Pluribus Unum (Glasford and Dovidio, 2011) - What holds US united. Moderator of the discussion was Dr. John Brown from Georgetown University.

Then the delegates were introduced to the activities of the Maryland Institute of Technology - MTEch - innovation program. A representative of the institute was Professor Peter Sandborn, Director.

On the same day, the delegation went on a tour to the US Congress, the Library of Congress, the Capitol and the White House.

On the next day, May 2nd, the delegation headed to Chicago. The delegation of experts from Serbia in Chicago was hosted by the organization World Chicago (<http://www.worldchicago.org>). At the beginning of the visit to Chicago, during first two days, delegates had the opportunity to learn about the cultural and historical sights of the city.

Then, on Monday, 5th of May, the



Figure 5. Group of delegates from Serbia on a study visit to USA

From left to right seated: Tijana Hrkalović - facilitator, Ivan Mihajlović - Technical Faculty in Bor, Slobodan Tabaković - Faculty of Technical Sciences in Novi Sad, Saša Adamović - Singidunum University, Branko Koprivica - Faculty of Technical Sciences in Čačak and Tamara Čolić - Technology transfer center of the University of Belgrade

delegation visited the "medical district", which includes 560 acres of laboratories for medical research, bio technology business incubator, several medical universities and more than 40 facilities related to research in medicine. Host of the delegation was Dr Joe Collins, program director of the center. In the afternoon, the delegation visited the Technology Development Centre of the Microsoft Company. There the meeting with Mr. Kevin M. Gates, technical director of the center, was organized.

After that, delegates from Serbia visited the Willis Tower Skydeck - 103 floors high tower, the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere.

On 6th of May the delegation visited the Technology Innovation Center - Technology and Research Park Illinois. During this visit, the delegates exchanged opinions with Timothy Lavengood, executive director of the center.

Then the delegation went to Northwestern University, one of the leading US Universities. The meetings with Professors Craig LaMay, Richard Gordon and Joe Garmuska, were held there.

A couple of useful links on the activities of the Northwestern University:

- overview of entrepreneurship at Northwestern:

<http://fcei.northwestern.edu/entrepreneurship-at-nu/index.html>

- The six NUvention courses: <http://fcei.northwestern.edu/entrepreneurship-at-nu/index.html>

- NUvention Web: <http://fcei.northwestern.edu/curriculum/nuvention/web.html>

The delegation, with colleagues at Northwestern University, talked about current trends in the development of technology for its practical applications in the classroom but also in order to launch SMEs and creating new jobs.

On 7th of May, the program included a visit to the Institute of Technology of the state of Illinois (IIT). The delegation was welcomed by Professor Mazin Safar - Program Director of the Institute. Here the discussion was on the subject of IIT research opportunities, as well as the possibilities of establishing cooperation between universities in Serbia and IIT. The meeting was also attended by Professor Will Mauer, who teaches operations management and project management at the University, and Professor Mary Dawson - Vice Dean for international cooperation. Central point of the discussions were about ways to launch start-up companies, as well as cooperation between universities and industry. Then the delegation visited the laboratories of the institute.

On the same day, a visit was organized to the University of Chicago - Booth School of Business and within it Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Here the delegation met Patrick Ip who recently graduated from this school and as a student he founded a company for consulting and collecting funds "Kip Solutions" in which he is executive director now. Delegation was also hosted by Jerome Goodrich program manager of the school and Joey Mak - Assistant Director for Economic development of the University of Illinois. Here the delegation had opportunity to discuss about the education of students in order to start their own businesses and observe the examples of companies that have been formed by the students of this school while studying at the undergraduate level.

On the 8th of May, delegates from Serbia had a meeting with the financiers of the World Chicago and Open World, where they presented their faculties and research and

discussed the similarities and differences between Serbian and American educational systems. This meeting was attended by Mr. Dejan Radulovic - Serbian consul in Chicago. After that, a visit to institution "Early college of Science Technology Engineering" was organized. Delegation was hosted by Professor Brenda Darren Wilkerson and Mr. John Engman, project manager. During the meeting delegates discussed with their hosts about developments in entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship based on ICT in public secondary schools in the United States.

Then the delegation visited the University of Illinois at Chicago, Technology Management Center. The interview was conducted in a laboratory for development and innovation. The delegation was received by Professor Kenneth Brezinsky - Dean for Research and Development and Michael J. Scott Professor of Industrial Management.

At the end of the day, the delegation visited the Health Technology Innovation - HTI business incubator. This is the organization that issues the laboratory and research space for young scientists who are engaged in pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, according to the principles of business incubators. Here the conversation was moderated by Mrs. Kapila Vigésimo Director and Professor Aleksej Krunic, who is working in HTI laboratories on developing a drug for the prevention of HIV transmission.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This article is, in its first part, presenting the most important facts about the philanthropy program of USA Congress called Open World. Then, in the second part,

personal experience of one of its alumni, Prof. dr Ivan Mihajlovic, from Technical Faculty in Bor, is presented.

As a general impression, after considering and analyzing all that was seen and heard at meetings in the US educational institutions and business incubators the following conclusions can be drawn. Operations mode at universities in the United States is based on work in small groups and the formation of interdisciplinary teams of students to develop business ideas even during undergraduate studies. For example, students of management, information technology, industrial technology or any other technical discipline are working in interdisciplinary teams. Then, on a weekly basis, teams have meetings with the aim of developing business potential of their business ideas. Often, together with professors, their

mentors are successful entrepreneurs from the region. In addition to receiving grades and diplomas, a certain percentage of the students actually commercialize their ideas by starting their own businesses, even during the studies. In last decade, more than 90 percent of these companies were formed on the basis of application of ICT.

Also, universities have a strong coupling with the economy so that companies often participate in designing the curriculum of universities and provide an opportunity for students to have practical research in their plants and laboratories. Then, the most successful students usually continue to work in the receiving companies after graduation.

The experience gained during this professional visit to leading US Universities, located in the region of Chicago, is very useful for future work of Serbian professors,

ПРОГРАМ ОТВОРЕНИ СВЕТ

Мост између САД и земаља Еуразије

Иван Михајловић, Милена Оташевић

Извод

Овај допис уредника има за циљ да промовише напоре програма Отворени Свет у мисији унапређења међусобног разумевања и могућности даље сарадње између Сједињених Америчких Држава и земаља “Еуразије”, развојем мреже лидера у региону који су стекли значајно искуство из прве руке о америчкој демократској, предузимљивој управи и њеном систему отвореног тржишта (www.openworld.gov). Текст написан у овом чланку је заснован на чињеницама о самом програму Отворени Свет, припремљеним од стране госпођице Милене Оташевић, бившег Програм координатора овог програма у Србији и на личном искуству Ивана Михајловића, Главног уредника часописа СЈМ, који је имао задовољство да буде један од делегата овог програма током 2014. године. Циљ овог текста је да да` додатно признање племенитим намерама Конгреса Сједињених Држава, који финансира овај програм као и да упозна публику часописа СЈМ са могућностима даљег укључивања у ову иницијативу.

Кључне речи: програм Отворени Свет, Конгрес Сједињених Држава, интернационална сарадња

who were the members of this program group. Most of the practical organizational issues, evidenced there can be fully applicable in future development of the studying program and courses at Serbian Universities. Also, professional contacts developed during this program will be good starting point for future cooperation between Higher Education institutions of two countries. Off course, this wouldn't be possible without existence of the Open World program and its noble efforts.

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