



"Young Friends"

A project for Peace and Reconciliation

**For students and young professionals
from former war-torn countries in the West Balkans**

Managed by Oslo Vest Rotary Club, D2310, Norway

"Young Friends" – for Peace



**All of former Yugoslavia participate
- except Slovenia**

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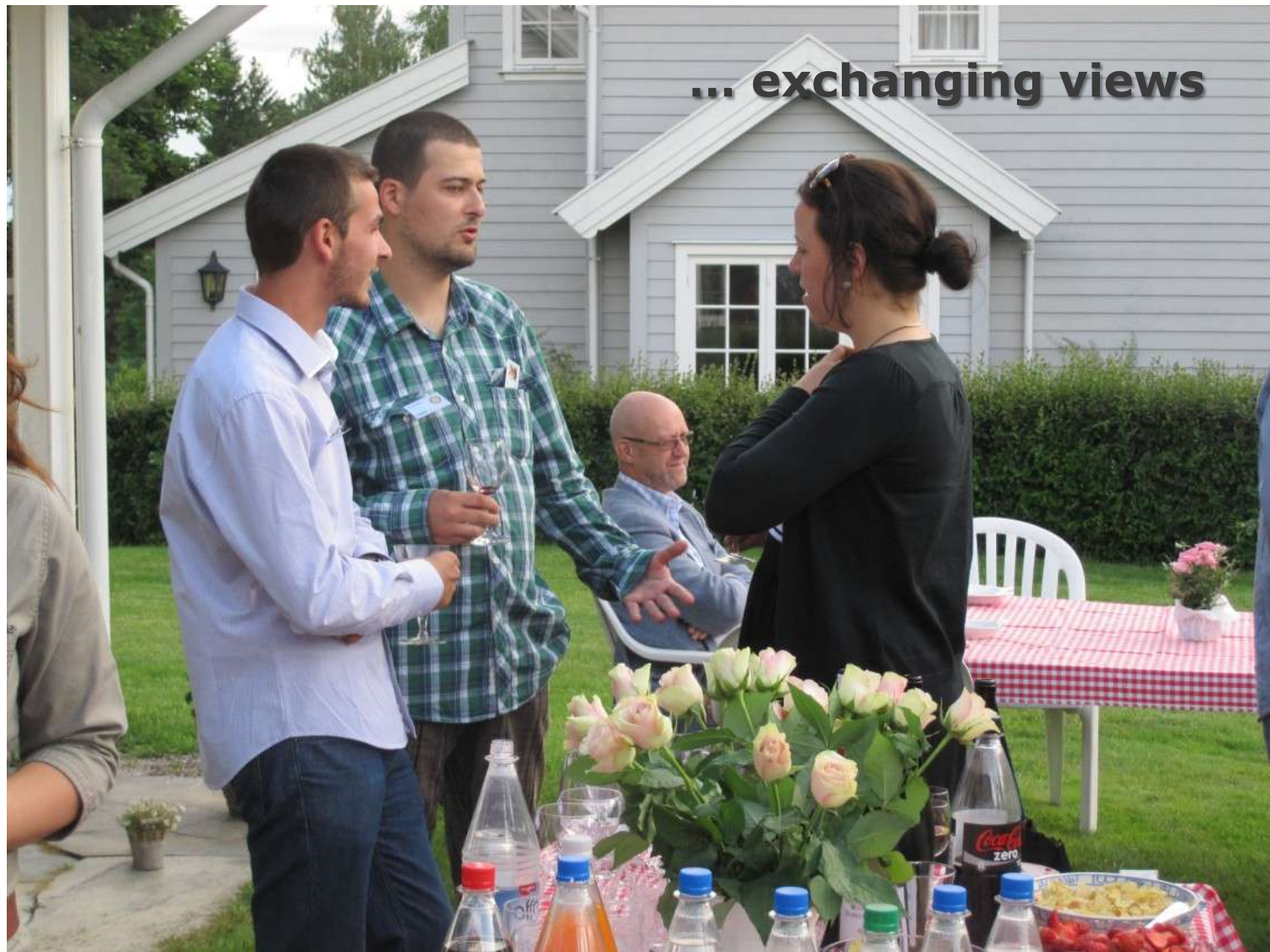
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...sharing experiences



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A mix of 6 nations

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**Seven weeks of togetherness
- tuning into a common understanding**

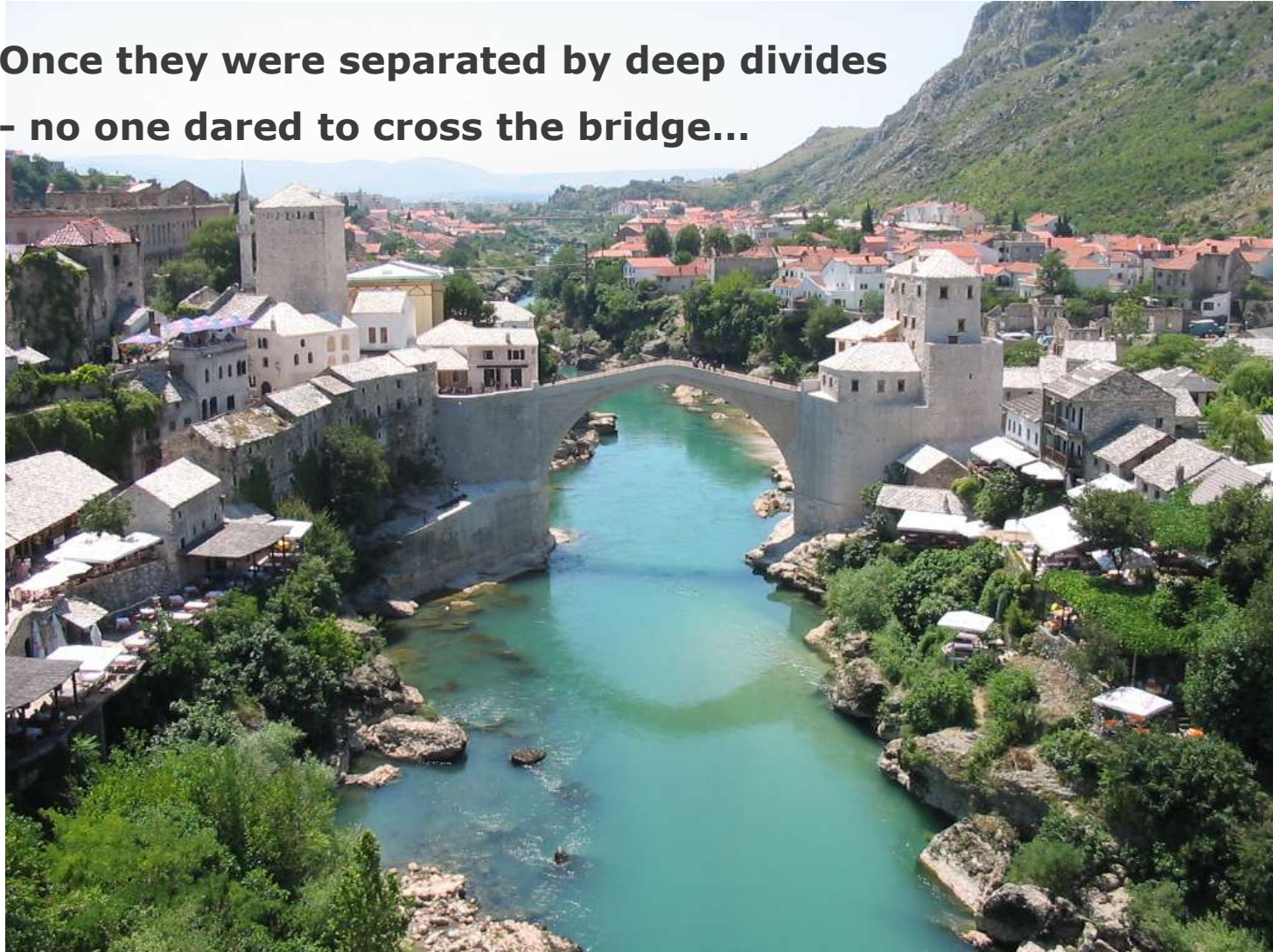
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**Lasting peace demands
hard work and reconciliation**



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**Once they were separated by deep divides
- no one dared to cross the bridge...**

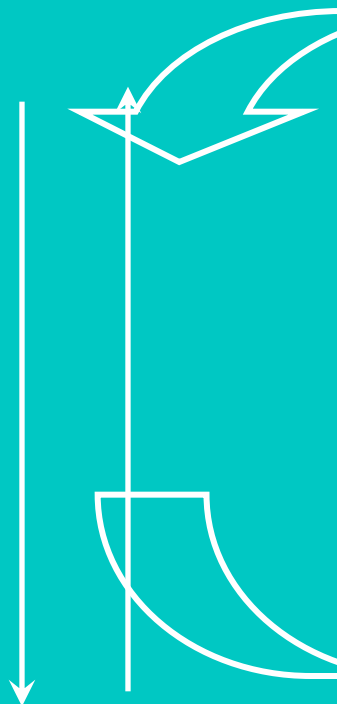


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Bridging divided communities

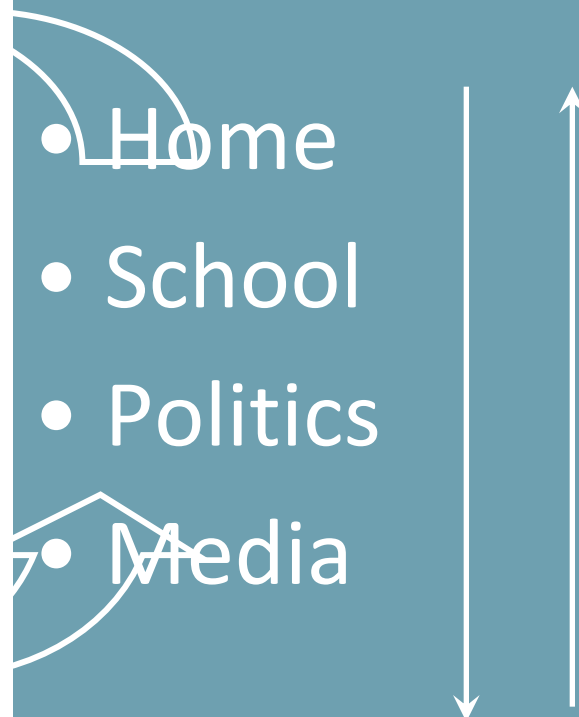
Group A: Serbian

- Home
- School
- Politics
- Media



Group B: Albanian

- Home
- School
- Politics
- Media



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from

DEBATE

to

DIALOGUE

Goal: To win

- Convince
- Argue
- Look for the weak argument
- Hunter
- Moral Judge
- Make opponent insecure
- To change opinion is a sign of weakness
- Confronting language

Goal: To understand

- Explain
- Listen
- Look for the strength in the opponent
- Self-discipline
- Tolerance
- Make opponent feel safe
- To change opinion is a sign of maturity
- Supportive language

The Nansen Dialogue concept:

- We wish to provide a neutral space where people from opposite sides in serious conflicts can meet face to face in honest dialogue.



- Through dialogue, participants gain new understanding of each other's experiences, perspectives, and needs. Enemy images may be broken down and relationships rebuilt.

Steinar Bryn, Senior Advisor
Nansen Center for Peace and Dialogue
Nansen Academy, Lillehammer

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Dialogue is the basis of understanding

A total of 28 "Young Friends " from the West Balkans

have participated since 2007

in this reconciliation and conflict resolution project.

PROJECT VISION

The "Young Friends" project underpins the crucial conflict resolution, reconciliation and peace process between young people from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds in the West Balkan countries of Serbia, Croatia, Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia

PROJECT GOALS

Our "Young Friends" from the West Balkans will

- ✓ broaden their interpersonal skills and cross cultural tolerance and reciprocal respect
- ✓ benefit professionally from credit giving studies
- ✓ be provided with an international peer network through the West Balkans and Norwegian Rotarians, Rotaract members and fellow students at the Nansen Center for Peace and Dialogue, Lillehammer, and the International Summer School, University in Oslo

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*- An outstanding project.
This is how peace and
reconciliation is built.*

Thorvald Stoltenberg
Former Norwegian
Minister of Foreign Affairs
November 2011



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- We are working on peace and reconciliation with our neighbors in former Yugoslavia, and strongly support Rotary's "YOUNG FRIENDS" project.

Boris Tadic,
President of Serbia
May 2010



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*- Best project for our District
that I have ever heard of.*

Toni Hilscher
Past Governor RD1910, Balkan
December 2007



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Friends - for ever !