



Virtual Storytelling Club in Malisheva/Kosovo, with students from the "Ibrahim Mazreku School" December 2020 and January 2021

The Malisheva Storytelling Club was conducted by Veton Kastrati, a teacher and media activist in Malisheva, with support by Kirsten Schneid from the PRIX JEUNESSE Foundation. We decided to do a five days virtual workshop during the Christmas/New Year holiday time.

There were six children aged 12 to 14 in our Storytelling Club. We tried to choose children with different backgrounds and activities. Some love movies, writing, and some are good at science and art. The children joined the STC from home through Zoom.

Thankfully, Kirsten Schneid had sent us the handout of the Storytelling Club content and helped us to realize it. On some days we had a lot of difficulties with the electricity and the internet, but we managed.

We started the virtual workshops with questions about the life of the students in times of the pandemic, about their changing behaviour and the way they are arranging their daily routine. The students told us how they are spending their time: They are watching movies, using social media, they read and they cook. The questions and exercises we did made the students reflect and talk more about their experiences and activities during the pandemic time.

In the beginning the students did not like to express themselves a lot. But in the second session they started to tell their own stories and talked about their emotions during the challenging times. They discussed a lot of with Kirsten and they very much enjoyed to express themselves to someone new and did not hesitate to tell every detail from their life during the pandemic and before. Different stories came up. Most of them were connected with health problems, the loss of family members and accidents that experienced. Some told that family members were infected with Covid-19 but passed this illness.

All of the students had collected writing experiences previously. Some even had participated in writing competitions. But this was a new way of writing for them, to follow steps in order to create stories and even having to illustrate their stories by drawing small images. For the students this was a little bit challenging because they found it difficult to illustrate what they had written. Also the teacher Veton Kastrati shared his own story when he was a child during the war and how he and his family passed three months hidden in the mountains.

Report by Veton Kastrati, Teacher in "Ibrahim Mazreku School", Malisheve/Kosovo

A story by Rozafa, 13 years old:

The day I became strong!

The pandemic has left many consequences both to humans and economically. Many people have been tested in different ways, have been tested for their patience, and some unfortunately with a loss of a loved one. I have been very careful during this time as I know that putting on a mask could save someone life. Most of my family members are doctors, my grandmother worked every day until late, as she takes care of sick peoples. I didn't think she would be affected by Covid 19, but my grandfather got the virus. I was convinced that my grandfather would pass it because he was strong, he didn't have any concomitant diseases and even he did fitness. I was worried about my grandmother, I have her as a second mother. My Mother passed away almost 2 years ago since then I have been very attached to her. I thought I would never get out of that situation. Those were the two horrible weeks of my life. Sometimes I asked myself how I got through this situation. The answer is: I thought a lot. It was very sad for me and I didn't want to experience the same pain again for the second time. One day I had an idea. My grandparents were staying in their home and didn't dare to go out and I went to their house and I saw them from the window. That way I could fulfill my desire to see them. After those two horrible weeks we gathered in the family, the joy and happiness didn't stop, the warmth we offer and receive has a very important role. After this event I realized how strong I was. This changed my life a lot as I realized that I had to be prepared in life. Life brings many great and bad surprises. The most important thing is to know how to cope with them.

