

Social responsibility in practice: Presentation of Slovenia at the International Music Olympiad

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Abstract

In April 2018, Luka Kraševac, then an eighth grade student at the primary school *Osnovna šola Notranjski odred Cerknica*, took part in an international music competition for primary school students in Tallinn, Estonia, with me acting as his tutor. He earned the right to participate at the International Music Olympiad by previously placing second at the national competition known as the Slovenian Music Olympiad. This competition is very complex and consists of several segments. Within certain segments, the competitors are allowed the assistance of other students or teachers (e.g. performing their own written, original pieces composed for several musicians). To that end, Luka and I set off to Estonia with four other students of our school who had helped him (in any way) in terms of performing the pieces at the national level. Since the International Music Olympiad consisted of a mandatory competitive part as well as an optional non-competitive part, our students, being socially responsible people, were more than happy to accept the invitation to prepare a presentation of our country at the aforementioned optional part. Slovenian folk music and dances, pictures of our town and the world-famous intermittent Lake Cerknica amazed the audience; they awarded us with a loud round of applause, and many representatives from other countries praised our presentation even after the event.

With this paper, I would like to present an example of good practice which came about as a product of our sense of social responsibility and into which we put a lot of effort and, as socially responsible, proud patriots, a lot of our free time. As already mentioned, the presentation of our country was optional and did not in any way affect the competition itself or results thereof.

Keywords: International Music Olympiad, Social Responsibility, Presentation of Slovenia, Example of Good Practice.

Družbena odgovornost v praksi: Predstavitev naše države na Mednarodni glasbeni olimpijadi

Povzetek

V aprilu 2018 se je Luka Kraševac, takrat učenec 8. razreda Osnovne šole Notranjski odred Cerknica, pod mojim mentorstvom udeležil mednarodnega glasbenega tekmovanja za učence osnovnih šol, ki je potekalo v Talinu, v Estoniji. Luka si je udeležbo na Mednarodni glasbeni olimpijadi prislužil z osvojenim 2. mestom na predhodnem državnem tekmovanju, ki ga poznamo pod imenom Slovenska glasbena olimpijada. Tekmovanje je zelo kompleksno in je sestavljeno iz več segmentov. Pri določenih segmentih tekmovalcu pri izvedbah lahko



pomagajo tudi drugi učenci ali učitelji (npr. pri izvedbi lastne, avtorske skladbe, ki je npr. napisana za večjo zasedbo). Tako so v Estonijo z menoj in Luko potovali tudi štirje drugi učenci naše šole, ki so na državnem tekmovanju Luki kakorkoli pomagali pri izvedbah skladb v posameznih segmentih samega tekmovanja. Ker je bila Mednarodna glasbena olimpijada sestavljena iz obveznega tekmovalnega dela in neobveznega netekmovalnega dela, smo se kot družbeno odgovorni ljudje odzvali povabilu organizatorja, da na neobveznem netekmovalnem delu predstavimo našo državo, čemur smo se z veseljem odzvali. S slovensko ljudsko pesmijo in plesom, slikami naše občine in našega znamenitega presihajočega Cerkniškega jezera smo navzoče naravnost navdušili, za kar smo prejeli bučen aplavz in veliko pohval predstavnikov različnih držav tudi kasneje, po samem dogodku.

V svojem prispevku bi želela predstaviti konkreten primer dobre prakse, ki je nastal kot produkt naše velike družbene odgovornosti, saj smo vanj vložili veliko truda, predvsem pa kot družbeno odgovorni patrioti, veliko prostega časa. Kot že zapisano, je bila predstavitev države namreč neobvezna in nikakor ni vplivala na samo tekmovanje oz. rezultate le-tega.

Ključne besede: Mednarodna glasbena olimpijada, družbeno odgovornost, predstavitev Slovenije, primer dobre prakse.

1 Introduction

At the very beginning, it is necessary to ask oneself what social responsibility or socially responsible behavior is at all. I think that the answer to this question is not clear and can, in practice, be interpreted from various perspectives. As a teacher with many years of experience in the field of educational work, I definitely understand social responsibility as the responsibility of the organization and the individual to ethically affect people and nature, as stated in the invitation to the 14th IRDO International Scientific and Business Conference, in the summary of the program. Therefore, we can perceive the social responsibility of the school, among other things as well as the school being an example for the students. By way of example, I am referring to the most diverse forms of behavior that are considered to be moral and ethical in society. This is social responsibility in the broader sense. In my opinion, social responsibility in a narrower sense differs from organization to organization. We could note that there are different forms of social responsibility. School, e.g. besides its general social responsibility also undertakes the task of raising awareness and educating about, "sustainable development and active involvement in a democratic society, which includes a deeper knowledge of, and a responsible attitude among students to themselves, their health, to others, to their culture and other peoples' culture, the natural and social environment, and future generations" (ZOFVI, 2017). Its social responsibility is also to develop the awareness of their nationality and national identity and spread knowledge of the history of Slovenia and its culture, provide education related to general cultural and civilised values which originate from European tradition, and the development and preservation of one's own cultural tradition (the Primary School Act, 2006). "Educational institutions raise awareness of citizenship and national identity by marking the occasion of public holidays, celebrating with the anthem of the Republic of Slovenia specifically, and pursuing other activities to raise awareness of citizenship and national identity" (ZOFVI, 2017). In accordance with the Rules on the school calendar in primary schools, the last day of school before Independence and Unity Day, before Statehood Day and before the Slovenian Cultural Holiday, schools must organize a celebration. "The school can



also organize other celebrations in accordance with the annual work plan" (Rules on the school calendar in primary schools, 2012).

The school as an organization is therefore governed by laws and regulations. The responsibility of its employees is to take these laws and regulations into account and enact them. As part of the social responsibility of the school and its employees is also linked to the development and preservation of one's own cultural tradition and awareness of citizenship and national identity among students, I will, as already stated, present an example of good practice which is the product of socially responsible behavior.

2 Presentation of our Country at the International Music Olympiad

2.1 Introduction

As already noted, on the days of 18 to 21 April, 2018 we participated at an international music competition. In addition to the competitor himself, four students from our school who had previously participated in a similar national competition, travelled to Estonia. One of them helped the competitor, Luka Kraševac, to perform the music at the Slovene and the International Music Olympiad, one of them accompanied him on the guitar during the singing part of the competition, the third one travelled with us as a reward as he, in addition to Luka, had also represented our school excellently at the Slovenian Music Olympiad and had also placed very high, and the fourth helped the artist to perform his own music. The tour was financed entirely by the organizer of the Slovenian competition, i.e. Glasbena mladina Slovenije (Musical Youth of Slovenia) in cooperation with the Academy of Music of the University of Ljubljana; the costs of my airline tickets were covered by our primary school (Notranjski odred Cerknica). The travel expenses of the remaining four students were covered through donations that I, in cooperation with the school management, collected myself. Furthermore, we received financial support from some local companies and the managers of the School Fund also supported us financially. The tour of the four students was also partially co-financed by the Municipality of Cerknica. The latter has once again shown that it is a great supporter of culture and our younger generation and that it takes care of the cultural development of the municipality. Apart from the fact that our national consciousness is usually awakened abroad, the support of the Municipality of Cerknica gave us even greater motivation for presenting the Municipality in the best possible light in Estonia.

2.2 Description of the Presentation of Slovenia and the Municipality of Cerknica

Whenever it comes to culture, it seems a logical fact that our country boasts rich human treasures. Since it is of utmost importance that our human treasure does not vanish into oblivion in order to preserve the history of Slovenians, we pay more attention to it at schools on such occasions. That is why my decision to present our country with the Slovenian folk song and dance was self-evident. Besides being conscious citizens of our municipality, we are also conscious citizens of our country, thus, we selected a folk song from our region for the singing part of the presentation. Its title was "Sinoči sem na vasi bil" (Last Night I Was in the Village). I wrote the text for the presentation of the song myself and asked a colleague, an English professor, to translate the text into English. The colleague granted my request with pleasure and



thus set up an example of unselfish help to the students. She did not receive any payment or other benefits for her work. Furthermore, the English teacher often practised reading the text with Luka, who read the text within the non-competitive part of the musical olympics and she did this with her own initiative. I think that her actions qualifies as socially responsible behavior and represents a good example of the latter.

The following countries participated at The International Musical Olympiad: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Poland, Croatia and Slovenia. All these countries also participated in non-competitive work and at presentations. The picture below shows Luka reading a text.

Picture 1: Luka reading a text at the presentation of our country.



Source: Jernej Kraševac, 2018.

The text reads: We are going to introduce a Slovenian folk song *Sinoči sem na vasi bil* (Last Night I Was in the Village). It originates in our home region of Notranjska, in Southwestern Slovenia. This traditional piece of music is about Lake Cerknica, our biggest intermittent lake located near the town of Cerknica. Cerknica itself is surrounded by many villages. One of them is Dolenje Jezero and this folk song is typical for the village.

It is well known that Lake Cerknica is often hidden in the fog. For our ancestors, the fog was a serious danger when they were returning home from the woods in their 'drevaks', typical lake boats. For this reason, their wives would come to the lake shore and bang on empty pails. Thus, their men could follow the sound and reach home safely.

In this song, a girl is asking God to clear the horizon above the lake and make the fog disappear. Her pleas are answered and the heavy mist is gone (Jenče, 2009).



After Luka's presentation, two of our students, as shown in the picture below, sang in a highly harmonious dual accord. The crowd was especially impressed by the fact that two boys were singing the song.

Picture 2: Students Singing "Sinoči sem na vasi bil" (Last Night I Was in the Village) - a Slovene Folk Song.



Source: Jernej Kraševcevec, 2018.

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During the singing of the song, we projected a PowerPoint presentation of the pictures of Cerknica and Lake Cerknica the contents of which related to the song. The PowerPoint presentation was made by one of the participating students with my help.

This was followed by Luka's presentation of a folk dance called Špicpolka: dancing had a very important role in the lives of our ancestors and its role is constantly changing and evolving. A few decades ago, the dance was performed in magical / ritual traditions as people believed that the power of such rituals could grant them fertile soil and, at the same time, protect them from all evils. However, the dance as a ritual has more or less been forgotten nowadays.

The folk dance we are going to introduce is called the Spitz-Polka (Požugana) and used to be a very common dance in Notranjska, our home region. In the vast majority of the Slovenian ethnic territory, people have danced the same or similar dances as far as the characteristic form or melody are concerned. However, there exist some differences in the style of dancing.

Our dance belongs to the group of the so called clap dances that typically contain clapping, stomping and finger wagging. This type of dance was popular all over Slovenia because of its simple form and humorous character and has been preserved to the present day (Omerzel-Terlep, 1984).

From the picture below, it is evident that the dance was performed together with his colleague, a classmate, and by Luka, himself.



Picture 3: Presentation of the Folk Dance, the *Špicpolka*



Source: Jernej Kraševac, 2018.

Although it sounds simple, learning the *Špicpolka* folk dance took quite a few extra hours of practice, as there are very precisely defined rules of how to perform an individual folk dance. The clothing culture of Slovenes in particular periods was also very extensively researched. Due to the preciousness and inaccessibility of costumes from our environment, we could not really show the clothing culture to the audience, but we agreed with the students to present the completely modern version. Monika danced in her skirt and Luka wore a vest, which we borrowed for this purpose at the Cerknica Mardi Gras Society (Pustno društvo Cerknica).

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In the final part of the presentation, Branka Rotar Pance (Head of the Department of Musical Pedagogy at the Ljubljana Academy of Music, co-organizer of the Slovene Musical Olympiad, and Member of the Jury at the International Musical Olympiad in Estonia) and her husband joined us on stage. They performed wearing a Slovene, i.e. autochthonous, national costume of Gorenjska and danced together on the stage, presenting the *Zibenšrit* folk dance. The picture below shows that the stage arrangement of the dance was adapted in an interesting way because Ms. Branka and her husband danced in a pair, we (the students and me), danced the steps of the *Zebenšrit* in a row.

Picture 4: Presentation of a Folk Dance



Source: Jernej Kraševac, 2018.

The satisfaction with our entire presentation of Slovenia was also marked with a "selfie", as shown below.

Picture 5: Satisfaction and Pleasure Following the Excellent Presentation of our Country



Source: Jernej Kraševac, 2018.

We also eternalised our national awareness at the very end of the competition. Despite being visibly tired, we wanted to make a memory of how we, as Slovenes in international waters, proudly represented our country. The picture below shows: Slovenian representative of international jury Branka Rotar Pance, competitor Luka Kraševac and Luka's mentor Jasmina Žagar.

Picture 6: After the Announcement of the Results, on 20 April, 2018. Proud and Happy, but Tired.



Source: Jernej Kraševac, 2018.

3 Conclusion

Social responsibility and socially responsible behavior are very broad concepts that need to be understood and interpreted within the context in which they are represented. In the case that I have stated, social responsibility relates both to the impact I have on my students, to the example that I offer my students through my own socially responsible behavior, thus, educating them to become socially responsible people.

In our case, social responsibility has been demonstrated at several levels, as, with our presentation, we were socially responsible to the state, to our municipality, to our school, to the organizer who sent us to represent our country on the international level, to donors who have shown confidence, and, last but not least, to one another. We could have said to the organizer of the international competition that we would not cooperate in non-competitive work, as it was not obligatory and we did not have time for further preparations for the presentation. The decision to cooperate was primarily mine, but without the students' willingness to work, the presentation could not have been carried out. Was my decision to participate in non-competitive work affected by any laws or school regulations? Why did I decide to participate? The answer is simple. Because I was raised as a socially responsible person. Because in such competitions, this is expected. Because this is the only correct and moral thing to do even if there is financial support in the background. Why did the students agree to cooperate and do the additional work so easily? Because they are sufficiently old, personally developed, and mature enough to be capable of socially responsible behavior.

How come I dared to take four teenagers in puberty on such a trip? How could it be that we, despite all our efforts, enjoyed ourselves immensely, even in joint fellowship and joint tasks and responsibilities - even them with me? The answer is simple again. Because they are socially responsible. Did I expect that they would be well behaved and an example to other young people by obeying and respecting me? That they would not be offensive and cause dissent at the airport, in the shops, in the restaurants? That they would be polite and honest? That they would not shout, mock, and the list goes on... The answer is yes. I expected all of this because they are students who are socially responsible.

There could be much discussion about social responsibility and its concrete cases as well as about the different contexts in which social responsibility occurs. The previously described case shall thus serve as an example of good practice for only one aspect of socially responsible behaviour.

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