

U.S. EMBASSY IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Cultural Grants Program

APPLICANT'S CONTACT INFORMATION	
a. Implementing organization:	Cuvaj Se
b. Contact Person and Title:	Heather Derr-Smith, Director
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2.			
A.	Project title:	Cuvaj Se Writers' Workshops	
B.	Amount requested (USD):	Amount of co-share if any (USD):	Total Cost (USD):
	\$4,750.00	\$ 1,950.00	\$6,700.00

3.
 (SHORT SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT, NOT TO EXCEED 50 WORDS) My project
 I'd like to teach poetry workshops in Bosnia-Herzegovina at American Spaces in Sarajevo, Mostar, Tuzla, Bihac, and Zenica. The number of Americans reading poetry has doubled in the last year, and I'd like to share this aspect of American culture with Bosnian students while encouraging their own writing in English.

4.
 Students will be invited to attend a poetry workshop at American Spaces in their respective cities. Invitations will go out to prospective students via the American Spaces Facebook page, through local English and literature teachers, and via my own personal contacts that I have with writers and educators in each city.
 Workshops will be for two hours and will be led by Heather Derr-Smith, American poet and director of Cuvaj Se; and Amila Kahrovic-Posavljak, award-winning poet from Sarajevo. There will be time to share poems from an exciting diverse, younger generation of poets in the United States who have taken the literary community by storm: Ilya Kaminski, Kaveh Akbar, Danez Smith, Fatimah Asghar, Solmaz Sharff, and more. We will look at their poems and do a series of writing exercises based on the poems we read. We will then share our work as a group in a supportive and encouraging environment. Students will have the opportunity to bring finished poems for me (Heather Derr-Smith) to workshop outside of class and I will follow up with them by email, and will also have the opportunity to submit work for publication on the Cuvaj Se website.
 This is a great way for young writers to improve their craft, but it's also a fun activity for students wanting to practice English or anyone interested in learning more about the diversity of American culture.

I have taught several of these workshops in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Estonia, and Ukraine. My goal is to emphasize the unique character of American culture in its emphasis not on nationalism or ethnicity but in the American ideal of "E Pluribus Unum" - the aspiration and continuing project of a community based on equality, freedom, and diversity. I love this dream, and at this time when many people have grown disillusioned with Liberal Democracy, I still believe in the American dream, not just for those of us still working on it in the United States of America, but one that all people can share and build, even within their own countries.

I came to the former Yugoslavia and fell in love with the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1994 working in Gasinci Refugee Camp in Croatia. I have returned to the region for many years, and have a special attachment to Bosnia and Sarajevo in particular because of the spirit of co-existence and commitment to democracy among so many of my friends there. My favorite thing in the world is the sound of the church bells and the call to prayer as they sometimes overlap in Sarajevo. I love the history of Bosnia's particular and unique practices of Islam, the Sephardic Jewish traditions and influence, the Roma, and the incense of Catholic and Orthodox worship. I love the inclusion of nonbelievers and the complex personal histories that defy easy categorization. I love the long history of resistance to fascism and authoritarianism in the arts, through film, literature, and music. All of this is worth celebrating while continuing the work of dismantling sectarianism and division. I believe these are goals consistent with the Cultural Grants Program of the US Embassy.

6.

Locations: American Spaces in Sarajevo, Mostar, Tuzla, Bihac, and Zenica

7.

Numbers of participants can vary but range between 6 and up to as many can fit in the space! I have experience with a full range of participation. Ideally 12 university or high school students or the same range of adult writers makes a really nice workshop, but with fewer students you can have a more intimate, personal time of sharing, while in a larger group there is an excitement and energy and some folks just want to observe. I try to be open to any size group and do my best to accommodate and not turn anyone away. Every workshop I have done has been so much fun. In Mostar in 2017 we had almost thirty participants, mostly high school students but also foreign embassy staff visitors from Argentina and Austria. In Tuzla we had twelve students, mostly LGBTQ adults. At the International University of Sarajevo in 2010, I had a classroom of twenty university age students mostly from Turkey who had no background at all in creative writing. At Sarajevo University I had ten English Literature majors. At American University in Tuzla I had ten adult writers and grad students. In Estonia I taught twenty-five high school students who were a mix of Estonian and Russian-speaking. In Zaporizhia Ukraine, there were around twenty IDP's and high school students and adults from around Eastern Ukraine.

8.

My target date is ten days: anytime in November or December 2018, depending on acceptance of the application. I have a lot of experience leading this type of workshop and would need little preparation time. I already have the curriculum, poems, and contacts with local meeting places. In my experience with Bosnia, many people prefer to plan closer to the time. I am open and flexible to times and days when it is best for students, but usually in the evenings or on weekends.

However, if the embassy needs longer to process this grant, I am happy to propose later dates, such as in 2019. I am very flexible as to when I can come. I will be in Bosnia during October 8-16, 2018 and would be happy to meet with US Embassy staff during that time to discuss further.

I have taught poetry workshops for many years with my own funding. I am a well-established American poet with four award-winning books and have taught at the university level for decades. Last year I decided to form a nonprofit called Cuvaj Se (meaning "Take care" in Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian) to support my work with refugees, migrants, and communities affected by violence and trauma both in the United States and abroad.

As a poet, I have personally been facilitating poetry workshops for many years. But Cuvaj Se as an entity is brand new, and so while I have received limited government funding as a poet through a small grant at the Iowa Arts Council (\$500 in 2009), this is the first grant application on behalf of Cuvaj Se. I have so much experience doing poetry workshops in Bosnia that I am fully confident of continuing to do the work, but having a non-profit and the ability to apply for some grants would increase my capacity and outreach.

Examples of work done by Heather Derr-Smith, director of Cuvaj Se, before Cuvaj Se was officially registered:

December 2009- Poetry reading and poetry workshops at International University of Sarajevo, University of Sarajevo, American University, Tuzla, and Druga Gimnazija.

October 2015- LGBTQ Poetry workshops in partnership with American Corners, Tuzla University and Tuzla Open Center

October 2015-Poetry workshops United World College, Mostar in conjunction with American Corners.

June 2016- Teacher curriculum workshops in critical thinking with TPO Foundation, Sarajevo

November 2017--Democracy, Human Rights and Poetry workshops in Narva, Estonia in partnership with American Spaces

Democracy, Human Rights, and Poetry workshops in Zaporizhia, Ukraine in partnerships with American Spaces and The Mennonite Center, Molochansk.

Cuvaj Se had a presence this year with a table at the AWP (Association of Writers and Writers Programs) convention in Tampa, Florida in United States. This is the largest gathering of writers in the US every year. We passed out flyers and postcards with information about the organization. We have been in discussion with TPO foundation about partnering with them to do poetry, literature, and creative writing curriculum workshops for teachers. I was a participant as an individual in curriculum workshops with TPO in 2016. They were eager to continue the partnership with Cuvaj Se. We have also been in communication with Prometei Centre in Zaporizhia, Ukraine about partnering to raise money for their unique program meeting the psycho-social and educational needs of children with disabilities. Plans are underway to do a creative writing workshop summer camp for children. Cuvaj Se also has a presence on Twitter, raising money for particular projects in the US and abroad.

A grant from the US Embassy for ongoing work in BiH would enable us to expand our credibility and or mission to share poetry from the United States and parts of the world struggling for democracy and peace.

10.

None

11. DETAILED BUDGET (itemize any amount larger than \$200):

	ITEM	A	B	C	D	E
		NO. OF UNITS	PRICE PER UNIT	U.S. SHARE OF THE COST (A x B)	APPLICANT'S SHARE OF THE COST (IF ANY)	TOTAL (C+D)
A.	Personnel					
	Heather Derr-Smith, facilitator, salary	1500	100%	1500	0	1500
	SUBTOTAL A	1500	100%	1500	0	1500
B.	Fringe					
	SUBTOTAL B					
C.	Travel					
	Travel from Iowa to Bosnia	1200	0%	0	1200	1200
	Travel for Heather Derr-Smith and Amila Kahrovic-Posavljak by train or bus to Mostar, Tuzla, Bihac, Zenica	500	100%	500	0	500
	Hotels in Mostar, Tuzla, Bihac, Zenica	250	100%	250	0.00	250
	Hotel in Sarajevo	500	100%	500	0.00	500
	food	300	100%	300	0.00	300
	SUBTOTAL C	2750		1550	1200	2750
D.	Supplies					

	Thrust by Heather Derr-Smith	250	0%	0	250	250
	Tongue Screw by Heather Derr-Smith	250	0%	0	250	250
	Bride Minaret by Heather Derr-Smith	250	0%	0	250	250
	printing	200	100%	200	0	200
	Smrt Djeca by Amila Kahrovic-Posavljak	500	100%	500	0	500
	SUBTOTAL D	1450		700	750	1450
E.	Contractual					
	Assistant, Bosnian award-winning poet Amila Kahrovic-Posavljak	1000	100%	1000	0	1000
	SUBTOTAL E	1000	100%	1000	0	1000
F.	Other Direct Costs					
	SUBTOTAL F					
GRAND TOTAL (A+B+C+D+E+F)				4750	1950	6700