

Agricultural High School 'Vrsac' from Vrsac, Serbia

Location

Agricultural High School in Vrsac is located in a lovely town called Vrsac situated only 86km from Serbia's capital city Belgrade and only 14 km away from national border with Romania. It is set in the province of Vojvodina, part of Serbia famous for thousands of hectares of arable land and agriculture. Vrsac is also a town of art, business and sport, famous for clean air, beautiful countryside and vineyards. This town is a unique connection between rich tradition and modern life. For more information, visit www.vrsac.com.

About the school

Agricultural High School in Vrsac was established in 1921. For more than 90 years the school has been successfully educating many young generations of students. Today, the school has 520 pupils divided in 21 classes of agricultural, food production, veterinary and tourism and catering professions. The school educates students in the following fields of work:

Agriculture, food production and food processing with the following educational profiles:

- agricultural technician
- technician for biotechnology
- veterinary technician
- butcher and baker

Trade, catering and tourism with the following educational profiles:

- tourist technician
- waiter
- cook



Agricultural High School building
For more information, visit www.bioskola.edu.rs

In order to give our students chance to develop other interests and talents, our school has a lot of different Club activities such as:

1. Japanese club (started on June 12 2013.)
2. English club
3. Agricultural club (grapes growing, organic production, etc)
4. Ecology club
5. IT club
6. Tradition and customs club
7. Tourism: World Travelers Club
8. Cooking club
9. Sports club
10. Music
11. Drama club

Agricultural High School 'Vrsac' has 50 qualified teachers and we are proud to say that we have established good cooperation with Agricultural High Schools from other countries such as Austria and Slovenia as well as long tradition of cooperation with High Schools from Romania. We are often involved in many local and national projects of various kinds and a number of them have multi-cultural background.

The school took part in many cross-boarder projects with High Schools from Romania. All the projects were funded by European Union. In 2006 we have signed a special Agreement of Cooperation with High School 'T.T. Niti' from Timisoara, Romania and since then our two schools share the ideas and experience and visit each other on regular basis.

Our school cherishes tradition and customs of people from this region of Banat, province of Vojvodina. We carried out a project called "Traditional Bread from Banat" in order to save the recipe of this special sort of bread.

After the NATO bombing of our country in 1999, our school was worried because of danger of possible radiation and hazardous substances in local food, so we carried out control of locally produced milk on heavy metals.

Since we are agricultural school, we pay a lot of attention to agriculture and farming. We are proud to say that we started organic production in our school and since 2010 we have a certificate for organic production.

Our school is also involved in many projects regarding the environment protection and ecology. We have excellent cooperation with local Ecological society 'Avala' and the school also had its own Ecological society "Panonian Island". We are aware that as an educational institution we can help raising the awareness of ecological problems not just among our students but also within the local community. We had many activities in order to encourage local people to get involved in waste separation and become familiar with the importance of recycling. Our students together with our Computer science teacher took part in competition called 'Green Games' for which they created a PC game on collecting the garbage.

We have excellent cooperation with Center for Energy Efficiency (CEFIX) from Vrsac and few of our teachers are actively involved in work of this centre. The most recent project in which our school took part was called "Share your Knowledge – Win the Prize" and it was organized by CEFIX. We are proud to say that our students won the prize – a digital school board. The task of the project was to show that students are able to share their knowledge about ecology, energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and protection of the environment and to publish the articles on these topics on the web site www.cefix.rs. The project lasted from April to June and our students published 175 articles altogether and won the first place and the prize.

Agricultural High School from Vrsac is very excited about the chance to start cooperation with Agricultural High Schools from Japan. We are happy to inform you that we established our Japanese Club on June 12. Our English teacher Mrs. Anita Djuric-Stojkov has also studied Japanese language so she started teaching our students Japanese language. We are pleased that there are many students who want to be the members of the club and to learn Japanese language and to get to know Japanese culture and tradition. They were all very excited about the possible cooperation with the fellow students from Japan.

Project on cooperation with Agricultural High Schools from Japan

Key persons for the project:

1. School Principal – **Mrs. Svetlana Radojkovic**

Mrs. Radojkovic started her career as an engineer of Technology, then worked as a Technology teacher and after years of experience, she became a School principal of Agricultural High School in Vrsac where she has been the principal for many years.

Mrs. Radojkovic is the president of two professional associations. She is the President of Serbian Chemical Society – Vrsac department and the President of Serbian- Norwegian Society. She has been involved in various projects on protection of the environment (Waste water examination, Milk control, Additives in food production, etc.). She also has a number of publications from the field of environmental protection. She has been the manager of various cross border projects and involved in international educational cooperation.

2. Deputy principal – **Mr. Zdravko Starc**

Mr. Starc is also a Mathematics teacher in Agricultural High school in Vrsac for 35 years. He is a member of National Association of Mathematicians. Mr. Starc has published various articles in national and international Mathematics journals. He is especially interested in Japanese educational system and tries to keep up with the latest news in that field. As a deputy principal he is also involved in various school projects and international cooperation. Since 2004 he is the President of the Association of Slovenians in Vrsac.

3. Computer Science Teacher – **Mr. Miroslav Cuca**

Mr. Cuca is a Computer Science teacher in Agricultural High school in Vrsac who also runs IT club for students. He is a member of National Association of Mathematicians and Informatics Alliance of Vojvodina. He attended numerous professional seminars and courses such as:

Oracle University (educational center in Belgrade Serbia, May 2005 – July 2005) and gained the title of Oracle Certified Associate as well as Oracle Academy in Prague, Czech Republic (April 2010 – July 2010) and gained the title of Oracle Academy Teacher.

He attended the seminar by Serbian Network for Energy Efficiency in Industry (MEEIS), Innovation Center, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Belgrade University (January 2013 - February 2013) and gained the title of Energy auditor in the industry.

Skilled and experienced in various projects of cross-boarder cooperation as well as number of projects funded by European Union in the fields of education, culture and environmental issues. He is an active member of the Center for Energy Efficiency (CEFIX) in Vrsac and took part in many projects regarding energy efficiency, renewable energy sources etc. He is experienced in narrative and financial reports composition, logistic support, documentation translation, tender documentation preparation, web sites and databases creation and maintenance. Fluent in English.

4. English Teacher – **Mrs. Anita Djuric-Stojkov**

Mrs. Djuric-Stojkov is an English teacher in Agricultural High school in Vrsac. She also studied Japanese language and literature at Belgrade University, Serbia. She started Japanese club at our school where she teaches students Japanese language and tries to get them familiar with Japanese culture and tradition. She is an experienced English teacher who has international experience (she attended Advanced English language course in London, UK, for one year). Mrs. Djuric-Stojkov also has experience in working for non-government organization, Save the Children, UK in Belgrade, Serbia, for three years. She was involved on various projects such as Mobile teams and Children workshops. She attended numerous seminars on English language teaching professional development as well as non-violent communication and children's rights. She is one of the authors of the handbook 'Mobile teams and Children workshops' published by Save the Children in 2003.

Mrs. Djuric-Stojkov has also taken part in various cross-boarder projects and international cooperation, worked as English-Serbian translator and was involved in many school projects. She also runs English Club for students in our school.

If we get the chance to cooperate with Agricultural High Schools from Japan we would be happy to involve more teachers from our school depending on the type of project activities.

Agricultural High School from Vrsac is very excited about the chance to start cooperation with Agricultural High Schools from Japan, Hyogo Prefectural Agricultural High School and Hyogo Prefectural Sayo High School.

This cooperation will enable all the schools involved in the project to exchange ideas and experience from many areas of agriculture and environmental protection as well as to bring more important, cultural exchange. This project will also bring benefit for all the students because they will improve their skills and knowledge and experience new culture and meet new friends.

Project Proposal

Since our schools are miles away geographically, the first steps would be to make them closer via Internet communication. The idea was to get students to communicate and connect with each other through different mutual projects.

Cooperation and exchange programme can have a few fields of interest such as Ecology and environment protection, Agriculture, Japanese and Serbian tradition and Customs, Healthy Food and some topics that are attractive to teenage students, for example, music, pop culture etc.

Both schools, from Japan and from Serbia should establish student clubs.

For example they could be: Ecology club, Agricultural club, Tradition and customs club, Cooking Club and / or Music / Pop culture club. For a start, teachers would organize students who are willing to take part in this project into those clubs. The communication should be in English, so English teachers are welcomed to participate and help the students.

Teachers will give the students and their clubs appropriate topics for research (same topics for all schools) and they will do a small research and then make a short presentation, write an article or PowerPoint presentation on the subject and send it via email or post it on school's Facebook profile (<https://www.facebook.com/PoljoprivrednaSkolaVrsac>) to the students from other schools to see. It would be a good idea to create a new web page for the purposes of this communication and enable other students and people to see their project presentation and work.

This would be a great way for students to improve their knowledge from different areas of interest, to exchange ideas with other students, to develop their creative potentials and of course to practice their English.

We can also include more people from the local community in the project. For example, for Ecology topics we can ask experts from Hyogo Hands-on Ecology Center to propose some environmental subjects for research.

In this way students from all schools on the project will discover new information, get new ideas, improve their knowledge and skills and moreover, promote the ideas like environmental protection and cultural exchange not only to their schools and local communities but also to wider population in both countries.

After the phase of exploring the given topics, students write the articles or create their presentations after which they exchange their researches and information collected on the subject matter. In this way they learn and discover new things.

Final part of this cooperation would be to organize a Quiz for the students from all schools involved in the project. The best way would be to make it possible for students to meet each other in person and to visit other school, either in Vrsac, Serbia or in Hyogo prefecture, Japan. This final quiz will not be just educational for the students but also challenging and entertaining for all the project participants.

The final quiz should cover all the proposed areas of interest and research:

1. ECO quiz
2. Agriculture quiz (e.g. Organic production quiz)
3. Japanese and Serbian Tradition quiz
4. Food quiz
5. Pop culture quiz

The opportunity for both students to visit other country and see, meet and taste the new culture would be priceless experience for all of them. Especially since our two cultures are different and we are sure that Japanese and Serbian students would benefit greatly from this exchange visit programme.

The proposed project has several benefits to all the schools involved in the project. It helps students understand the importance of maintaining a healthy environment and the multitude of factors that affect the natural world around. It gives teachers a chance to teach authentic, hands-on lessons while introducing current and relevant issues. It also provides students with valuable experience and exposure to new culture, new country and meeting new friends. It is proven that this kind of student involvement, through research and unconventional methods of teaching and learning, sparks their imagination and creativity. In other words, this kind of learning can be more fun and appealing to modern generations of students no matter where on the planet they live.

To sum up, this project will raise awareness on the important topics of ecology, agriculture, cultural exchange, etc, not just among the students, but their local communities and population in both countries. It will give new aspects to the power of education and its opportunities when schools share their experience and develop new connections. This project is definitely of national and international importance because it will connect and bring closer two countries: Japan and Serbia and show that young generations of students are those who will through knowledge and enthusiasm build bridges between our, only geographically far away countries.

We had an honor and pleasure to meet Professor Takeshi Nakano at Symposium of Chemistry and Environmental Protection – EnviroChem 2013 in Vrsac, He visited our school and we had the opportunity to exchange some ideas with him.



Professor Takeshi Nakano and Prof. Vladimir P. Beskoski visited our school in May 2013

We are looking forward to start cooperation with the Agricultural High Schools from Japan and meet our fellow teachers and students.

Best regards,

Project team of Agricultural High School 'Vrsac', Serbia