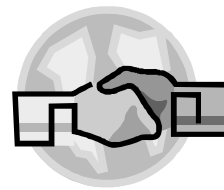


# Cultures of the World - Bosnia & Herzegovina



**By: Prem Deep**

Armin Budimlic is a very impressive person with incredible understanding. I worked with him at the IMAA (Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association) in 1998. Until 1999, he was a case manager. His responsibility was to provide advocacy, support, employment and interpreting services for the program participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily to the refugees. From 1999 to 2002, he worked as a Contract Services Manager. His services entailed overall monitoring of program performance outcomes in all programs administered at the Association. He was also responsible for supervision and performance evaluation; and training and development opportunities for the direct service staff. In 2002, on his assignment as an Associate Director, I congratulated him for his promotion and asked him about his current duties. He said, “Besides my responsibilities as a Contract Services Manager, now my additional responsibility is to determine the technological needs of IMAA and I’m also responsible for managing the internal computer network.”

Armin was born in Prijedor, Bosnia and came to the USA as a refugee but was granted the US citizenship in 2000. Along with his job, he continued his education. In 2005, he had his BS in business administration from Winona State University and is currently enrolled in the MBA program with St. Mary’s University.

Why he came to Rochester, about this he said, “I chose Rochester because my brother Elvis and his wife Sebiha were the first refugees from Bosnia and were settled in Rochester in 1993. When I got the job at IMAA and as my family had settled here, I also decided to make Rochester my permanent home.”

About Rochester, he said, “Although Rochester is considered to be a smaller city, yet the diversity is significant. About 65-70 different language-speaking groups live in the Olmsted County. As I deal with the people of different communities, according to my observation, it is my belief that the immigrants come to the USA looking for better life for themselves and their families.”

“How would you compare the life style of both the countries?” To this he replied, “There is a great influence of the Western life in Bosnia and Herzegovina but the people still seem to be more family oriented and more devoted to the families.”

I asked him, “Besides Bosnia and the USA, have you traveled to other countries also? If so, what are your impressions of those countries?” He said, “I’ve been to Croatia, Slovenia, Austria and Sweden. I have found Sweden as an extremely well organized country that cares for its citizens.”

“By the way,” he continued, “I have friends from Somalia, Mexico, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Sudan, India (he looked at me and smiled) and many other countries.”



*Armin and his family*

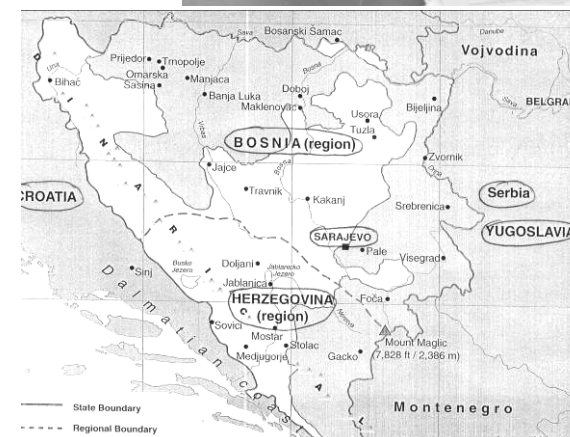
“Out of all the countries and out of all the people you have met, what country appealed you the most?” He replied, “I love America. A great country to live but my heart is in Bosnia as I was born there. My family ties are with my father Arif and my mother Muniba. I have five brothers and sisters – Mirzet, Fatima, Muris, Tifa and Elvis. Mirzet, Fatima and Elvis live in Rochester with their families. My sister Tifa and her family live in Sweden and my brother Muris and his family live in Slovenia.” Armin’s wife Samka is a lab assistant and they have two children – daughter Amra and son Alladin.

Coming back to the regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, they are situated in the southeastern Europe. The area is slightly smaller than Louisiana or West Virginia. The population is close to Minnesota. Border countries are Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. The country attained its independence in 1992 with initial peace agreement in 1995. Since 2004, the mission of the country is to maintain peace and stability in the country. According to Eric Black of Star Tribune, ‘Although the

country faces tremendous odds, yet, a variety of local and international organizations are working to create peaceful communities in which Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats can live together.’

Official name is the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is an emerging democratic country. Head of the Government is the Prime Minister, capital Sarajevo and official languages are Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian. Main religions are Muslims, eastern orthodox Christians, and Roman Catholics. Ethnic groups consist of Bosniak (Muslims), Croats and Serbs. Literacy rate in the regions is 94.6 % and current unemployment rate is 45.5 %. The family loving people are known for hospitality. Favorite sports are soccer, basketball, ice-skating, skiing, fishing, hunting and hiking. According to three ethnic groups, their festivals are Ramadan, Christmas and Krsna Slava (Serbs). With the rebirth of the nation, art, literature and manufacturing industries are making progress. Remarkable feature is that the families are helping families after all the hardships they had suffered.

*Armin at work*



*Bosnia & Herzegovina*