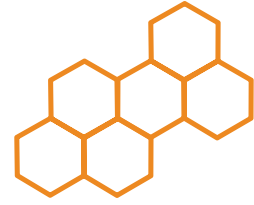




Bee EFB Buzz



Dear members of the beeEFB community,

The past few months within Bee EFB Network were marked by the 3rd Annual Event, hosted in beautiful Podgorica, Montenegro. During the 2 day event, we hosted and welcomed a new cohort of our Alumni from the 2nd edition of BeeEffect Programme. As we look forward to engaging with you this year, we want to draw attention to the open call for 2 new Board members. We invite you to take on a new challenge in your engagement within the Network by applying until May 5th, 2024.

We'd like to invite you to look at a few milestones achieved in the past few months.

Your support to the Alumni Network and contribution to its growth remains a source of pride and a driving force that moves us forward.

Get involved in our EDI activities



engaged
democracy
initiative

Since both EDI and the beeEFB Alumni Network serve to connect regionally and to build communities and regional solidarity, this is an open invitation to you as EFB alumni to get more involved in creating new cross-cutting synergies with the members of the EDI community.

EFB's Engaged Democracy Initiative (EDI) supports civic engagement across the Western Balkans, trying to activate citizens and empower them to demand accountable institutions, democratic processes, and social policies that serve the public interest. EDI involves representatives of various civic initiatives, local movements, CSOs, researchers, engaged citizens, and journalists in a horizontal demand-driven regional network where experience and support are exchanged, and new ideas are generated.

Jointly with all of them, five topics common for the region were identified as a foundation of EDI activities: **environment, decent work, public space, media, and rights of activists.**

Depending on your specific expertise or interests, you as EFB Alumni can get engaged in EDI in several ways. If you are interested in becoming part of the regional network of activists and local initiatives, you can join our www.engagedbalkans.org online platform (by invitation only). When it comes to the micro-granting instrument **Response Hub** you should know that there are 3 calls per year in **January, May, and September**. You can write to responsehub@balkanfund.org for more info on the eligibility and conditions for the **upcoming call in May**.

EFB ANNUAL EVENT 2024

Podgorica, Montenegro



The third Annual event of the beeEFB community was held in Podgorica on February 22-25, 2024. The event was a splendid opportunity to gather and exchange views and ideas. Participation in the Annual event was partially an outcome of the alumni network mapping process done during 2023. Based on it, as well as previous contributions to the Network, a mix of alumni were invited to join us in Montenegro. The first **day** of the event was dedicated to the **beeEffect programme** as the community's flagship initiative including the closure of the program as well as mentorship closure. The first day was **moderated by Irma Zulic**, a program team member and previously a Board member. During the day, participants enjoyed case study presentations, with the winning team consisting of Edisona Xani, Nasir Muftic, Maria Giangkampozidou, and Daniel Josifovski. The day dedicated to beeEffect program ended with participants' official enrolment into the vast pool of beeEFB Alumni.

The second day started with the official welcome and opening words by **Aleksandra Tomanic**, EFB executive director, **Ljiljana Simic Deru**, facilitator, and **Elena Petkovska Georgijevska**, EFB Communications manager. One of the highlight messages given by Mrs. Tomanic emphasized the importance of having fun and joy while contributing to the development of our Network. The event has been **moderated by Board member, Ivan Jovetic**. During the day **Armela Maxhelaku**, a Board member, presented an overview and results for 2023 as well as 2024 plans and ideas. In addition, three **joint initiatives** supported by the Network during 2023, were presented to the wider alumni audience by **Miruna Troncota** and **Doru Toma** as well as **Chrysa Petala** while **Nebojsa Kuruzovic** presented his team's achievements in person.

One of the novelties for the respective event has been a **mix of alumni and local experts**. A local expert, **Ivana Vojinovic** from the UDG-Centre for Natural Resources, Climate Change and Ecology a member of POP (Protect Our Planet) movements, and Alumni member **Milos Popovic** from UNDP had amazing fireside chats on Climate Change and Resilience. The second important novelty has been the introduction of an **external expert and facilitator**. Mrs. Ljiljana Simic Deru has been in charge of the external evaluation of the network and the execution of co-design sessions. The results of the session have provided a solid ground for future actions by the Board and even more important, the entire community. In addition, the common feeling that the co-design session exceeded its intention prevailed among the community.

Last but not least, the event has also been a tremendous opportunity for networking and exchange of ideas, peer-to-peer, cross-generational learning, and building personal and professional relations. In addition, it has also been an opportunity to experience famous Montenegrin hospitality and cuisine.

We are confident that the 4th annual event will mark a significant advancement of the beeEFB Alumni Network, fostering greater cohesion and outreach

We share few photos from both days and for videos please go to these links:

VIDEO DAY 1

VIDEO DAY 2







THE BEE
EFFECT
PROGRAMME

The mentor-mentee story

In this edition of beeEFB Buzz, we share a mentor-mentee story by Sinem Bağçe, our new Network member, and Irma Burzić, who took the role of mentor in the Bee Effect Programme 2023/24.

Sinem Bağçe:

I am excited to share my enriching experience with the beeEffect Mentorship Program. My mentor and I have built a strong friendship based on our shared interest in learning and exchanging ideas.



In December 2023, thanks to the EFB Alumni Network, I had the opportunity to visit my mentor, Irma in Sarajevo. We had a great time discussing my career goals and how I could get better at developing projects and building international connections in the academic world. Our meeting helped strengthen our friendship and our commitment to work together professionally. During my visit to Sarajevo, I also had the pleasure of meeting Irma's friends and family. This offered a wonderful opportunity to engage in deep conversations about life perspectives and philosophical ideas. Sarajevo as a city inspired me greatly; its rich history and vibrant culture made me eager to immerse myself further and draw inspiration from its unique atmosphere.

At the program's annual event, it felt like Irma and I had known each other for a long time. We enjoyed the event together, and she introduced me to her friends in our EFB alumni network. Meeting them made me feel more engaged with the Network. This experience has greatly benefited my professional development and deepened the personal relationships that are essential in our field.

Irma Burzić:

Acting as a mentor brought me valuable insights and the opportunity to learn from Sinem's background and career journey as well. I enjoyed being Sinem's mentor and being a host in my country felt like I should have shown Sinem something beyond the program guidelines.

Mentorship was an enriching experience for me in many ways. The BeeEffect programme has been designed in a wonderful manner that serves not only for personal development but to form bonds and friendships that would last. I feel privileged to be part of the program. It was a unique and rewarding experience that does not come along many times in a lifetime"

Meet our new Alumni!

Radu Vladimir Rauta

Share your experience at the Annual Event

As a first time attendee to the annual event, it was clear from the first moment that there was a palpable energy in the air. I can describe it as a collective excitement of friends reconnecting and very hospitable to forge new connections. This allowed me to interact easily with fellow members of the Alumni Network, building strong connections that we followed upon after the Event.

I am grateful for the opportunity to become a member of a community with shared experiences and mutual passions. The Event can be best described as an environment where ideas spark, knowledge flows, and inspiration ignites. It was a celebration of progress, a testament to perseverance, and a reminder of the power of community.



What does it mean to you to be a part of the EFB Alumni Network?

Being part of this Network means staying connected to a community that continues to inspire, challenge, and uplift each other long after our time at EFB.

It's a reminder that our impact extends far beyond the confines of the programs we attended, shaping the world around us in meaningful ways.

What is your favorite memory/moment from the past year with the beeEFB Network?

The shared laughter, heartfelt conversations, and forging new friendships made it a truly special occasion for me.

My favorite moment consists of several episodes, all related to the mentoring process. Being paired with an inspiring mentor that dedicated his time and patience to explore together many numerous topics, along with the time spent together in Sarajevo, is an experience unrivalled so far.

The mentoring provided an opportunity for both of us to expand our perspectives, refine skills, and develop personally. As mentee, I am grateful for being able to gain insights and guidance from my mentor's experience.

Calling all Alumni members!

We're seeking **two (2) passionate individuals** to join the beeEFB Alumni Board and help shape our community. If you have fresh ideas, love connecting with people, and want to make a positive impact, this is your chance to shine!



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR
**TWO BOARD MEMBERS OF THE
BEE EFB ALUMNI NETWORK**



JOIN US
IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE

APPLY BEFORE 5 MAY 2024



New board members will contribute to our Development Strategy 2021-2024 and assist with drafting the new beeEFB Strategy. Your impact will also be relevant in increasing Alumni community engagement, delivering current programs, designing and implementing new initiatives based on Alumni input, and developing partnerships to grow our community. If it sparks your interest, you can find more details about the Board member role [here](#). Contact us at efbalumni@gmail.com for questions and more information.

Join us in impacting our community!

For your ideas, questions, comments - email us at efbalumni@gmail.com.

May the hive **Bee** with you!