Marko Madecki, a junior in the IB program at the Zagreb campus, will always remember the summer of 2015 as a life-changing adventure. For three months, he lived and worked in London, as part of the team at European Travel Ventures, Ltd., which runs The Yacht Week, The Ski Week, and other travel, leisure and cultural events across the world.

Born in Zagreb and raised near Boston, Massachusetts in the US, Marko returned to Croatia after high school to study at RIT. We caught up with him in Zagreb recently to hear about his experiences.

**What was it like working for ETV?**

Because ETV is a small company, I was put to work wherever I was needed. I got a taste of everything from commercial

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**Community problem-solving in action**

**RIT Croatia helps restore fire-damaged areas of Pelješac**

As part of the college’s annual Community Service Day, more than 80 students, faculty and staff members spent one Saturday in April cleaning several beaches and underwater areas near the town of Trstenik, on the Pelješac peninsula. The area was heavily damaged in forest fires during the summer of 2015. Burned trees and debris, along with large amounts of trash washed up from the sea, had turned Trstenik’s beautiful beaches into a discouraging mess, but RIT Croatia was determined to help, in cooperation with local residents of Trstenik, and members of local diving clubs.

“We see this event not only as an opportunity to contribute to the local community, but also an important learning experience for our students,” explained Professor Zrinka Friganović Sain, faculty coordinator of this year’s event. “Education at RIT Croatia involves learning about local current events, working with others, and taking a proactive approach to solving real life problems.”
A career-focused education at RIT Croatia means much more than just learning in the classroom; it means a chance to experience the working world first hand, meet and listen to industry professionals, and gain paid working experience through co-op placements around the world. Our focus on career preparation is why 80% of graduates in the Dubrovnik campus class of 2014-15 are already employed.

To support this career-focused mission, the college organizes an annual Career Education Day, held this year for the 16th time in Dubrovnik, and for the fourth year in Zagreb. This professional, all-day event is an integral part of the educational program which prepares students for business opportunities and challenges that await them in the marketplace after graduation.

The events included presentations from leading employers throughout the region, including Dubrovnik Riviera Hotels, Maistra, Dogus, PHOBS, Pixel Design as well as companies like Drap, Ernst and Young, P&amp;G, IBM and Metro. Students not only got an inside look at the operations of these companies, but also had the opportunity to apply for employment, by submitting resumes in advance and being selected for job interviews held on site.

“Career Education Day is a great way to connect the theory and knowledge that we have learned in class with real-life advice from industry experts,” said fourth-year student Tonka Pranjić. “This event definitely added value to my education.”

RIT Croatia is known throughout the region for its focus on career education, and our students have gained a reputation among employers as hardworking, motivated employees with positive attitudes and a proactive approach.

“RIT Croatia students come to interviews well prepared, with an exceptional knowledge of the trends in the industry. We have hired several RIT Croatia graduates and consider the network of RIT Croatia graduates a great source of future employees,” said Mario Majdić Natrli, of Libertas Rixos Hotels.

“Career Education Day is one of my favorite memories from my days as an RIT Croatia student,” said graduate Goran Mićeta, now employed with Valamar Riviera Hotels. “At each one, I learned something new and established useful contacts. CED was also where I secured a co-op position with Stowe Mountain Lodge in Vermont, USA, for a full year. The knowledge and experience I gained there was incomparable to anything I had ever experienced before.”

A new element at this year’s event was a series of panel discussions, bringing together leading local experts from a variety of fields to discuss current trends in their industries. In Dubrovnik, three panels addressed the importance of internships for career development, opportunities within the hotel industry, and key trends in Information Technology.

In Zagreb, a panel of experts discussed the current job market from the perspective of employers, key trends in the IT industry, and the role and importance of leadership in today’s business environment.

The total duration of all student coops at RIT Croatia exceeds 300 years

80% of Dubrovnik campus students (Class 2015) have found jobs within 6 months upon their graduation

This is how employers describe our students:
More than 80 people participated in a day of sports and games for the benefit of children from the Zagreb Children’s Home on April 30 at the Trnje sports and recreation center. Football, basketball, a polygon race, badminton, volleyball and board games were all available for a day of friendly competition and fun. The teams were made up of a mix of children and students, to encourage communication and establish a friendly relaxed atmosphere. RIT Croatia students shared their studying experiences and encouraged the children to work hard and go to college.

Since everyone gets hungry after playing sports, there was plenty of food and drinks provided. Local firefighters demonstrated their training routines and firefighting equipment, giving children and students a chance to try using it. Of course, it turned into a big, fun “war” and a lot of the volunteers ended up soaking wet but with enormous smiles on their faces.

The concept for this year’s Community Service Day was decided upon by the first year generation of students, who also participated in all aspects of organizing the event, along with assistance from members of Student Government, faculty and staff.

“Organizing this project took a lot of work, but it was completely worth it, when I saw the smiles on the children’s faces,” said student Matea Cvijanović. “Students, faculty and staff worked together to create an amazing event that definitely filled all my expectations. I hope all our charity events in the future will be as amazing as this one.”
After completing a successful four-year term as president of the RIT Croatia Alumni Association, the “one and only” Ana Jarak, handed over her position to a new leadership team elected in March by the graduates of RIT Croatia. Nina Mimica (class of 2007) was elected President, and Vlado Dujić (class of 2006) was elected Vice-President. Nina’s professional employment includes positions as account manager in the Digitel advertising agency in Zagreb and as a product management consultant at Electrolux Professional in Italy. Today she works as a Senior Product Development Manager at Hrvatski Telekom in Zagreb. Vlado started his career at Sunčani Hvar Hotels, in hotel operations, and then human resources, and he was promoted to a management position in another company. He now works in Erste & Steiermärkische Bank as Head of recruitment and development.

Value of an RIT Croatia Education

"Of course, college equipped me with core competencies and knowledge, but what helped me the most was the opportunity to develop skills such as teamwork, collaboration, leadership, and presentation skills," Nina said. "By the time I received my diploma at age 23, I had completed three internships – this really set me apart from other candidates on the labor market."

Vlado agreed. “Without a doubt, the whole RIT Croatia experience helped my career in many ways: working with different people, completing projects and practical assignments, and soft skills that I gathered throughout my studies, such as presentation skills, teamwork, and many others.”

Graduating seniors from the Zagreb and Dubrovnik campuses joined graduates of RIT Croatia for networking dinner events in April. About 70 people, including 35 alumni, attended the Zagreb campus event, while 40 people, including 20 alumni, attended in Dubrovnik.

This new event, introduced by the Career Services and Alumni Relations Office, provided senior students with a unique networking opportunity to meet with their colleagues who had graduated from the college in the generations before them. Seniors learned about their colleagues’ lives and careers after graduation.

These events also strengthened the bonds of the RIT Croatia Alumni community by connecting current senior students with alumni. It was beneficial for both groups -- alumni had the opportunity to share their expertise and experiences with students, and students benefitted from the valuable relationships that developed in the process. Some of these relationships will lead to long-term mentoring, internship opportunities, and career connections. We are sure this event is just first of many to come.

“The event was very beneficial. It gave us an opportunity to connect with influencers from many industries,” said Maximillian Žagar, a senior in the IB program at the Zagreb campus. “The key thing was that it wasn’t like meeting complete strangers. We all shared a connection and it could be felt because we engaged in friendly conversations only after a few minutes. The fact that we all share a similar part of our lives; having gone to RIT, really sets a friendly atmosphere.”

Heartfelt thanks and appreciation go out to all the other candidates as well: Grgo Aljinović (Class of 2005), Martina Batalija (Class of 2010), Lucija Bilandžić (Class of 2007), and Maja Škrinjar (Class of 2005), Marcela Ljubomirac (Class of 2005), Jasmina Bubalo (Šurjak) (Class of 2008) and Antonio Tolo (Class of 2006).

Plans for Alumni Association

Nina and Vlado said the first step is to define a concrete project plan for the next two years.

“I see RIT Croatia alumni as a powerful group which could seize the benefits of networking. We are the end “product” of our four-year investment and our careers, contacts and experience are a value we should take advantage of,” Nina explained.

Nina Mimica ’07, President Vladimir Dujić ’06, Vice-President
Academic Honesty at RIT Croatia

What is the purpose of a university education? For most students, it’s an opportunity to gain valuable skills and knowledge to prepare for a career in today’s dynamic economy. But at RIT Croatia, it’s also an opportunity to develop ethical work habits that prepare students for integrity in their personal and professional lives.

Intellectual inquiry and the free exchange of ideas are encouraged at RIT Croatia, and students and professors are guided by our Academic Honesty policy, a set of guidelines developed to encourage and support honest and ethical behavior in academic settings.

Some students come to RIT Croatia with previous experience at other schools in which copy-pasting from the internet, or using hidden notes during a test was tolerated or overlooked. However, this behavior are not permitted at RIT Croatia. Our philosophy is that students who cheat or plagiarize on school assignments rob themselves of an opportunity for true learning. A student who passes an exam by cheating also behaves unfairly to peers who studied honestly for the same exam.

The real value of a university education is the knowledge and skills gained, which can only be accomplished through honest work. A diploma without real knowledge behind it is simply an empty piece of paper. At RIT Croatia, students understand that cheaters only cheat themselves out of real learning, and end up unprepared for the demands of the workplace.

The educational environment at RIT Croatia teaches students about ethical academic behavior and aims to prevent cheating before it occurs. Students are taught how to write in their own words, how to cite sources properly and avoid plagiarism. Every student signs the RIT Croatia Honor Pledge, promising to uphold the expectations of honest intellectual work. Any student who would like help writing honestly, is encouraged to meet privately with professors for guidance and assistance.

This policy has succeeded in reducing cases of academic dishonesty at the college, and the vast majority of students complete their coursework honestly, without copying or cheating. However, repeated violations of the academic honesty policy do carry consequences, including loss of points, and failure of a course, and in extreme cases, expulsion from the college. While these rare situations are unfortunate, these consequences are necessary to uphold the reputation of the college and the value of students’ diplomas.

Student honors and awards

Outstanding Undergraduate Scholars

Five graduating seniors from RIT Croatia were honored as Outstanding Undergraduate scholars, based on their exceptional academic and personal achievements. Tajana Grubišić, Alexander Kondulukov and Andrija Sladić, of the IB program in Zagreb, and Đina Lujak and Vanessa Vlačić of the ISHM program in Dubrovnik were among more than 100 students selected from the entire RIT student body of over 17,000 students for this prestigious award.

Commencement Speakers

Graduating seniors Đina Lujak and Tajana Grubišić have been selected to represent the graduating classes of the Dubrovnik and Zagreb campuses as speakers at the commencement ceremonies.

Đina was selected for a special co-op assignment as an intern in the Dubrovnik county regional office in Bruxelles, Belgium in 2014. In addition to her volunteer work at the Domus Christi shelter in Dubrovnik, she is currently working on publishing her senior thesis in RITHink.

Tajana worked for Nestlé for two consecutive summers in the Finance and Controlling department. She has been a tutor for corporate finance, and last year spent a study abroad semester at the Saunders College of Business in Rochester, NY. She is currently working as an undergraduate research assistant for Professor Larisa Buhin.

Innovative App

Zagreb campus IB freshman Tomislav Grbavac recently created a mobile phone app which will help high school students in Croatia prepare for the national standardized exams known as Državna Matura. The application will allow students practice numerous possible questions and practice for the real test using their cell phones and tablets.

L’Oreal Brandstorm Competition Winners

Zagreb students Daren Perinčić, Mislav Mesek and Tamara Novak recently won the national finals in the L’Oreal Brandstorm competition, an international student marketing competition that has been running for 24 years. The team will soon travel to Paris for the global finals where they will compete with teams from 54 countries.
Alumni Gathering, Zagreb, April 2nd, 2016

One SpiRIT Event, Dubrovnik, February 20th, 2016

International Dinner, Zagreb, April 7, 2016

Senior Dinner, Dubrovnik, April 21st, 2016
supply tasks to finance projects. The opportunity to experience a wide variety of tasks was perfect for me. The small size of the company also meant that I was given a lot of responsibility, and, perhaps most importantly, exposed to all the real life interpersonal challenges that come up in a busy work environment. Things didn’t always go perfectly, but that was exactly what made it such a rich opportunity to expand my knowledge and professional skills. There are plenty of things that you just can’t learn in a classroom, which is why the coop program at RIT is so valuable.

Tell us about the interview, what was the experience like? How did RIT Croatia prepare you for it?

Considering that I was travelling across Europe for this job, the interview was surprisingly brief. Many, many back and forth emails were exchanged between myself and an RIT alumnus at the company, but it all culminated in a simple 15-minute Skype interview. I realized that 90% of the work it took to get the job was actually in the emails I had sent and the resume I had prepared. Perhaps most importantly, Marina Drmac from Career Services played an absolutely invaluable part in the whole process, making sure I was well-represented and opening channels of communication along the way.

And how was life in London?

London is a beast of a city. I had to keep costs very low, so I lived in a shared room. I had to get by on a lot of eggs and rice, but that’s kind of the point – if you want to be pampered, there are easier ways to do it than to travel the world. There’s a lot to do and to explore in London, and a lot of it is just the kind of stuff you can’t see in Croatia (or the U.S., for that matter).

Would you promote going abroad for coop?

Going abroad for a coop is nothing short of a brilliant opportunity. It’s not the easiest thing to pull off, for sure, and it takes a bit of effort and planning to make everything work, but the experience is worth its weight in gold in terms of the learning. I really want to emphasize that it’s something that absolutely anyone can do. Even the most challenging limitations, can be overcome (hint: Erasmus has some pretty great financing deals). If anyone is considering doing an internship abroad, just do it. Your adventure will be your own totally unique experience. You won’t regret it.

Over 40,000 Euro in scholarships awarded to English Language Contest winners

Each year, RIT Croatia awards valuable scholarships to incoming first-year students who show particular skill and talent in English, in our annual English Language Contest. This competition in English language and presentation skills earns the lucky winners scholarships for the International Hospitality and Service Management program (Dubrovnik), the International Business program (Zagreb), and the Information Technology program (Dubrovnik and Zagreb). This year’s ELC took place at both Dubrovnik and Zagreb campuses in two phases. In the first phase, applicants complete a standardized multiple-choice exam on English grammar and vocabulary. The top 10 scorers from each campus then progress to the final round, in which they are given a choice of current events topics to research, and create a presentation for a panel of three professors to judge. This year’s topics included privacy on social media, the possibility of “Brexit” from the European Union, and gender-free schools.

“The panel of professors was impressed with the quality of presentations from the candidates,” said Prof. Rebecca Charry, one of the judges at the Dubrovnik campus. “These young people demonstrated not only a fluent command of English, but even more importantly, a sense of intellectual curiosity and maturity. We welcome them to the college and look forward to seeing them our classes next year.”

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONTEST WINNERS

Dubrovnik campus:
1st place Ivan Kralo – 7000 €
2nd place Haron Mehdić – 5000 €
3rd place Toni Tomić – 4000 €
4th place Pamina Benčić – 3000 €
5th place Belma Sokolović – 2000 €

Zagreb campus:
1st place Leonarda Gregović – 7000 €
2nd place Roberto Cukon – 5000 €
3rd place Marin Vilić – 4000 €
4th place Hugo Dericin – 3000 €
5th place Mihael Paradžič – 2000 €

Porto Montenegro Sponsors Scholarship Award

Jovana Ivanović to receive full scholarship

RIT Croatia attracts top students from around the region, and offers various forms of scholarship and financial aid to assist families in paying tuition. The latest scholarship opportunity has been provided by the Porto Montenegro luxury resort, in Tivat, Montenegro, which has generously sponsored a full 25,000 Euro scholarship to the International Hospitality and Service Management program in Dubrovnik.

The scholarship contest was open to all current high school seniors from Montenegro. After a preliminary application round, in which applicants submitted a personal essay in English on “Elite tourism development in Montenegro,” the top seven candidates were invited to personal interviews with Human Resources and PR representatives of Porto Montenegro in Tivat.

“It was extremely difficult to choose the winner, as all finalists demonstrated high level of communication skills and motivation to become our scholarship recipients. It was truly rewarding for all of us to be able to participate in this selection process as we saw great potential in all of our finalists, and we can say that we are equally proud of all of them”, said Danilo Kalezić, PR Manager of Porto Montenegro.

But there can be only one winner, and after detailed consideration, Porto Montenegro representatives awarded the scholarship to Jovana Ivanović from Tivat.

We congratulate Jovana on her success and are looking forward to have her joining us at Dubrovnik campus in September. The college also looks forward to continuing cooperation with Porto Montenegro in the future.
What’s the best thing about studying at RIT Croatia?

Professors are persistent in making us work hard and every day and not wasting our time.

*Ines Miščević, Freshman International Business student*

The positive atmosphere and professional relationship with the professors who are always willing to help.

*Anamarija Trojić, Sophomore IHSM student*

It’s a pretty small school so it really feels like one big family. Also, there are a lot of students from outside of Croatia so it is fun and interesting to hear about their experiences.

*Dorotea Plečko, Junior International Business student*

The opportunities to meet and hang out with amazing people, as well as to get new internship opportunities and make connections that will help me once I start my career after finishing college.

*Gabrijela Brigljević, Junior International Business student*

We learn not only from books, but from real life experience like summer co-op. All courses have team work and individual work in which I can gain knowledge about business world.

*Josipa Buble, Sophomore IHSM student*

Everybody knows each other and there are no barriers between students regardless of their year level. Every corner of this college is filled with positive energy.

*Niko Katušić, Freshman IHSM student*