



Programme

- 09:00 – 09:30 **Registration**
- 09:30 – 09:45 **Welcome Address 1:** Marija Pejatović, Yals Chair
- 09:45 – 09:50 **Welcome Address 2:** Denise Lowery, RELO Officer, US Embassy in Belgrade
- 09:50 – 10:30 **Session 1: From History to Action: American Principles at Work**
Ivana Banković, RELO Assistant, US Embassy in Belgrade
Marica Vukomanović, RELO Assistant, US Embassy in Belgrade
- 10:35–11:15 **Session 2: The Power of Classroom Dynamics**
Nataša Janković, PhD, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Belgrade University and Faculty of Dramatic Arts, University of Arts, Belgrade, Serbia
- 11:15–11:45 **Coffee break**
- 11:45–12:25 **Session 3: The Future of Education: Current Trends**
Beata Dudzińska, Pearson Sales Director for Western, Central and Eastern Europe
- 12:30–13:10 **Session 4: Motivating Learners & Teaching Soft Skills Through AI**
Nicky Koutalianou, Consulting Strategist, Bourtsoukli Foreign Language School, Tripoli, and QLS Association, Greece
- 13:10–13:20 **Project Presentation 1:** Debate Festival, QLS Association, Greece
- 13:20–13:30 **Project Presentation 2:** Reading Competition, OPTIMA, Bulgaria
- 13:30–14:30 **Lunch break**
- 14:30–15:10 **Session 5: Can grammar practice be fun for students?**
Alegra Nikolova-Ristovska, EFL Teacher, Gotse Delchev Primary School, Skopje, North Macedonia
- 15:15–15:25 **Project Presentation 3:** Erasmus+ Opportunity, Blackbird School, Serbia
- 15:25–15:55 **Coffee break**
- 15:55–16:35 **Session 6: How to promote leadership skills in education?**
Marija Pejatović, Teacher Trainer, Oxford School Leskovac, Serbia
- 16:40–17:00 **Raffle, Evaluation & Photo Session**

Presentation abstracts

Title	Abstract
From History to Action: American Principles at Work Ivana Banković, Marica Vukomanović	How do we help students move from admiring historical figures to embodying the values those figures represent? This workshop explores a pedagogical approach that bridges history and active language usage in the language classroom, drawing on the biographies of admired American figures to illustrate shared values and principles. Teachers will discover how storytelling and guided reflection can help students recognize these same principles in themselves and their communities. Participants will leave with a ready-to-use framework for turning historical inquiry into personal action and authentic language practice.
The Power of Classroom Dynamics Nataša Janković	What makes foreign language learning effective – is it knowledge, skills, the quantity of content or the quality of engagement? Or is it all at once? Maybe our students don't know it yet, but we do – they will need English for life. This presentation explores what we, as teachers, can do to make our classrooms more dynamic spaces for natural language use. The key question is: How can rebalancing teacher–student and student–student interactions turn current and future generations' language potential into meaningful possibility? We shall attempt to answer this question together by discovering the power of classroom dynamics.
The Future of Education: Current Trends Beata Dudzińska	The future of language learning is being shaped by education reform, demographic change, new technologies and changing expectations from learners and parents. Can private language schools turn these changes into new opportunities? I will look at some of the key trends influencing their development. In Poland, for example, education reform, demographic decline and increasing competition are making retention, differentiation and clear learning outcomes more important than ever. Mongolia, however, shows how a growing education market and the increasing importance of English can create new opportunities for learners and language schools.
Motivating Learners & Teaching Soft Skills Through A.I. Nicky Koutalianou	Discover how artificial intelligence can transform the way you engage learners and build essential soft skills. This hands-on workshop explores practical AI tools and strategies to boost motivation, spark enthusiasm and make soft-skills training more interactive and effective — including how AI can connect you with the culture of the English language through fun, travel-inspired exercises. Walk away with actionable techniques you can apply immediately in your classroom.
Can grammar practice be fun for students? Alegra Nikolova-Ristovska	This workshop focuses on grammar practice with primary school students and ways to make it more fun for the students. The attendees will be presented with 7 activities that they can do with their students to practice grammar in a different, motivating and entertaining way. The attendees will also be able to get hands-on practice and do most of the activities during the workshop, gaining practical insight into these activities as well as additional ideas as to how some of the proposed activities can be used in other instances, adapted to students in the upper primary as well.
How to promote leadership skills in education? Marija Pejatović	What do <i>The Story of Ganesh</i>, chain diagrams, <i>The Two Sisters of Bali</i>, the Canteen Challenge and Simon Sinek have in common? At first glance, very little. In this practical session, I will connect them through engaging activities designed to spark creative thinking and meaningful discussion. Participants will explore ways to encourage critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making in the classroom, while also fostering empathy, teamwork and social responsibility. These are the skills that help shape future leaders—and what better place to start developing them than in our classrooms?

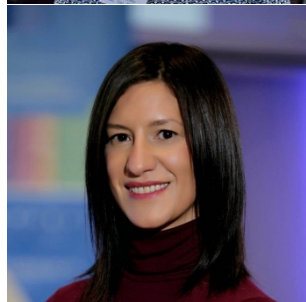
Biographies



Denise Lowery is the RELO Officer in Belgrade. Previously, she served as RELO Jerusalem, in ECA/A/L as GPO for Access and Exchanges, as an RPO for WHA, and a RELO in Lima, Amman and Budapest. Before joining the Foreign Service, Denise had extensive experience with ESL education in her home state of Georgia, and abroad in Spain. Denise earned a BA in Spanish from Mercer University, an MED in TESOL from Regent University, and completed doctoral level courses at the University of Extremadura in Spain where she earned a “Certificado de Estudios Avanzados del Doctorado,” roughly the equivalent of an ABD.



Ivana Banković has worked in the field of education for 20 years. Having previously worked as an EL teacher, a teacher trainer for various national educational programs, and a Project Officer for Erasmus+, she is presently working as a RELO Assistant in Belgrade. She holds a degree in English Language and Literature from the University of Kragujevac (Serbia) and an M.A. from the International Master in Early Childhood Education and Care.



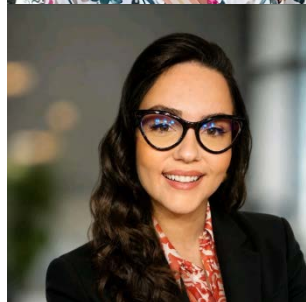
Marica Vukomanović is currently working as a RELO Assistant in Belgrade. Her 15-year long working experience in education includes English language teaching, designing and delivering teacher trainings, working for Erasmus+ National Agency and coordinating European Commission’s educational platforms for adult education and school education in Serbia. She graduated from the Faculty of Philology in Kragujevac, Serbia with a Master’s degree in English Language and Literature. She believes that education can change the world.



Nataša Janković, PhD, is an Associate Professor of English Language and Applied Linguistics at the Faculty of Education in Belgrade, where she developed and coordinates the English Language Module, an integrated interdisciplinary 15-course study programme. As an adjunct professor at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, she co-coordinates the University of Arts’ English Language Assessment for Erasmus+ exchanges. Her research addresses language teaching and testing, multilingualism, young learners, ESP, CLIL, EMI and curriculum design.



Beata Dudzińska is an experienced education professional with a strong international background and many years of involvement in shaping educational initiatives across different countries and systems. Over the years, she has been involved in teacher training, professional development and a wide range of educational initiatives. In her current role at Pearson, she is one of the key leaders contributing to strategic initiatives and helping shape the company’s future direction as a global education leader.



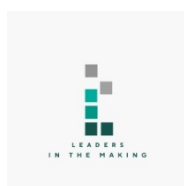
Nicky Koutalianou is currently the consulting strategist for Bourtsoukli Foreign Language School in Tripoli, Greece. She has taught learners of all ages from toddlers to adults for around a decade. She holds a B.A. in English Language and Literature and an M.A. in digital marketing and communication. She has led and organised an Erasmus+ programme with participating language schools from the U.K, Spain, Finland and Belgium. With a strong love for the arts, she tries to incorporate creative elements in everything she does.



Alegra Nikolova-Ristovska is an experienced teacher and a novice teacher trainer. She has over 20 years of experience teaching students aged 3-63, but she loves teaching children. As she loves teaching the youngest, teaching with limited resources is one of her subspecialties. She is committed to personal and professional development and loves attending and delivering practical sessions, gaining and sharing hands-on knowledge, fun activities and games that she can put into practice with the students.



Marija Pejatović, current Yals chair, has been a teacher and teacher trainer for over 25 years. She keeps searching for ways to motivate and engage students and enjoys sharing her successful findings with colleagues. She has presented at a number of international conferences, the latest being the Eaquals conference in Berlin, Germany, Quest Conference in Cluj Romania, OPTIMA Conference in Sofia, Bulgaria and Eaquals joint members event in Athens, Greece. She took part in several KA1 and KA2 Erasmus projects.



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