

NEWSLETTER

January, 2026

Call for Applications for the awarding of scholarships to gifted/talented pupils

For many years, the Hastor Foundation has represented a pillar and support for a large number of young people and continuously expands a community in which education, effort, and perseverance occupy a central place. Consistent with its mission, the Hastor Foundation this year as well provided an opportunity for new pupils to become part of this large family.

At the end of 2025, a Call for Applications for the awarding of scholarships to gifted/talented pupils of primary and secondary schools for the 2025/2026 school year was published, which was open until 9 January 2026. For primary school pupils, the sports category was open, while secondary school pupils could apply in the science category.

After the application call procedure is completed and scholarship contracts are signed, the Foundation will be richer for new members who share the values of dedicated work and excellence, and in return receive mentoring and material support with the aim of improving their knowledge and improving their talents.

The Hastor Foundation recognises and values positive values and looks forward to meeting new scholarship recipients who nurture those values and build space both for personal progress and for the progress of the community.



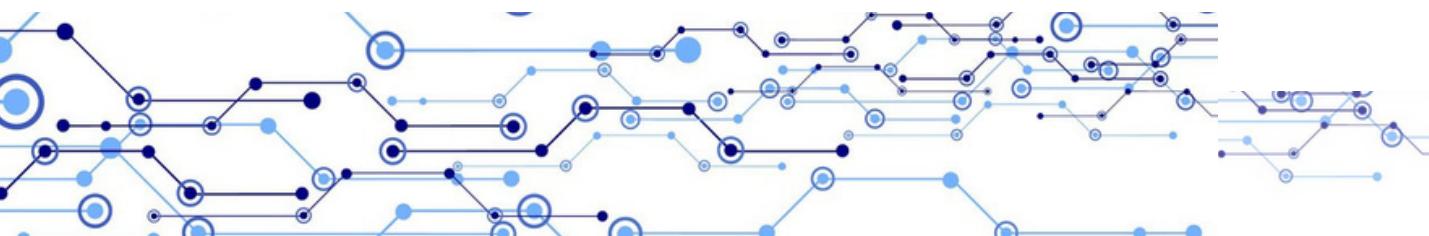
From a school fair to an international Olympiad – scholarship recipient Asmira Kunić at the world robotics competition

Asmira Kunić comes from Zvornik and has been a scholarship recipient of the Hastor Foundation for six years. As a fourth-grade grammar school student at the Maarif International School in Sarajevo, she had the opportunity to represent **Bosnia and Herzegovina** at one of the most significant world competitions in the field of robotics – the “**FIRST Global Challenge**”. It is an international Olympiad that brings together teams from almost the entire world and was held in **Panama City**, in the period from **29 October to 1 November 2025**, with the participation of as many as 190 countries.

Preparations for the competition were intensive and demanding, and often took place in Mostar, which represented an additional challenge due to travel. Nevertheless, this did not prevent Asmira from actively contributing to the team, even when she could not be physically present. The specificity of Asmira’s team is reflected in the fact that there are no strictly divided roles, but all members participate in all segments of work, from managing social media to programming, assembling, and operating the robot. The biggest challenge was to design a functional robot design that can complete the task within a limited time without technical disturbances.



As Asmira points out, this was her **second participation** in such a competition, which is why she was more confident, more relaxed, and more prepared for all the challenges that awaited her. Every year, the competition brings a new challenge, that is, a game in which robots perform tasks on a specially designed platform. Through a series of matches, speed, precision, robot mobility, and team coordination are scored. Robots during the competition are controlled by selected members, which requires high concentration and team synchronization. Other members, including Asmira, focused on technical support online. Thanks to the pronounced team spirit and quality communication, Asmira’s team deservedly won the “Social Media Award”.





Asmira's path to the International Olympiad began much earlier. She first encountered robotics in the second grade of secondary school during robotics classes. A turning point occurred when her professor suggested participation in a school science fair. Months of work resulted in **first place**, but also in a lasting love for this field.

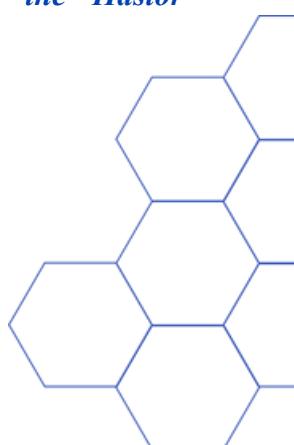
I can say that my love for robotics started there, says Asmira.

She perceives robotics as a combination of logic, innovation, and discipline and believes that dedication, perseverance, and readiness to learn are crucial for success. For Asmira, competitions have special value.



I believe that competitions are life opportunities, she says, emphasising that, besides knowledge, they bring her experiences and acquaintances that last a lifetime.

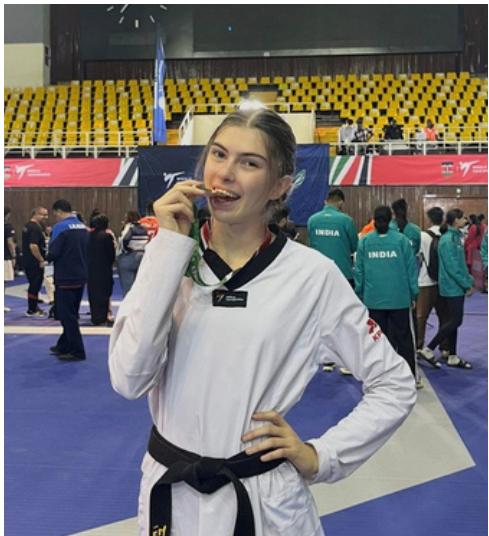
The greatest support was provided by her parents. Also, the Hastor Foundation played a significant role on her path, providing her with financial, mentoring, and moral support. As part of **the Foundation**, she gained new knowledge and experiences and emphasises how much belonging to a community in which she can learn and progress together with others means to her: *The least I can say to the Hastor Foundation is thank you.*



*Prepared by: Sanita Fuško
Translated by: Amila Bajrić*



Scholarship recipient Ada Avdagić wrote the history of Bosnian Herzegovinian taekwondo with a bronze medal at the Under-21 World Championship



The representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina and scholarship recipient of the Hastor Foundation, Ada Avdagić, achieved a historic success by winning a bronze medal at the Under-21 World Taekwondo Championship, in the category up to 53 kilograms. With this result, achieved at the competition in Nairobi, Kenya, Ada wrote the finest pages of Bosnian Herzegovinian taekwondo in this age category.

The path to the podium began with a victory over the Korean Siwoo Kim (2:0), and with a triumph against the Bulgarian Erika Karabeleva in the quarterfinals, she secured a historic medal. Although she was stopped in the semifinals by the Iranian Mobina Nematzadeh, her bronze shines with golden brilliance because it represents the greatest success of Bosnian Herzegovinian taekwondo in this age group at the world level.

This historic result is the fruit of long-term work, steel discipline, and the support that Ada had throughout her sporting journey.

The support of the Hastor Foundation enabled me to focus on my goals and reach top form on the international stage, Ada conveys, not forgetting to emphasise special gratitude to her family and coach Ibrahim Kolja, as well as to everyone who supported her during preparations and performances at the championship.



The bronze medal of Ada Avdagić once again confirms that, with dedicated work, clear goals, and the right support, top results can be achieved, and Bosnia and Herzegovina can be represented with dignity. By investing in education, sport, and the personal development of young people, the Hastor Foundation enables athletes like Ada Avdagić to fully devote themselves to their progress and the winning of world medals.

*Prepared by: Lamija Sejdic
Translated by: Amila Bajric*

Less stress, more knowledge: smart learning strategies



Exam period. Those two words for most students cause mild discomfort, an accelerated heartbeat, and the feeling that there is never enough time. Regardless of how many times we have already gone through this, every exam season carries the same challenge: how to learn as much as possible, and at the same time not burn out.

We thought that learning is the same for everyone – you sit down, open a book, and study until it “enters the head”. However, experience has taught us that the problem is not in the quantity of material but in the way we approach it. Learning methods are not just tricks for better memorisation; they are a way to preserve concentration, motivation, and mental health.

The first and perhaps most important thing is understanding one’s own rhythm. Some of us function best early in the morning, while others are most productive late in the evening. Instead of insisting that we study “the right way”, it is much more effective to study when our brain naturally cooperates with us. That is not laziness – that is smart organisation.



One of the methods that has proven to be extremely useful is studying in shorter intervals. Instead of sitting with a book for several hours, the material can be divided into blocks of 25 to 40 minutes, after which a short break follows. During those breaks, it is important to truly step away – to stand up, stretch, drink water, or look out the window. This way of studying helps concentration remain stable and allows information to “settle”.



Another common **mistake** is passive learning. Reading a script over and over again sometimes creates only a false sense of knowledge. Try to retell the lesson to an imaginary listener, because only then will you understand which part of the material you truly understand, and what is familiar to you only on paper.

Writing summaries can be especially singled out. Not mere copying but summarising. When we extract key terms and ideas from a large unit, we force the brain to think and connect information.

We must not forget the role of the environment either. Studying in a space full of distractions is an almost impossible mission. It is important to find your learning zone, in which we have a “signal” for the brain that it is a space for focus. For some, it is the library, for some, a desk at home, and for some, headphones with quiet music.

And perhaps the hardest part – self-care. Although it sounds like a cliché, sleep, nutrition, and short breaks are not a luxury, but a necessity. A tired brain does not remember, does not connect, and does not conclude well. Often, an hour of sleep is more valuable than an additional hour of studying.

In the end, it is important to remind ourselves that exams do not define our value. They are just one station on the path of learning and growth. We learn not only to pass an exam but to develop skills that we will need far beyond the classroom. Knowledge is not built under pressure, but with patience, understanding, and the right methods.

Behind the scenes of the series “With proud steps through BiH”

One of the projects that marked the year 2025 at the Hastor Foundation, among many others, is certainly the documentary series “With proud steps through BiH”. The Hastor Foundation launched this series with the aim of promoting the natural beauties of Bosnia and Herzegovina, its human potential, and the opportunities that are offered so that young people would see that they can build their future in our country. The Hastor Foundation team has completed the first season, and on that occasion, the January interview of the month will be dedicated to **Hana Kazić Sulić**, our scholarship recipient, as one of the key members behind this project.

1. How did your involvement in the filming and editing of the first season of the series “With proud steps through BiH” come about, and what was your first impression of the project?

I became involved in the project at the initiative of the editor and host of the series “With proud steps through BiH”, Dženana Zulum. I was among the first to whom the concept was presented, and I immediately received the question of whether I would like to participate in the realization of such a significant project, with responsibility for filming and editing. My first impression was extremely positive. I liked the idea of the series because, creatively and credibly, it presents the cultural heritage and beauties of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the potential of our country. I was especially motivated by the fact that the project has a clear message – to show positive examples and to encourage young people and motivate them to stay and build their future here.

2. What were your specific tasks during filming and editing, and what did the fieldwork across Bosnia and Herzegovina look like?

My specific tasks during work on the series encompassed the entire process of filming and editing. Before each filming session, it was necessary to thoroughly research the city and surrounding places so that we would be as well prepared as possible; to familiarise ourselves with the environment, plan shots, and design the visual approach for each episode in advance. During the filming itself, in addition to video material, an important part of the work was sound recording. We had to take care of the ambience and conditions in the field so that the voices of the guests and the host would remain clear and understandable. In addition to interviews, we also filmed additional shots, so-called cutaways and atmospheric scenes, which later helped in building the overall story. After the field part, editing followed, which included selection of material, assembling the narrative, colour grading, processing and cleaning the sound, searching for appropriate music for each episode, as well as recording and adding additional voiceovers. Each episode required a careful and creative approach so that the result would be dynamic and content-wise complete.



3. What represented the biggest challenge for you in the process of filming and editing, and what would you single out as the most beautiful part of that experience?

The biggest challenge in the process of filming and editing was the demanding pace of work, especially travelling to different cities and organising filming within a limited time frame. It was often exhausting to coordinate logistics, filming schedules, and technical conditions in the field, but we tried to turn every challenge into part of the creative process. The travels themselves, despite the fatigue, were interesting because during them we had the opportunity to plan shots and exchange ideas. From the editing side, the biggest challenge was to make a meaningful and dynamic whole out of a large amount of material, while preserving the authenticity of the stories and the atmosphere of each city. It was necessary to carefully choose shots, music, and the rhythm of the episode so that the final recording would be high-quality and interesting to viewers. As the most beautiful part of the experience, I would certainly single out meeting the guests and visiting different places across Bosnia and Herzegovina. Each city carried its own special energy and story, and the opportunity to get to know them better and present them through the series was extremely inspiring. Precisely those encounters with people, new acquaintances, and the feeling of jointly creating something valuable made the entire project unforgettable.

4. How significant was the support of the Hastor Foundation for the realisation of the series, and what do such projects mean for young people who want to professionally develop in the field of media?

The support of the Hastor Foundation was crucial for the implementation of the entire series. Without their support and trust, such a project would have been much harder to realise, especially in production terms. They enabled us with funds, organizational support, and space for creative expression, which is extremely important for young authors. Such projects are of great importance for young people who want to professionally develop in the field of media; they provide an opportunity for practical experience, teamwork, and direct contact with video production. Through work on the series, we had the opportunity to learn, research, develop new skills, and build a professional approach to work. Also, such projects give young people self-confidence and a sense that their work has real value and visibility. The Hastor Foundation recognised the potential of young creatives and enabled us to turn our ideas into a concrete and socially significant project, which was invaluable for our professional development.

Fragments of volunteer activities

In a time in which solidarity is often reduced to a post and empathy to a passing reaction, it is rarely spoken about those who quietly, without an audience, choose to be present. The Hastor Foundation turns precisely that silence into action, into carefully organised support, into voices that speak without words, into small communities that connect again and again. Behind the calendar of activities and administrative announcements are hidden stories that do not fit into The table: stories about learning, responsibility and empathy. The review of January's volunteer activities opens up exactly that space – a space where volunteering becomes an experience that changes both the volunteers and those to whom the help is intended.

Volunteer activities are realised in different cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, from Sarajevo, Zenica and Tuzla, to Foča, Kalesija and Derventa, but they are connected by a common thread: real involvement in the community and a concrete contribution to the everyday life of people.

In Sarajevo, volunteers through educational workshops entered into the world of sign language, getting acquainted with the basics of communication of deaf and hard-of-hearing persons. Through interactive work, visual demonstration and exercises in pairs, they learned how to greet, introduce themselves, express emotions and basic needs without words. These workshops were not only a lesson in language, but also lessons of patience, attention and understanding, a reminder that communication does not begin with speech, but with listening and empathy.



In the same city, but totally different context, volunteering took on a humanitarian dimension. Through sorting, stacking and packing donated clothes and necessities, volunteers become part of a chain that enables help to reach socially vulnerable people. It is about work that often remains invisible, but without which no humanitarian action could function.

Zenica was the place where volunteering took place in the heart of the community, in the community centre. After the renovation of the space, the volunteers devoted themselves to its fundamental cleaning and decoration, taking care of every room, corridor, and sanitary facility. Although physically demanding, this activity carried a strong message: taking care of the common space means taking care of the people who use it.



In Foča, volunteering took on a warm, almost family atmosphere. In the student centre, the volunteers, in addition to cleaning the common rooms, decided to do something more: prepare pancakes for the students who are preparing for the exam period in the reading room. That simple gesture turned into a moment of rest, conversation, and support, reminding us that volunteering sometimes just means being there and understanding someone's fatigue.

A special focus of the January activities was aimed at children and young people. In Derventa, through creative workshops, toys were created from recycled and non-recycled materials. This process developed not only creativity, but also a sense of empathy, social responsibility and pride in creating something beautiful for others. The final discussion and reflection further strengthened the message that even small ideas can have great significance.

In Zenica, volunteers stayed at the kindergarten, bringing extra warmth, attention, and play into the daily lives of the youngest. Through socialising, creative activities, and conversation, an atmosphere of safety and acceptance was created. This kind of volunteering demonstrates that help is not always material; sometimes it is time, a smile, and presence.



Kalesija commemorated the International Day of Education through a series of interconnected activities. Making panels, promotional materials for the local youth association, and an educational quiz reminded us that education is the foundation of personal and social development, as well as a responsibility shared by all. The activities offered an opportunity to learn while fostering social engagement and cooperation within the community.

In Tuzla, volunteering also adopted an ecological focus. The initiative “Restaurant for birds” combined creative work, education, and care for biodiversity. Making feeders, informing citizens, and an interactive quiz outdoors demonstrated how young people can actively participate in preserving nature and, at the same time, educate the community.



It is important to mention that our volunteers this month were also a vital part of the work at the Hastor Foundation office. With a high level of responsibility and empathy, they contributed to various administrative tasks, from coordinating telephone communications to recording protocols and processing final grades for scholarship students at the end of the first semester. Through meticulous work, friendly communication, and a willingness to assist, they served as a crucial link between the Foundation and its scholarship students, as well as all others interested in our work.

When considering all these examples together, it is evident that volunteering at the Hastor Foundation takes many forms and cannot be confined to one definition. It occurs in classrooms and homes, in kindergartens and student centres, in parks and warehouses. It is a blend of work, learning, play, and solidarity.



For those contemplating volunteering, these activities provide a clear answer to the question “What does volunteering truly mean?” – it means being present, taking responsibility, and leaving the community at least a little better than it was yesterday.

**Prepared by: Ajna Šido
Translated by: Maida Avdić**



We invite you
to join our mission and contribute
to fulfilling the dreams of prom-
ising students and young people
who need our help.



If you would like to support the work of the Hastor Foundation, you can
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