

**OTI MACEDONIA:  
CONFIDENCE BUILDING INITIATIVE**

**Community Impact Evaluation Survey\***

**September 2003**

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\* Excerpted from **OTI Macedonia: Confidence Building Initiative** Draft Evaluation William Millsap, Ph.D. and Emery Brusset;  
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## **Background**

*In response to the eruption of violent conflict in Macedonia in March 2001, various offices within the U.S. government asked OTI to intervene in the country to help minimize further conflict and support the country's democratic transition. After undertaking a country assessment, OTI, in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy and USAID Mission in Macedonia, decided to (1) establish a quick-disbursing community stabilization component to the USAID Mission's existing Community Self Help Initiative; (2) establish field offices in Tetovo and Kumanovo to manage community stabilization fund activities and complement other ongoing USAID programs; and (3) develop media activities to emphasize multi-ethnic cooperation and peaceful solutions to common problems. OTI began setting up its operations in Macedonia in May 2001 and was awarding its first grants by early June.*

*In August 2001, the parties to the conflict signed the internationally brokered Framework Agreement, officially ending the violent conflict. To support the political settlement, the U.S. government determined that Macedonia merited a more robust response. As part of that response, OTI agreed to invest significant TI funds and establish a new and separate contracting mechanism in order to quickly disburse those funds. The new program would be focused on community-level confidence building measures, small infrastructure projects and media campaigns, and would provide a flexible response that would address critical needs arising out of the implementation of the agreement.*

*At the time of CBI's launch in October 2001, apprehension was still widespread about whether the fragile cease-fire and peace agreement would hold. Structural underdevelopment, weak institutional capacities, political infighting and high unemployment served to further exacerbate tensions throughout the country.*

*OTI believed that many of the most pressing needs in the country existed at the community level, where confidence in the future of a peaceful, democratic, multi-ethnic nation had been ruptured. CBI, which is being implemented by the International Organization for Migration, moved quickly to provide support to moderate local leaders and communities to bolster their efforts to reduce tensions and rebuild confidence between ethnic groups and across political party divides.<sup>1</sup>*

## **Evaluation Purpose and Methods**

The purpose of the final evaluation was to provide OTI and USAID with an assessment of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and probable sustainability of its Confidence Building (CBI) Activities in Macedonia.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the evaluation will seek to provide OTI/Washington with a methodological model for future OTI operations to facilitate the establishment of monitoring and evaluation systems capable of generate

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from **Task Order #3**: "Final Evaluation of OTI's Program in Macedonia, Scope of Work"

<sup>2</sup> As used in this evaluation, *impact* is defined as "attitudinal or behavioral" changes directly attributable to the interventions of the OTI CBI project, based upon data collected from participants and stakeholders.

comparable findings. The evaluation addressed five fundamental questions:

- Did CBI meet its stated goal and objectives?
- Did OTI's approach fill an important gap?
- Did OTI complement the efforts of other USAID offices and international organizations working to promote peace and support the democratic transition in Macedonia?
- Did the management and operation of the CBI program contribute to or detract from achievement of the program goal and objectives?
- What programmatic and management lessons can be learned from the CBI program that can provide useful guidance to other OTI programs in like environments?

An Evaluation Team, consisting of two Evaluation Specialists developed an evaluation strategy that included a mix of qualitative and quantitative data collection approaches. Relevant documents were reviewed for understanding the development and dynamics of the CBI program, individual interviews and focus groups were conducted to capture a qualitative sense of the CBI/OTI experience, and a formal survey was administered to a sample of CBI participants to more rigorously collect data that could be analyzed quantitatively.

## Beneficiaries' Perspectives: Survey Results

During the initial discussions with OTI on the design and scope of the evaluation, Washington staff made it clear to the Evaluation Team that there was a genuine need to obtain information on whether the Macedonian CBI program was having an impact on its participants. Prior OTI evaluations (in Macedonia and other sites) had focused mainly on collecting data through interviews with local staff, implementing partners and to selected project participants—resulting in evaluations comprised of primarily qualitative data summaries. In consultation with OTI/Washington, the Evaluation Team proposed carrying an attitudinal survey of the CBI project participants to generate quantitative data on participants' views of CBI, its operational efficiency and effectiveness, and the perceived impact(s) of the program. These data would complement other information gathered from interviews, focus groups, and document reviews. In fact, the information collected from the actual participants (i.e., beneficiaries) in the local CBUs, would in effect serve to externally validate these other data.

Once the Evaluation Team had completed site visits to each of the CBI field offices along with interviews with CBI and OTI managers and staff, the Evaluation Team began the development of a field survey instrument for gathering views from CBU participants.<sup>3</sup> Like the focus groups, there were certain key questions (domains of inquiry) that the instrument was designed to probe (see inset to the right) that were in concert with CBI program objectives.<sup>4</sup>

Subsequently, the team devised question sets corresponding to these domains. Once completed, the questionnaire was translated into both Macedonian and Albanian—the most predominant ethnic groups—then reviewed internally by OTI staff and pre-tested with two different CBUs in Skopje.

Modifications were made to the instrument based upon these reviews (note: both of these questionnaires were formatted comparable to the English version for data entry accuracy).

### Survey Instrument Keys Domains of Inquiry

1. Participants' involvement and knowledge of CBI;
2. Level of participation and personal attributes;
3. CBI and Meeting community needs;
4. Solving community problems;
5. Indicators of attitude and/or behavioral change;
6. Likely continuation of intervention efforts; and
7. General demographics of CBU participants.

Refer to Annex 5-Survey Questionnaire

In order to administer the survey, a sample frame was used (consisting of project year [2002, 3003], sector [infrastructure, social], and grantee contribution level [in percent]) to

<sup>3</sup> Had there been a greater understanding and appreciation of CBI operations—especially in the local field offices, a survey instrument might have been developed prior to carrying out fieldwork. However, in this instance, it proved beneficial to know more about local conditions and program nuances in order to develop a survey instrument sensitive to these issues.

<sup>4</sup> These were: 1) supporting positive, community-based interaction among diverse groups, 2) promoting citizen participation in community decision-making, and 3) fostering transparency, responsiveness, and accountability between citizens and local government. The fourth objective on “increasing citizen access to balanced information and diverse points of view” was not addressed since it was basically a media issue.

select CBUs representing a range of project types in terms of duration and grantee participation levels. The survey was administered to 42 different CBUs drawn from all of the field offices over a three- week period with the collected data entered and analyzed in Windows/SPSS (see Table 4.7).

**Table 4.7 CBUs Participating in Survey by Office**

Office	No. CBUs.	%	10% Target	Survey No.	%
Bitola	98	23.2	10	8	19.0
Kicevo	63	15.0	6	7	16.7
Kocani	85	20.2	8	8	19.0
Skopje:	52	12.4	6	7	16.7
Tetovo	123	29.2	12	12	28.6
Totals:	421	100.0	42	42	100.0

The number of participating CBUs in the survey by field office was consistent with the overall distribution of CBUs; however, August is when most Macedonians take their vacations and this reduced the number of CBU participants available to take part in the survey. Nevertheless, the number of participants was fairly close to existing CBU participation ratios--with the exception of Kocani (see inset).

Total Participants (n=260)
Bitola=64 (24.6%)
Kicevo=41 (15.8%)
Kocani=28 (10.8%)
Skopje=45 (17.3%)
Tetovo=82 (31.5%)

In terms of projects, 48 percent were completed in 2002; with 52 percent being completed in 2003. Over half of these CBUs by sector were infrastructure projects (61%) with the remaining (39%) designated as social projects.<sup>5</sup> Of 42 grantees in the sample, 42 percent of the respondents were in CBUs that made in-kind contributions of under 15 percent; for the remaining 58 percent made contributions over 15 percent with the average contribution for all grants of 21 percent. The range was .9 percent to 60 percent. Summarized below are the responses of the survey participants by

“inquiry domain” which best captured grantee views of their CBI experiences.<sup>6</sup>

### 1. Participants’ Involvement and Knowledge of CBI

The majority (54%) of participants reported learning about the CBI project after listening and/or talking with CBI staff; just under half (48%) of the participants be involved directly as a result of these contacts. Asked about the purpose of CBI, 60 percent felt the role was to assist communities in infrastructure projects, get communities to work together (52%), or involve citizens in community affairs. Only 22 percent of the respondents associated CBI with resolving conflict between groups. 79 percent acknowledged that their projects had been agreed upon the “discussion in meetings.” Participants were predominately community members (60%) or CBI staff about half the time (48%), and local government officials (25%). As a result of participating in CBI meeting, 92 percent stated, “they are interested in becoming more involved in community activities” and further reported attending on average seven or more CBU meetings. CBI’s community processing” activities seem to have been an effective mechanism for involving people in their community.

<sup>5</sup> By program category, 79 projects were designated as community impact, 125 as civil society/organization support, and 53 projects cited as transparency-good governance projects.

<sup>6</sup> A summary file in Excel is available upon request.

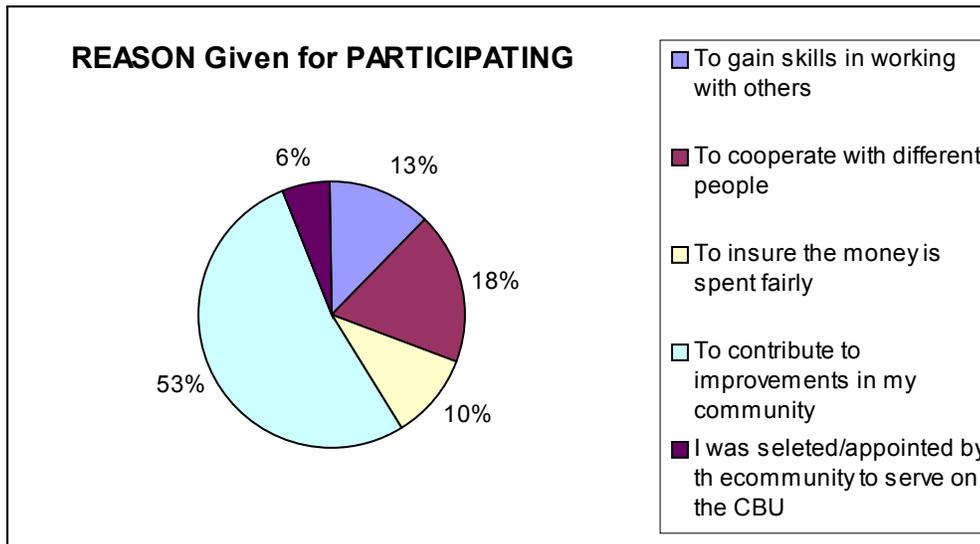
2. Level of participation and personal attributes:

The majority of grantees (59%) said they participated in the CBI project by providing labor, local knowledge (54%), and management assistance (47%). Financial assistance was cited only by 16 percent of the respondents. Of course, a contribution was a requirement for a community to participate in the CBI program—but it appears there was great latitude on what the group contribution could be. With such latitude, how these various contributions are monetized in the database becomes problematic and will be discussed further in the findings’ management section

<u>Grantee Participation</u>	
Labor	59%
Local Knowledge	54%
Mgmt Assistance	47%
Obtaining Permits	24%
Providing Materials	22%
Financial Assistance	16%
Technical Assistance	15%
Technical Equipment	15%
Did Nothing	3%

Of far greater interest is why individuals choose to participate in the local CBU. Figure 4.3 displays the reasons provided by survey participants. Average participation reported by CBU participants was 38 (median=20 members).

Figure 4.3



CBI participation was valued; first in terms of providing funds (67%), providing equipment (47%), and organizing community members (42%) as well as paying contractors (42%). Only 3 percent of respondents said CBI staff did nothing. The most important attributes that CBU said they gained (based on a five-point scale: 1=very poor, 5=best) are listed in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8

Attributes Gained by CBU Members by Participating in CBI Community Projects  
(n=260)

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Willingness to listen to others	4.15
Tolerance of other's opinions	4.27
Personal connections with local officials	3.83
Building self-reliance to start community initiatives	4.37
Promoting commitment to one's community	4.34
A desire to make positive changes in the community	4.654
Ability to lead others	4.30
Cooperating and working together	4.33
Learning to reach agreement with others	4.45

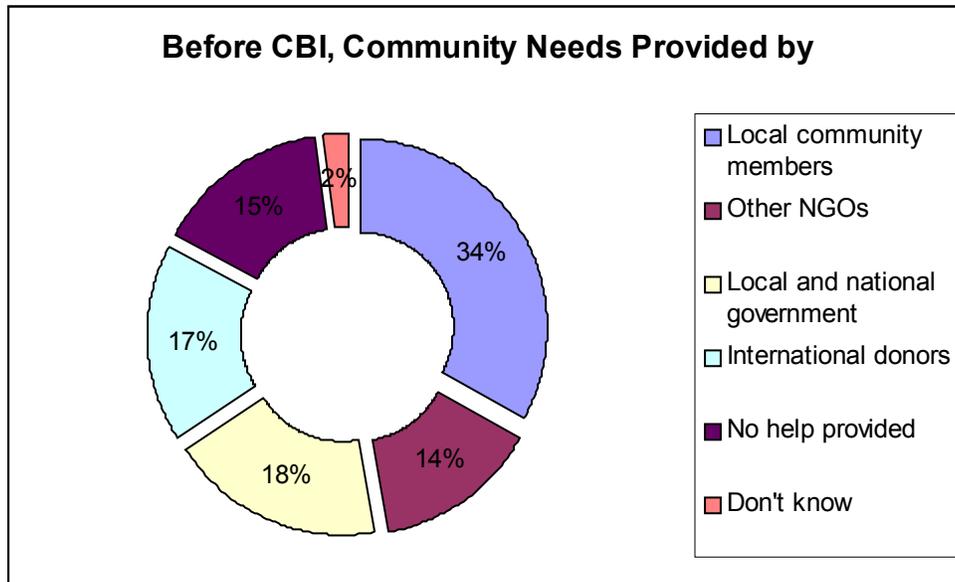
The scale of 1 to 5 was used since this is comparable to the grade scale 4.45 used in the Macedonian school system (field assistants-personal communication).

The highest ranked reasons given by participants was; 1) a desire to make positive changes in the community; and 2) learning to reach agreement with others.

### 3. CBI and Meeting community needs

Most respondents viewed meeting with CBI staff in a positive context where community members talked about common problems (31%) and by working together solutions could be determined (44%). These meetings were perceived as being generally open to the public (56%) where everyone could participate equally (48%). No doubt some persons participated more than others but all CBUs had meetings, and 33 percent of respondents indicated that people from the local community (referring to the CBU) attended these meetings. Interestingly, CBI staff were seen as attending only about half (47%) of the CBU meetings suggesting an inertia was in play independent of CBI staff that was a desired goal once "processing" had been completed. Indeed, as shown in Figure 4.4, before the CBI program, local communities were largely on their own seeking funds or assistance from a variety of sources. To be sure, CBU members said they did meet before CBI (78%) but rarely initiated meetings with local authorities (31%) and said they "showed little initiative relying on local government for assistance (85%).

**Figure 4.4**



<u>Grantee Perceptions of CBI Staff</u>	<u>Mean</u>
Responded to our requests when others did not:	4.3
Supportive of group activities:	4.4
Worked closely with community members:	4.3
Did what they promised to do:	4.5
Approved our project with little delay:	3.3

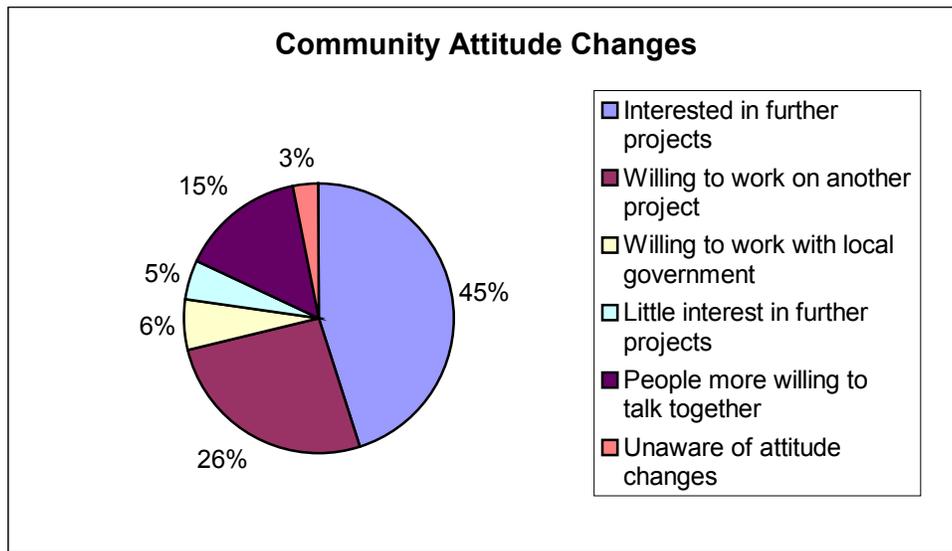
Survey participants viewed CBI staff and their activities quite positively. The inset below shows the level of satisfaction (on a 5 point scale; 1=lowest, 5=highest). With one exception, the ratings were very high. In as much as CBI was quick to point out how quickly they can approve and fund projects, the lower rating was somewhat curious. But since infrastructure projects typically took longer to approve and then carry out via

contractors (and associated delays), the mean score may make sense. After all, over half of the projects were concerned with infrastructure as opposed to doing social programs.

#### 4. Solving community problems

Almost a quarter (24%) of the grantees said there was another CBI project in their community as well as other donors (32%) providing assistance. Only 10 percent said that their local government was assisting the community. Respondents (n=260) felt there had been real attitude changes in their communities over the two-year operation of CBI (see Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5



As a result of working with CBI, 47 percent of the survey participants said they can now “work together to solve local problems,” or participants felt (44%) they were now more prepared to petition and cooperate with local government to resolve local problems. The

<u>Perception of Project Benefits</u>	
Economic Development	31%
Infrastructure	48%
Employment	16%
Education	39%
Health	13%
Ethnic Relations	45%
Community Interaction	42%
Decision-Making	33%
Gender Relations	31%

major perceived benefits of the CBI projects are displayed in the inset; infrastructure is no surprise but respondents also acknowledged the CBI projects assisted the communities in “ethnic relations” and “community interaction.”

When asked about attitudes on participating in community activities “before and after” CBI; grantees responses revealed virtually no differences—suggesting the CBU members were already predisposed to active involvement in their community. But as noted earlier, participants have become more aware of how to become involved and are more focused on not only material improvements in their communities but also group relationships (i.e., ethnic issues, gender relations, and decision-making).

### 5. Indicators of attitude and/or behavioral change

Asked about whether their exposure and interaction with CBI had changed their attitudes in any meaningful way or their behavior, CBU participants reported as follows:

88% said they will use their experience to find solutions to other problems in their community;

- 50% said they would now go to *places* in their community where they did not go before the CBI program;

- 64% said they now visit *people* that they did not visit before participating in the CBI program; and
- 83% of the people in their community where project was implemented are aware of the CBI program.

Figure 4.8 displays the acknowledged attitude and/or behavioral changes by each of the field offices. Each field site demonstrated a positive shift by the willingness of respondents to visit places and people that they would not have done two years ago. Program Officers, especially in Bitola and Tetovo said to the Evaluation Team that they believed their CBI activities were having a genuine effect on how local populations were behaving. In Bitola, the shopping pattern was resuming what it had been before the conflict and in Tetovo (where some of the most intense fighting took place), there was more interaction between ethnic groups in restaurants, taverns, and in some of the parks that CBI has assisted in rehabilitating.

**Figure 4.9**

**Attitudes on Places and Faces since CBI Intervention**

CBI Office	Places You Would Now Go Since Participating in CBI Program (%)				People You Would Now Visit Since Participating in CBI Program (%)			
	Yes	No	Not Sure	Same as Before	Yes	No	Not Sure	Same as Before
Bitola	45	16	11	28	66	6	2	27
Kicevo	71	7	7	15	78	0	0	22
Kocani	43	7	7	42	46	0	4	50
Skopje	56	16	4	24	73	2	4	20
Tetovo	43	12	13	32	55	6	4	37

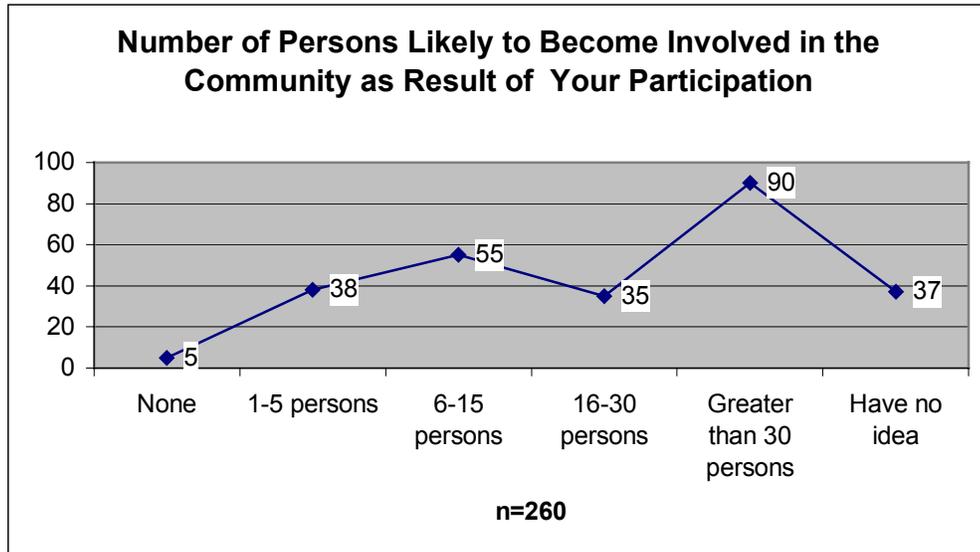
Of course, the interventions by CBI were not the only factor at work to effect these changes. Indeed, considerable resources (including those of CBI) have assisted in improving a more balanced access to information about events throughout Macedonia. A recent survey carried out the Macedonia Research Institute for CBI with funding from USAID revealed “greater trust in media as a source of information (TV 89%, radio 60%, and the daily press 59%).” This suggests an improving social landscape where CBI activities were taking place.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, CBI staff have worked hard and the program seems to have had a strong influence on CBU participants.<sup>8</sup>

Lastly, survey participants reported on the number of persons they believed would become involved as a result of their participation on the CBI program (see Figure 4.6).

<sup>7</sup> See SMMRI, “2002 Census in Macedonia: Public Opinion Survey,” March 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Annex 5 provides a full demographic profile of survey participants.

Figure 4.6



## ANNEX 5 Survey Participant Demographics

**Sample size**=42 CBU, 260 Respondents

**Age range** 13-78; Average=41.4

**Gender:** Males=61%, Females=39%

### **Marital Status**

Married=79%

Single=18%

Widowed=1%

Divorced=2%

### **No. Children**

1=10%

2=41%

3+=9%

None=22%

### **Highest Level of Education**

Primary School=8.5%

High School=21.2%

Technical Training=11.5%

Some College=19.6%

Univ. Degree=36.5%

Post Grad Courses=2.7%

### **Occupation Area**

Industry and/or Mining=4.6%

Agriculture and/or Forestry=7/7%

Transportation=1.5%

Construction=1.9%

Private Business=8.8%

Public Health=5.0%

Public Utilities=1.5%

Education/Cultural Activities=35%

Local/National Government=6.5%

No Response=1.5%

Other (not coded)=25.8%

**Currently Employed:** yes=69%; no=31%  
time=8%

**Percent Employment:** Full-time=92%; Part-

### **Ethnic Identification**

Macedonian=49.2%

Albanian=40.4%

Serb=1.9%

Roma=1.5%  
Vlach=1.5%  
Turk=3.5%  
Bosnian=1.5%  
Other=.4%

**Residence:** City=60%; Village=40%