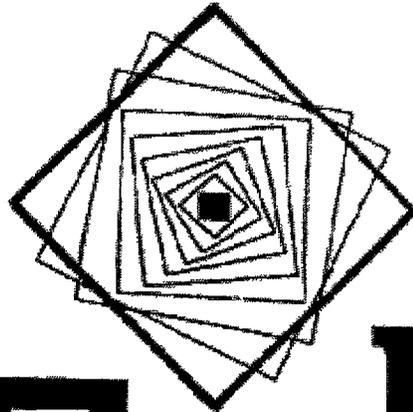


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FLGR

FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT

August 1998 - July 2000

prepared by

The Foundation for Local Government Reform

for

The United States Agency for International Development

Award No.183-0019-G-SS-8112-00

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I. INTRODUCTION

During the grant period the Foundation for Local Government Reform (FLGR) continued to respond timely and professionally to the needs of the Bulgarian local authorities by carrying out a number of programs and projects in the following main activity areas: training, publications and dissemination of information and innovative practices, research and analyses, consultations, town twinning, public forums, international conferences, and financing NGO projects stimulating partnerships at local level.

In May 2000 the Foundation for Local Government Reform marked its fifth anniversary as a non-governmental organization which aims at developing strong and effective local self-government in Bulgaria and broadening and enriching the public understanding about the problems and the importance of local government.

An indicator of FLGR's growth for the past two years is the expansion of its team. FLGR currently employs 24 staff members working in four teams: Training and Information Team, Programs and Projects Team, Financial and Administrative Team and Danube River Initiative Team.

The activities successfully accomplished during the grant prove that FLGR works in a broad network of various partners and that its team is highly professional and creative. The main characteristics of the grant period are: excellent networking, busy schedule, multiple events and activities and organization's capacity building.

This report covers all publications, training activities and programs under the direct grant for the period August 1998 – July 2000, as well as information on other major programs and projects of the Foundation which are of significant importance for following its strategic objectives.

II. PUBLICATIONS

1. Newsletter

During the reporting period 20 issues of FLGR's Monthly Newsletter were released. The monthly newsletters covered various issues, including some of the most common problems Bulgarian municipal authorities are facing in a changing social and economic environment. The Newsletter is distributed to all 262 municipalities, NGOs, government officials, donors, Board of Directors, youth organizations, professionals, etc. The topics are determined according to the needs of the local authorities and the latest legal developments in the area of local government.

Topics covered:

- Local authorities and European spirit and management wisdom;
- Folk days in Koprivshitz;
- Implementation of geographic information system in Municipality of Bourgas;

- The Day of Bulgarian Municipality - initiatives of the National Association of Bulgarian Municipalities and the Foundation for Local Government Reform;
- 3rd Youth Balkan Festival, Gabrovo;
- Minorities' integration in society
- The Capacity Building Process of the Local Self-Government Organizations
- -Announcing the official celebrations of October 12, the Day of the Bulgarian Municipality; an interview with Mr. Dimitar Kalchev, Mayor of Rousse and Chair of the National Association of the Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB); an article describing the celebration in Veliko Turnovo and the official awards of merit, presented by the NAMRB to donor and supporting organizations for contributions to Bulgarian local government.
- -training of municipal officials and staff (USAID/LGI Training Programs);
- Regional Development in Bulgaria and Europe
- -Policy Forums on the Regional Development Act in Sofia and Blagoevgrad , November 23/24 1998;
- -International Colloquium on Regional Development, Rousse (November 20, 1998);
- Fiscal Decentralization
- Policy Forum on Fiscal Decentralization, Sofia, November 3/4 1998;
- Local Economic Development
- PLEDGE Program/USDOL (Partners for Local Economic Development and Government Efficiency);
- International Conference "Mobilizing Public Resources for Local Economic Development", Budapest, November 9/12, 1998;
- Partnership between Public and Private Sector;
- Young People Participation in Local Self-Government
- Student Initiatives in Vratza municipality;
- European Horizons for Young People in Gabrovo;
- International Initiatives and Programs
- International Resource Cities Award (Foundation for Local Government Awarded for Outstanding Contribution to the USAID-ICMA International Resource Cities Program);
- The LOGIN Concept (Local Government Information Network Program);
- The USAID/ICMA/FLGR Technical Twinning Program in Bulgaria: Further Developments;
- "Vital Voices: Women in Democracy" Club in Bulgaria;
- VII European Congress of Twinned Cities, Ferrara, November 12/14, 1998;
- Transmission and Bridge for Cooperation (Razgrad - Brunswick) by Venelin Uzunov, Mayor of Razgrad Municipality;
- Partnership - A New Way of Thinking (Gabrovo - Portage) by Diana Ivanova, Bulgarian-American Business Center - Gabrovo;
- PHARE "Tourism Development" Program by Dimitrina Ivanova, PHARE Program Assistant;
- 50th Anniversary of the Council of Europe;
- Client-Server Technology in the Municipal Information System by Vassilka Sirachevska, Municipality of Blagoevgrad;

- Announcement of the FLGR/USAID Small Grants Program “Support for Local Government Reform”.
- Municipal Bonds Loan, by Nikolai Kuznetsov, Mayor of Svishtov Municipality;
- Public Center for Citizen Initiatives, by Simeon Dimchev, Mayor of “IzgreV” District, Sofia Municipality;
- Why Partners for Local Development?, by Ljudmila Atanassova, S.E.C.A.;
- Assistance in the Information Search from State Institutions, by Fani Davidova, Access to Information Program;
- Meeting between the Sliven Municipality Management and Local NGOs;
- Promising Partnership: Dobrich - Spokane, by Antoaneta Mateeva, FLGR;
- Abington Donation to Bulgarian Twin City of Haskovo;
- Non-for-Profit Legal Entities Act, by Svetoslav Ivanov, Legal Advisor, FLGR.
- Municipal Property in Bulgarian Local Self-Government, by Bistra Minkova, Legal Expert, Varna Municipality;
- Contribution to Regional Tourism Development in Bulgaria through the PHARE Program “Tourism Development in Bulgaria”, by Dimitrina Yaneva;
- Bad to Use but Good to Know Experience, by Diana Bebenova, PR Officer, Silistra;
- General Assembly Session of the National Association of Municipal Secretaries in Bulgaria, by Vassil Pancharov, Executive Director;
- Training - Instrument to Local Governments, by Deni Kamenov, LGI
- Administration - Managing Relationships, by Maria Karadjova;
- Spokane - Dobrich: You Must Believe in Professional Municipal Management, Bill Pupo, City Manager of Spokane;
- A Strategy for Economic Stabilization and Development of the Smolyan Region, by Ginka Kapitanova;
- The River Doesn't Separate Us, It Unifies Us, by Petya Sotirova, Municipality of Borovo;
- Experts from Municipality of Gabrovo Work with their Counterparts from the Twinned City of Portage, USA;
- An Equal Dialog, by Lyoubomir Sivkov, Municipality of Dobrich City;
- Agency for Economic Development and Investments - Silistra;
- Use of GIS Solutions for Municipalities' Problems, by Lyoubomir Dimov, Municipality of Varna;
- Congress of the International Union of Local Authorities, by Ginka Kapitanova;
- The MIX Program, by Fedya Trifonov, Committee of Youth, Physical Culture and Sports;
- On the Regional Governor's Control on Local Self-Government Bodies, by Emilia Panayotova;
- Encouraging Citizen Participation in Local Self-Government, by Hristina Kovacheva;
- Development of Citizen Participation at Local Level in the CEE Countries, by Belin Mollov, “Borrowed Nature”;
- I Can't Imagine a Better Team for Joint Work (Municipality of Blagoevgrad and the City of Auburn), by Ina Raycheva;

- Projects Approved for Funding under the “Support for the Local Self-Government Reform” Subgrant Program;
- On Some Necessary Changes to the Administration Act, by Emilia Panayotova;
- Municipal Mayors’ Rights and Responsibilities Related to Territorial Development and Town-Planning, by Anton Karavelov;
- Razgrad - Brunswick: A Successful Partnership, by Dobrinka Moneva, Chair of the Razgrad Municipal Council;
- Citizen Participation and Establishing Neighborhood Centers in Spokane, by Dr. V. Zheleva, Municipality of Dobrich City;
- Team-Working, Partnership, Integration, by Maya Zaneva, Municipality of Kozlodui;
- The Youth Orientation of the Center for Development of Municipality of Zlatograd;
- Five Bulgarian Municipalities are Implementing Pilot Innovative Initiatives on Improving Public Services, by Bill Guerrant and Bogdana Sultanova, LGI;
- We Will Make the Association Legitimate, an interview with Ivan Ivanov, chairman of the Association of Municipal PR Officers;
- A Service-Oriented Budgeting Process, by Deni Kamenov;
- A Strategy for Healthcare, by Zlatina Naneva, Municipality of Stara Zagora;
- General Assembly of NAMRB;
- The Municipal Counselors are Everywhere Alike, by Tatiana Dimitrova, FRGR;
- How to Write a Successful Project Proposal;
- Project “More Women in Local Government” – “WAD” Foundation;
- Civil Initiative: Readiness and Ideas, by Docho Mihailov, A.S.A
- Let’s be Partners, by Nikoleta Efremova, FLGR;
- The Establishment of a Model for Creating Municipal Centers in the Municipality of Dobrich, by Antoaneta Mateeva, FLGR;
- The (Im)Possible Partnership, by Ksila Vinche, Hungary.
- Civil Society in Bulgaria – a View from Outside, by Bogdan Stoyanov, BNR;
- The Day-to-day Concerns of the Mayor in Central Europe, by Alexander Slavkovski, Slovakia;
- Regional Partnership;
- Cooperation between Government Institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations in the field of Employment Policy and the Attraction of Investment, by Dora Dimitrova, AED – Varna;
- The New Healthcare System;
- IV Balkan Youth Festival “The Youth of the Balkans”, 5-10 August 1999, Gabrovo;
- Address on Youth Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment at the Second Balkan Youth Business Forum.

- Urban Environment for All, by Architect Anton Karavelov;
- Arizona’99, by Nikoleta Efremova, FLGR;
- Effective Partnerships for Municipal Development;

- With the Young People – for the Young People, by Julia Iozova, Municipality of Svishtov;
- Kardzhali and East Staffordshire – the Exchange of Democratic Practices Continues;
- Whoever Wins the Women’s Vote Wins the Elections, by Reni Timcheva;
- Transborder Region Development, by Lubomira Kolcheva;
- The Municipality of Blagoevgrad won “Savvy” award in the category “Improvement of Public Services”.
- International Conference – Young People and Local Authorities;
- Appeal-Memorandum of the participants in the International Conference to the state institutions and local authorities in the Republic of Bulgaria;
- Working group “Free Time and Cultural Activities” - report;
- Working group “Occupational activities and Unemployment” - report;
- Working group “Civic Education” - report;
- Working group “Ecology and Healthy Living Environment” – report;
- Working group “Information Centers and Technologies” – report;
- Working group “Social Activities” - report;
- Working group “Specific regions” - report;
- Working group “Crime prevention” – report;
- “The Unified Classifier of the Administrative and Territorial Units – the New Old Classifier” – Ivo Mihailov, National Statistics Institute;
- “Center for Citizen Information and Services – Municipality of Blagoevgrad” – Vassilka Sirachevska, Head of Department “Information Provision”, Municipality of Blagoevgrad .
- “Postcommunist Officials Talk about Bribery” - Ase B. Grodeland, William L. Miller and Tatyana Y. Koshechkina, University of Glasgow, UK;
- “What is ‘sustainable development’”? – Tinka Popova, Belin Mollov;
- “The Authority and the Citizens – Face to Face” – Dimiter Rouskov;
- “The Danube River Initiative, FLGR Program for the Danube Municipalities”;
- “Special Requirements of Ordinance N 5/98” – Anton Karavelov;
- Useful Internet Addresses.
- “Dialog and Confidence: Interaction between the Civil Organizations and Local Authorities against Corruption; The Role of the Local Authorities – Ginka Kapitanova, FLGR Executive Director;
- “Measures for Fighting and Limiting Corruption: Responses of Mayors”;
- “XII Annual Seminar and General Assembly of the European Network of Training Organisations for Regional and Local Authorities (ENTO)” – Vesselina Kolcheva, FLGR Chief Program Officer;
- “Municipal Strategy for Sustainable Development – Stages” – Tinka Popova and Belin Mollov;
- “Education about the Environment – a Step Towards Sustainable Development (project in the Municipality of Silistra) – Diana Bebenova;
- Matrix for Selection of Investment Projects, by Alexander Mihailov;
- The Experience of the town of Corbey, Great Britain;
- Private Associations Renovate the Centers of US Cities, by Adelina Deliiska;

- Administrative Services - One of the Main Municipal Activities, by Svetoslav Ivanov;
- Let's Keep the Unity and the Non-Partisan Character of NAMRB;
- Only the Changes Will Take Us Back to Europe.
- Transborder Cooperation - an Important Component in the Development of the Development Strategies of the Border Municipalities, by Atanas Atanassov;
- The Pro-activeness of the Local and Regional Authorities - Key to European Integration, by Teodora Kaleinska;
- Fifth LGI Partnership Meeting, by Bogdana Sultanova;
- The Danube River Initiative, by Bouriana Konaklieva;
- Development of Urban Space, by Todor Boulev;
- Fifth General Assembly of NACSRB, by Vassil Pancharov;
- Introduction to Local Self-Government, by Tatiana Dimitrova;
- Brief Characteristics of Municipal Bonds and Analysis of the Emission of the Municipality of Svishtov, by Georgi Belovski;
- Results from the Competition for Grants under the Danube River Initiative Program of FLGR;
- Web-Marketing in the Work of the Municipality, by Peter Petrov and Silven Selman;
- On Temporary Construction Works and Other Issues, by Anton Karavelov;
- Investments for Energy Effectiveness in Bulgarian Municipalities;
- National Conference of the Local Government Legal Officers in Bulgaria, by Andrey Goranov;
- Program "Inter-Ethnic Development Fund".

2. Newsletter Inserts

- The Status of Municipal Employees According to the Civil Servants Bill
- IULA, Barcelona '99, Declaration of the International Union of Local Authorities
- The Community Center and the New Challenges, by Emilia Lisichkova, Project Manager of Community Centers Projects, UNDP.
- Bulgarian Technical Twinning Program, Mid-Term Evaluation, June, 1999.
- Discussion Forum: Concessions as an Instrument for Managing Public Municipal Property, by Bogdan Yordanov.
- Information Pool: New Criteria for Participation in the European Commission Program "Financial Support for Town Twinning"

3. Brochures, Booklets and Handbooks

European Charter on Regional Self-Government

The Charter on Regional Self-Government was adopted with a Recommendation 34 of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on June 5, 1997. The Charter will be one of the basic legal instruments, part of the management package of future united Europe, and will serve as a document, assisting the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. The European Charter on Regional Development is aiming at supporting European countries, and especially countries in transition, to design and adopt

legislation on creation and improvement of regional self-government in the decentralization processes.

The Charter on Regional Self-Government was published in December, 1998 and distributed to all Bulgarian municipalities, regional administrations, National Assembly members and standing commissions, ministries and state agencies, regional development formations and research institutions.

European Framework Convention on Trans-boarder Cooperation between Territorial Authorities

The European Framework Convention on Trans-Boarder Cooperation between Territorial Authorities has been accepted by many trans-boarder municipalities as a basic document, defining the frames of a specific type of a cooperation in Europe - the cooperation between trans-boarder regions and communities. Something more, the European commission through several funding programs supported the development of such partnerships across the European borders in Central and Eastern Europe.

This is the reason the Foundation to consider the Charter as a major document of high interest to more than 70% of Bulgarian municipalities that in one or another aspect will be influenced by the development of such partnerships and links.

The edition contains examples of contracts and agreements for local authorities in the field of trans-boarder cooperation such as:

- inter-governmental agreements;
- schemes of statuses;
- consultative groups;
- trans-boarder projects;
- private-public trans-boarder associations;
- schemes of commodities and services provision agreements;
- trans-boarder organs.

The Charter was distributed to all Bulgarian municipalities, regional administrations, central government institutions, non-governmental organizations.

European Charter on Young People Participation in Municipal and Regional Life

The European Charter on Young People Participation in Municipal and Regional Life was published by the Foundation in early 1996 and received broad publicity among local governments and youth organizations. As a result of its first publication the Municipal Council of Gabrovo adopted the Charter as part of its local regulations and created an example for the rest of the Bulgarian municipalities.

The Charter raised the interest of the young people themselves and resulted in series of meetings all around the country, and creation of children and youth councils and parliaments in many settlements. The initial quantities of the edition were quickly distributed, which caused the need of a second edition.

Local Self-Government and Private Initiative Book, Deni Kamenov

The Local Self-Government and Private Initiative Book is written by Mr. Deni Kamenov, previous Mayor of Vidin and active actor at USAID/LGI Program, training component. It is about the art to reach balance between the interests of a municipality and the needs and interests of local entrepreneurs.

The edition serves as a practical guidebook for local elected leaders and executive city administration staff to stimulate and encourage private initiatives, and to create incentives for private businesses development.

The Local Self-Government and Private Initiative Book was released in December in 500 copies, A5 format, 40 pages, and distributed to all Bulgarian municipalities, regional associations of municipalities and regional development agencies.

The Central Government and the Local Self-Government: Partners

This booklet by Deni Kamenov was published in April. It deals with the conditions and the need of partnership between the national and local authorities and raised great interest among the readers. The publication, in circulation of 500, was sent to all municipalities and presented to the attention of the participants in the "Parliamentary Governance and Modern Local Government" conference, held at the National Assembly on April 22, 1999.

A Code of Ethics for Local Authorities

This brochure presents two working practices in the area of ethic norms for the people working in, and for, the local self-government: Great Britain (courtesy of the PHARE-supported Democracy Program) and USA (courtesy of the USAID-supported Bulgarian Technical Twinning Program of FLGR/ICMA). The booklet presents a *draft code of ethics for municipal councilors in Bulgaria*, developed by the LGI Team on Innovative Practices in Local Self-Government and with FLGR's participation. The ethics in the work of municipal employees, experts, leaders and elected officials is of great importance as a guarantee for the successful work of local self-government. Together with the publication of the brochure, the five municipalities represented on the Team adopted the initiative to pilot the code in their municipal councils. The Team hopes that the other Bulgarian municipalities will catch with the initiative after the local elections.

FLGR's 1998 Annual Report.

The Report was published in May in circulation of 500, in English and Bulgarian, and reached FLGR's international partners and donors in Bulgaria and abroad. Besides providing transparency of the Foundation's work, the publication also aims at contributing to FLGR's good image and to inform both existing and potential donors and partners about our capacity and the quality of services we provide. The report is also a detailed promotional snapshot of the organization.

How to Lobby

This brochure, published in circulation of 1,000, was written by Alexander Mikhailov, forecasts and analyses expert at the Capital Municipality. The publication offers its readers practical information and advice on a topic new to Bulgaria, and to some extent fills the gap of lacking legislation and experience in this area. The readers evaluated the brochure as useful and interesting, and its publication captured the attention of the media. The brochure was presented on air by the Horizont channel of the Bulgarian National Radio, in an interview with the author.

A Manual on the Regional Aspects of Economic and Euro-Integration Policy

The manual was prepared by FLGR for a series of seminars for the regional and municipal administrations, scheduled to take place in July, 1999, in Veliko Turnovo, Varna, Burgas, Plovdiv, Blagoevgrad and Montana. The seminars are organized on the initiative of, and under the methodical guidance of, the Parliamentary Committee on Local Self-Government, Regional Policy and Public Works, the Parliamentary Committee on Economic Policy, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, the Ministry of Finance, and with the assistance of the Foundation for Local Government Reform, Local Government Initiative, PLEDGE and the Association for Regional Development and European Integration. The authors of the articles included in the manual are representatives of the above-mentioned institutions.

Handbook on Citizen Participation in Local Self-Government II "Local Self-Government – School for Democracy"

In November 1999 FLGR published a second part of the Handbook on Citizen Participation in Local Self-Government as a sequence of the I part of the Handbook published in March 1998 and a follow up of the International Conference on the same topic. The best practices published in the handbook present the experience of experts on local government issues, city managers, municipal officials, and representatives of Bulgarian and foreign NGO organizations. The articles were within the following topics: legal framework and international standards, information and services for the citizens, communications and media, the role of NGOs in partnership with local authorities, initiatives for local development, social activities, partnership for local economic development, civic education, involvement of young people and youth activities. The handbook was distributed to all regional municipal associations, mayors, chairmen of municipal councils, NGOs, donors, the Standing Committee for Local Self-Government, Regional Policy and Public Works at the National Assembly committee, foreign embassies, and FLGR Board of Directors.

A special press conference was held on November 17 in Balkan Agency for publicizing the Handbook and also a presentation of the publication was made through the National Radio on November 15.

Information Handbook for Newly Elected Mayors and Municipal Councilors

In November 1999 FLGR published a Handbook for Newly Elected Mayors and Municipal Councilors that was distributed at the seminars held in Montana, Blagoevgrad, Veliko Tarnovo, Bourgas, Dobrich, and Haskovo and mailed to all other mayors and chairmen of municipal councils.

The topics covered in the handbook are: The Legal Framework of Local Self-Government in Bulgaria; Budget and Local Finances; Management of Municipal Property, Public-Private Partnerships; Public Communications, Municipal Media Policy and Public Relations; Encouraging Citizen Participation in Local Self-Government; Skills and Duties of the Municipal Councilors and Elected Officials. The appendices included: International Organizations of Local Authorities; Telephone Directory of all telephone and fax numbers of municipal mayors in Bulgaria; Functions of the National Assembly; Constitutional Framework of Local Government; Local Self-Government and Local Administration Act; Selection from the Administrative Act.

Project Management

In November 1999 the Foundation issued another publication jointly with the Rouse University "Angel Kanchev". *Project Management* is authored by Nikolay Naidenov, Alexander Petkov and Daniela Yordanova and gives detailed directions to management and business students, experts from regional councils for regional development and municipalities on the project preparation, planning, management, monitoring and control of business, regional and international projects. It is distributed at seminars and workshops for mayors, experts and young people organized by FLGR.

Poster

A Memorandum to the newly elected mayors, municipal counselors and state officials appealing for adopting the principles of the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Municipal and Regional Life that has been signed at the Youth Conference was published on a poster with the signatures of the participants. The poster was distributed to all participants and sent to all municipalities.

Update of the municipal contact database of the FLGR after the local elections

A greeting address was mailed to all re-elected and newly elected mayors along with a leaflet introducing them to FLGR's activities and services. As an immediate outcome FLGR received letters from 10 newly elected mayors, declaring their willingness and commitment to work in partnership with the Foundation.

Handbook for Newly Elected Mayors and Municipal Councilors - II edition

Handbook on Effective Partnerships

The handbook incorporates best practices of Bulgarian cities engaged in close cooperation with American counterparts through the Technical Twinning Program. It also provides a step-by-step guidance for twinning activities in a European context.

Rights, Functions and Sanctionary Competences of the Municipal Administration according to the Consumer Protection Act and the Trade Rules, by Radostina Stoeva

The publication reviews the new aspects of the work of local authorities for protection of the rights and the economic rights of consumers, specifically the municipal units for consumer protection.

European Charter on Local Self-Government

European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities

FLGR Brochure

A brochure containing information on FLGR projects and programs was published in Bulgarian and English.

Legal Framework of the Municipal Property – Practical Commentary on the Municipal Property Act and the Regulations for Its Application

4. Newsletter Digest in English

The third Annual English Digest Edition of the Local Self-Government Reform Newsletter was published in February 1999. It covered the best and most interesting articles and materials from the 1998 newsletter collection. It provides useful information to everyone interested in Bulgaria's development and in the varied activities of the Foundation for Local Government Reform. The Annual English Digest Newsletter was disseminated to FLGR's international partner and donor organizations in Bulgaria and abroad.

5. Internet Page – www.flgr.bg

In May 1999 the Foundation entered cyberspace by publishing its own web page. The site offers up-to-date information on FLGR's activities, programs and projects and now also offers the interested users FLGR's publications in electronic format. The site gained popularity among the representatives of local government, non-governmental organizations and partners of the Foundation in Bulgaria and abroad. A greater number of visitors use the information on the various FLGR's programs, the opportunities for financing and the new legal acts related to local government.

III. SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS

Fiscal Decentralization Forum

The Foundation for Local Government Reform in Cooperation with Local Government Initiative/USAID organized and conducted Fiscal Decentralization Forum on November 3/4, 1998. More than 90 participants attended the Forum: representatives of the legislation and central government, mayors and city council chairs, regional associations and non-governmental organization, experts and media representatives.

Greater part of the Policy Forum work consisted of working sessions which produced a framework of a joint efforts work plan. Four major priority areas of activities were proposed and agreed by participants:

- transferring rights and responsibilities of providing services and control over them;
- budget transfers to local authorities;
- local revenues structure;
- access to capital investments resources.

Especially for the Policy Forum Fiscal Decentralization in Bulgaria Collection of Materials was published and distributed among all Bulgarian municipalities, central government institutions, non-governmental organizations and media representatives. the collection presents a diverse spectrum of author's materials, both Bulgarian and international experts in the field.

Thanks to the excellent preparation of the Information and Training Team a broad media coverage was assured. The national TV and all private Sofia located TV stations

broadcaster reports on the event. Many daily national newspapers covered the work of the conference and took interviews from the participants.

Rights and Responsibilities of Mayoralties Mayors Seminars, September 23/24, 1998, Smokinite Complex/ September 25, 1998, Haskovo

The Maritza Regional Association of Municipalities in cooperation with the Foundation for Local Government Reform organized series of seminars for mayors of mayoralties in the Haskovo Region. The focus of the seminar were the rights and responsibilities of the executive organs in the small settlements on the territory of a municipality in regard with the Law on Ministry of Internal Affairs, Notaries Act, Local Self-Government and Local Administration Act, municipal budgets and national unification codes. The seminars were attended by more than 50 people.

Discussion Forum with Students from Vratza, November 25, 1998

On November 25, 1998 the Youth Center of Vratza hosted a discussion forum titled "Young People and Local Authorities". The Forum was organized on the initiative of the Youth Center and the Foundation for Local Government Reform More than 35 students from the Vratza Math and Foreign Language Schools attended the discussion forum. Mayor of Vratza, Mr. Rumen Stomanyarski, greeted all the participants and presented the idea of Students Parliament creation in the city. The students raised a lot of questions regarding the Foundation "young people and Local Authorities or Why and How to Participate in Local Government" Booklet.

Seminar for Mayors of Mayoralties in Silistra Region

On November 27, 1998 the Foundation for Local Government Reform and the Association of Danube River Municipalities conducted Seminar for Mayors of Mayoralties in Silistra Region. The seminars topics included:

- associations of local authorities;
- practical problems in implementation of legal regulations;
- civic society - opportunities for small settlements;
- rights and responsibilities of mayors of mayoralties according to the law of Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law on Notaries;

Seminar on Final Annual Accounting of Budget Funded Organizations, Sofia, 7-8 January, 1999 - 32 participants from 23 municipalities. The topics were related to the closing of the fiscal year in the municipalities and specifically, the cancellation of the extra budget accounts, as well as the economic activities of the municipalities.

"Lobbying in Great Britain and Eastern Europe" Discussion Meeting, Sofia, 17 March 1999, 20 participants, municipal mayors, NAMRB, LGI.

"How to Become Citizens" Training Workshops for Young People, Topics covered: rights and responsibilities of local and central authorities, youth participation in local self-government, and main citizen rights according to the Bulgarian Constitution. Participants were young people at the age of 15 - 19 years. The seminars were held jointly with the host municipalities as follows:

Devin, 26-27 February 1999, 32 participants
Madan, 19 March 1999, 25 participants
Lukovit, 21 April 1999, 37 participants
Vratsa, 23 April 1999, 38 participants
Zlatograd, 28 April 1999, 38 participants
Rudozem, 30 April 1999, 41 participants
Belene, 18 May 1999, 38 participants
Belogradchik, 4 June 1999, 32 participants
Sandanski, 22 June 1999, 34 participants
Pernik, 28 September 1999, 26 participants
Harmanli, 29 February 2000, 33 participants
Tutrakan, 7 March 2000, 29 participants
Omurtag, 15 March 2000, 33 participants
Pazardjik, 24 March 2000, 32 participants
Simitli, 27 March 2000, 33 participants
Sapareva Bania, 29 March 2000, 36 participants
Zlatitsa - 5 May 2000, 37 participants
Bankia - 9 May 2000, 35 participants

Training of Trainers for the "How to Become Citizens" Workshops

The seminars aimed to train teams of trainers to deliver training to young people at the age 15-19 years in topics relating to the structure of local and central government, youth participation in local self-government, and main citizen rights according to the Bulgarian Constitution.

Veliko Turnovo - 28 May, Workshop with the new team
Liaskovets - 29 May 2000, 33 participants
Elena - 30 May 2000, 31 participants
Zlatograd - 31 May 2000, Workshop with the newly formed training team
Nedelino - 1 June 2000, 36 participants
Kirkovo - 2 June 2000, 29 participants
Workshop with the two new teams of trainers - The Students' Diplomatic Association and the Bulgarian National Scouts Association.
Aksakovo - 13 June 2000, 37 participants
Varna - 14 June 2000, 27 participants
The FLGR team also took part in the official session of the Municipal Council in Zlatograd for adopting the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Municipal and Regional Life.

"The Young People and Local Self-Government" Discussion Meetings.

On one hand, the meetings had educational purpose, and on the other, aimed at collecting information on young people's knowledge of local self-government and their attitude to get involved in solving local problems.

Blagoevgrad, 4 May 1999, 26 participants
Lukovit, 12 May 1999, 24 participants
Sofia - "Ilinden", 27 May 1999, 28 participants

Sofia, "Kliment Ohridski" University, 3 June 1999, 20 participants

“Regional Aspects of Economic and Euro-integration Policy” series of seminars for regional and municipal administrations. In July the seminars were held for the regional and municipal administrations in Veliko Tarnovo, Varna, Bourgas, Plovdiv, Blagoevgrad and Montana were held in July. The seminars were organized on the initiative and under the methodological guidance of the Standing Committee for Local Self-Government, Regional Policy and Public Works and the Standing Committee for Economic Policy at the National Assembly, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, and the Ministry of Finance and with the cooperation of FLGR, LGI, PLEDGE and the Association for Regional Development and European Integration.

Seminar “Servicing the Citizens”. Dobrich, 12-13 July 1999, 18 participants from the municipal administration of Dobrich. The seminar helped the improvement of the mechanisms for servicing the citizens.

Seminar on Strategic Planning

On April 11-12, 2000, a Seminar on Strategic Planning was held in Kjustendil for the municipalities from the region. There were 25 participants. The seminar covered the stages of strategic planning and the goal was to support the municipalities when developing their municipal strategies

International Conference “Young People and Local Authorities”, Sofia, 7-8 October 1999, 129 participants. The purpose of the conference was to attract the public interest to the problems of the young people and the opportunities for them to take part in local government; to create an atmosphere of dialog between the young people and the local authorities; to present existing Bulgarian and international patterns for achieving active commitment on the part of the young people in the process of decision-making and partnership with the local authorities. At the end of the forum the participants signed a Memorandum for more active policy towards the young people in Bulgaria that was distributed by FLGR to state and municipal authorities.

Seminars for Newly Elected Officials. The training was held in 7 regions of the country and covered the following important topics: legal basis of local self-government, local finances, municipal property management, relations with media and citizen participation.

Montana, 9-10 December 1999, 36 participants from 22 municipalities
Blagoevgrad, 15-16 December 1999, 25 participants from 18 municipalities
Veliko Tarnovo, 6-7 January 2000 – 38 participants from 17 municipalities
Bourgas, 12-13 January 2000, 26 participants from 14 municipalities
Dobrich, 14-15 January 2000, 40 participants from 20 municipalities
Pamporovo, 18-19 January 2000, 32 participants from 3 municipalities
Haskovo, 27-28 January 2000, 34 participants from 11 municipalities

Successful Projects Seminars

Objectives

- give orientation and knowledge to municipal officials about current trends and requirements for the preparation of successful projects
- assist the preparation of effective proposals for municipal projects
- develop practical skills in the preparation of a written proposal for a project: narrative and budget sections
- develop practical skills in the implementation of the logical framework approach and the preparation of a logical matrix
- give knowledge and skills in the preparation of an activity schedule and a detailed budget
- give knowledge and skills in monitoring planning and project evaluation
- introduce the FLGR funding programs and other institutions, which support local self-government in Bulgaria, as well as current information sources for competitions.

Sofia, June 29, 2000 for representatives of the Association of Municipal Communication Officers, National Association “Legal Local Government Initiative”;

Dobrich, July 11-12, 2000 for Municipal Administration representatives from municipality of town of Dobrich, municipality of Dobrich region, General Toshevo, Novi Pazar, Smyadovo, Toutrakan, Alfatar, Antonovo, Shabla, Tervel, Varbitza, Silistra, Kavarna, Doulovo, Veliki Preslav, Omourtag;

Varna, July 18-19, 2000 for Municipal Administration representatives from Byala, Dolni Chiflik, VI. Varnenchek District - Varna, Pomorie, Beloslav, Dalgopol, Devnya, Nessebar, Mladost District - Varna, Malko Turnovo, Aksakovo, Dobrich, Shabla, Asparouhovo region - Varna, Avren, Pomorie, Souvorovo, , Association of Bulgarian Black Sea Municipalities, Business Agency – Varna.

Seminar on Public Communications and Media Policy

The seminar was held at Vitosha, Sofia on 3-5 May 2000. It was attended by 36 participants from 30 municipalities.

The seminar’s goal was to introduce municipal public relations officers of the new local government term to the history and main professional principles of public relations, the practice of PR in the different social sectors, the role and point of view of the media, the tools for creating a municipal communications plan and media relations instruments like interviews and press-conferences. The aim was successfully achieved thanks to the interactive schedule, including presentations of PR practitioners, discussion with journalists, demonstration of the application of communication tools and small group work assignments. A special meeting was conducted along with the seminar, where an Association of Municipal Communication Officers in Bulgaria (AMCO) was officially founded. Thus a long cherished idea for a professional organization of municipal PR officers was achieved.

Effective Internal Communication and Crisis PR

The seminar took place in Sofia on 27-28 July 2000. It was attended by 32 participants from 30 municipalities.

The goal of the seminar was to present to the participants the elements and instruments of internal communication of an organization, to assist them in planning and conducting crisis communication, as well as to contribute to the organizational strengthening of the Association of Municipal Communication Officers (AMCO). The presentations on the

two main topics of the seminar included also work in small groups on practical assignments, where the participants were able to apply the new concepts and methods. A work meeting of AMCO was held in the framework of the seminar, where the Association members planned and discussed forthcoming activities and selected their own logo.

The seminar was organized with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development and conducted in partnership with the Local Government Initiative Program.

Legal Aspects of Municipal Property Management

The seminar was held in Velingrad on 13-14 July 2000. It was attended by 45 participants, representatives of municipalities - members of RAM "Hebar".

Topics covered in the seminar included "Procurement", "Concessions", "Privatization" and "Management of Municipal Capital in Trade Companies". The seminar was led by representatives of the National Association "Legal Local Government Initiative" and the Council of Ministers.

The seminar was funded by the United States Agency for International Development and conducted jointly with RAM "Hebar".

IV. PROGRAMS

Subgrant Program "Support for the Reform in Local Self-Government"

The Support for Local Self-Government Program was FLGR's first subgrant program. The program provides grants of up to \$10 000 to Bulgarian non-governmental organizations for the implementation of projects, developed in partnership with local governments, civic groups, institutions, representatives of the business circles, etc. The program aims at encouraging cooperation at local level among key participants in the process of municipal and regional development.

The program goals are:

- to encourage the implementation of innovative ideas and practices in the field of local self-government;
- to enable the creation of conditions conducive to the improvement of the local self-government environment;
- to promote partnership among citizen organizations, local governments, local institutions and business representatives.

The Program started in January 1999. 170 NGOs from all over the country applied with their projects in the competition. Projects fell primarily in the following categories: promotion of citizen participation in local self-government, development of mechanisms improving the efficient work of local authorities, improvement of the socio-economic environment, and youth participation in local self-government.

More than 85 Bulgarian municipalities pledged their willingness to work in cooperation with Bulgarian NGOs. After a review and evaluation of the projects by an Expert

Committee, 21 projects were approved by FLGR's Board of Directors for funding under the Program.

Project implementation started in June 1999. The major challenge to all implementing organizations was the transition period in their work with the newly elected local government representatives. The momentum gained in the dialogue with the local authorities until that moment and the express willingness of local government officials to further develop the established partnerships, however, turned out to be the major factors of a smooth transition.

A very positive result under the Program is the involvement of representatives of Regional Governments within the partnerships to achieve project goals. They have been active participants in the projects and have contributed for the creation of sustainable mechanisms of interaction with local government representatives and citizens, which in its turn is a factor for sustainable development.

The list of projects implemented in 1999-2000 includes:

- Agency for Regional Economic Development and Investments – Kardjali* - Partnership for sustainable development of Kardjali Municipality
- Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights* - Civil participation in the decision-making mechanisms
- Bulgarka National Civil Forum – Sofia* - Encouragement of participation of women in local self-government
- Civil Society Development Foundation – Sofia* - Civil Initiative for local Community Foundations
- Club "Economika 2000" – Sofia* - Socio-economic development of Nevestino Municipality: strategy and implementation
- Community Development/Information Centre – Zlatograd* - Stimulation of active civil participation and municipal information services in Zlatograd Municipality
- Educational Youth Centre – Yambol* - Building up sustainable models for interaction between local government, businesses, NGOs and the media
- Euro- Atlantic Foundation for Security and Foreign Policy -- Sofia* - Partnership between the local government and NGOs in Ihtiman and Kostenets
- Gabrovo Youth Information Cultural Centre* - Young people -- partners for efficient local self-government
- Human Dimension Foundation – Russe* - A family for the days off
- Institute for financial research and innovations – Sofia* - Venture capital and entrepreneurship in the municipality
- Institute for Political and Legal Studies – Sofia* - Building up municipal centres for work with young people in Bankya District, Sofia Municipality and in Veliko Tarnovo Municipality
- Media with human face – Plovdiv* - Government and citizens -- face to face
- National City Secretaries' Association – Gabrovo* - Preparation and publishing of a Handbook for municipal protocol service provision

National Association of Political Science Students -- Sofia - The deliberation forum -- a means of enhancing civil knowledge and the quality of selection of local government elite

Regional Economic Development Agency -- Stara Zagora - Development and implementation of a program aimed at the needs of consumers of services as a basis for improvement of the social and economic environment for local government reform

Romany Public Council COUPATE -- Sofia - Partnership -- a vehicle for the implementation of a municipal program for work with Romany

Social Development Club -- Dobrich - Civil dialog academy

Sustainable Mountain Development Centre -- Smolyan - Beyond the city: information support for a strong local self-government in two "village" municipalities of Smolyan Region, Borino and Banite

Veliki Preslav Foundation -- Veliki Preslav - History, culture and tourism in support of the socio-economic development of Veliki Preslav

Znanie -- Lovech - Approved by: the Citizen!

V. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

• Recruitment

In August 1999 FLGR announced competition for filling in the positions of Chief Program Officer and Innovative Practices Project Coordinator. The overall number of applicants was 40, of which 15 were shortlisted for interview. After the selection process was completed, Vesselina Kolcheva was appointed as Chief Program Officer and Bogdana Shopova – as Innovative Practices Project Coordinator.

In October 1999 FLGR announced in the Capital Newspaper a competition for filling in the positions of Project Manager, Grant Officer, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Financial Officer and Technical Assistant for the Danube River Initiative Program. The overall number of applicants was 100 for the various positions. Part of them were shortlisted for interview and after the selection process was completed, Bouriana Konaklieva was appointed as Project Manager, Andrey Goranov – as Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Peter Chesnovski – as Financial Officer and Milena Evtimova – as Technical Assistant.

Two rounds of interviews were conducted in April and May 2000 for the position of MIS Manager/Systems Administrator. As a result, Angel Georgiev was recruited as a MIS Manager.

• Staff Retreats

On December 8/9, 1998 the Foundation organized Staff Retreat in Bistritza. The retreat aimed at creating a network schedule for 1998 and adoption of ethic code procedures. For a day and a half the staff managed to accomplish several things:

- detailed schedule for the first three month period of 1998;
- framework of activities for 1998;

- basic drafts of technological schemes for standard events such as seminars, conferences, publications;
- new organizational structure;
- changes in the administrative procedures.

On 19-21 September 1999 FLGR staff organized a staff retreat in Shipkovo near the town of Troyan. The team discussed its overall activities with regard to the application for a USAID grant. The intensive discussions and brainstorming group sessions resulted in the formulation of the strategy, mission, and vision, as well as the specific strategic objectives of the Foundation. The newly appointed team members also joined the retreat and were involved in the discussions.

On 3-4 December 1999 FLGR organized a staff retreat on organizational development in Park Hotel "Moskva". The team analyzed the organization's strengths and weaknesses, solutions to existing problems and the organizational values. The group sessions and common discussions resulted in finding ways to deal with problems and share responsibilities. The newly appointed team members also participated actively in all sessions.

On 17-19 March 2000 FLGR organized a staff retreat in Pamporovo. The staff members held a group session on organizational issues. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the job descriptions of all team members, promoting FLGR's image by consistent staff behavior, getting to know better each other and considering ways to celebrate FLGR's fifth anniversary.

Another Staff Retreat was held on April 24-26, 2000. It was focused on methods of organizational performance improvement and was facilitated by Camille Barnett, international consultant.

On 21-24 July FLGR organized a staff retreat in the Sunny Beach resort.

- **Anniversary Celebration**

FLGR held its Fifth Anniversary Celebration on May 18, 2000 at the Matty Hall. The party was attended by more than 100 guests - municipal mayors, representatives of donor organizations, NGOs, Bulgarian and international partners and FLGR collaborators. Anniversary rewards were granted to the people and organizations who have mostly contributed to FLGR success to date.

VI. OTHER PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES FUNDED BY OTHER DONORS

1. Danube River Initiative Program

In the beginning of October 1999 the Foundation for Local Government Reform started the implementation of a complex program for the municipalities along the Danube River with the financial support of USAID.

Its main objective is to assist the Danube River Municipalities to overcome the consequences of Kosovo crisis through creating possibilities for sustainable development. Through its activities FLGR aims at increasing the effective performance of municipal services, improving the living environment and building community spirit by implementing small scale infrastructure projects, creating a favorable environment for dialog and partnership between non-governmental organizations and local government and identifying appropriate instruments for local economic growth and promotion of existing resources and investment opportunities.

In the realization of concrete initiatives, FLGR implements expertise, experience and working practices accumulated during its 5 years of existence. The Program successfully combines different approaches for assistance through providing information, training, consultations, funding of projects proposed either by municipalities or non-governmental organizations. FLGR applies tailor-made approach to each one of its partners according to their needs and ideas. The Foundation aims at creating a favorable environment for dialog and mutual activities between all the parties concerned in the region, thus providing long-term sustainable development.

600 000 USD are disbursed for the following types of projects:

- Funded 9 infrastructure projects;
- 4 Citizens Service Centers are under construction;
- 2 Municipal Development Centers are being established;
- A Municipal Tourist Center is being established;
- 7 projects of local non-governmental organizations are being implemented;
- the institutional strengthening of the Association of Danube River Municipalities is being supported;
- Strategies for development of Pleven and Rousse regions are being elaborated;
- Expert assistance and consultations are being provided to 3 municipalities in order to facilitate their efforts to develop marketing strategies and advertising materials containing information for local resources and investment opportunities.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

▪ Hristo Botev School Playground Construction – Kozloduy

The Foundation for Local Government Reform approved for financing at the amount of 80,000 leva a project for overall construction and planting of children's playground at an area of about 7 dka. 1384 children will use the field and track utilities, new basketball and volleyball playgrounds.

- **Municipal Market in Glavinitsa**

98 297 leva were granted for marketplace complex construction with a parking lot, recreation center and an administrative building located in the center of the town. The area will be urbanized and planted. 54 covered stalls are going to be at the tradesmen's disposal.

- **Public Works in Vazhodi Living Complex - Tutrakan**

The Foundation for Local Government Reform granted 94 700 leva for the transformation of an interblock space in a living complex, inhabited by some 15% of the town population, into a complex with modern design. Asphalt and pavements will be laid; parking lots are going to be built as well as children's and sports playgrounds, recreation center.

- **Water Supply of Village of Bazovets, Valchedram Municipality**

FLGR granted 85 890 leva for construction of the inner water supply network including all the main branches with a total length of 6000 m. 257 people will use the newly built utility. Most of the inhabitants of the village contribute to the construction working as volunteers.

- **Reconstruction of A Part of a Water Supply Network – Novo Selo**

56 671 leva were granted for renovation of a 838 m water-conduit. The frequent water supply network failures due to crack pipes will cease and 1534 people will rhythmically be supplied with water. There will be put an end to the regular digging of the main street.

- **Providing Sewerage in a Roma Neighborhood – Oryahovo**

The financial assistance of FLGR to the amount of 95 100 leva was intended for a construction of 623 m sewerage along the Totleben and Raina Knyaginya streets. The ecological environment and hygiene in the neighborhood will be improved. The flooding of the ground will cease as well as the risk of a renewed landslide activity in the lower part of Totleben street will be minimized. The danger of hepatitis and stomach infections dissemination will be diminished too.

IMPROVING OF LIVING ENVIRONMENT

- **Fortification and Anti-Erosion Activities in the Village of Obretenik, Borovo Municipality**

FLGR provided financial assistance at the amount of 85 464 leva for stopping of erosion processes going in the southeastern part of the village. There existed a real danger of breaking off the Roma neighborhood from the rest of the village. Thus, through construction of this utility the existing infrastructure (road, electric wiring, water conduit) will be preserved

- **Sewerage and Reconstruction of Alexander Stamboliiski Street – Belene**

92 165 leva were granted for a construction of 280 m sewerage branch, laying of a road bed and asphalt along Alexander Stamboliiski street in the town of Belene. Thus 6 neighborhoods from the northeastern part of the town will be connected to the center.

▪ **Improvement of Roma Neighborhoods Microinfrastructure – Lom**

FLGR granted 19 915 leva for sanitation of illegal dumps in Stadionna and Mladenovo neighborhoods. The refuse will be transported to the town dump. 2 concrete floors will be built and 16 refuse cans installed. The Roma population will contribute to the project through volunteer planting of the clean places.

CITIZENS SERVICE CENTERS

4 citizens service centers in the municipalities of Rousse, Silistra, Vidin and Svishtov are established within the framework of the Danube River Initiative. The Foundation for Local Government Reform granted 330 000 leva for construction activities, technical equipment delivery, software and staff training. The aim of this program component is to increase the efficacy and transparency of municipal services delivered through introduction of modern administrative-management and information technologies.

In the newly established centers the approach of service delivery to the citizens will be completely different - characterized by quick and effective servicing by highly qualified personnel. The range of municipal services delivered will increase including civil status, municipal property and rent relations; transport, trade and protection of customers as well as all administrative-technical services. "One-stop shop", i.e. one counter service, will be the working principle. The transition from close type of municipal management into an open administration will be achieved.

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

The Foundation for Local Government Reform granted 30 000 leva to the municipality of Dimovo for establishment of a center which will foster the development of municipalities of Dimovo, Ruzhintsi and Makresh. The newly established center will assist the local governments in applying for funding under different projects as well as in developing strategies for development. It will provide a great range of consultations and services to the citizens and local business. A part of the funding will cover the reconstruction of the building.

26 000 leva were granted to the municipality of Nikopol for the establishment of a similar center which apart from its main task will also stimulate the trans-border relations with the Romanian municipality of Turno Magurele and organize the cleaning of the Danube River coast.

TOURIST CENTER

Roussenski Lom-Danube Tourist Info Centre - Village Of Ivanovo

The Foundation for Local Government Reform granted 30 000 leva to the municipality of Ivanovo for establishment of a tourist information center which will make popular the tourist heritage on the territory of the municipality. Its main task will be to motivate the local population to participate in tourist business development. The center activities will also be directed towards tourist package marketing in the country and abroad as well as attracting potential investors. Half of the funding will cover the reconstruction and equipment delivery.

NGO PROJECTS

Children's Playground Public Works – Village of Iskra, Municipality of Sitovo

The Foundation for Local Government Reform granted 5 000 leva to the NGO Union of women – village of Iskra for replacement of a part of the fence, formation of children's playgrounds, painting of slides, refurbishment inside the building and planting. The parents will contribute to the project as volunteers. Thus 70 children will have better conditions for playing and recreation.

Time Project – Village of Golyamo Vranovo, Municipality of Slivo Pole

3 754 leva were granted for restoration of the clock-relic installed on Ivan Vazov school's tower in 1929. This is the symbol of the village that has united the diverse ethnic population over the years.

Danube Park 2000 Project – Town of Silistra

FLGR granted 14 523 leva to the Bulgarian Union of Women – town of Silistra for reconstruction of games and recreation utilities in the coast town park. The project includes formation of an eco-path, organization of park celebrations, publishing of a map and creation of a web page of one of the most favorite places for recreation of the people living in the town of Silistra and its guests.

Green School for Children and Adults – Village of Novo Selo, Vidin Region

16 340 leva were granted to Zemedelts Chitalishte, municipality of Novo Selo for a great number of ecological initiatives: the fruit trees in all villages on the territory of the municipality were treated against pests (white butterfly), the paths of entrance to the Danube River as well as the coast itself were cleaned and indicative boards placed. Children eco-clubs with the local schools were formed. The domestic ruminants were vaccinated against Ektima kontageosa. The eroded coast will be planted and fortified with the contribution of the municipality and the forestry enterprise.

FLGR granted 5 309 leva to Akademik Sports Society – Rousse in order to form and advertise tourist routes along Roussenski Lom river.

“Ariadna's Thread” Project

“Ariadna's thread” project of the European Space – 21st Century Organization was approved for financing at the amount of 14 450 leva. It includes development of a multimedia product presenting the organizational structure of the municipal administration in Rousse and introducing it to the general public.

“Little Prince” Children’s Playground - Vidin

FLGR granted 16 130 leva to Friends for Vidin organization for construction of a children’s playground and making public works of a part of the coastal park zone. Games spots, rock gardens and flowerbeds will be formed. An open-air summer stage is going to be built on which children celebrations, concerts and competitions will take place.

26 372 leva were granted for the institutional strengthening of the Association of Danube River Municipalities

2. Technical Twinning Program

The successful implementation of the Bulgarian Technical Twinning Program, Phase II continued with the support and coordination of the Foundation for Local Government Reform and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), USA.

The program allows Bulgarian and American partner-municipalities to exchange experience, know-how and successful practices in important areas of local self-government. The short-term goal of the program is to provide assistance to Bulgarian Municipalities in solving specific technical and management issues, to offer opportunities for initiatives in local economic development, establishing public-private partnerships to improve the functioning and service delivery of the municipalities and increase citizen participation in local governance.

In the long run, the program aims at strengthening the capacity of the local governments by means of alternative approaches and application of innovative ideas in partnership with other public and private organizations.

In the course of the reporting period, the four partnerships Blagoevgrad/Auburn, AL; Gabrovo/Portage, MI; Dobrich/Spokane, WA and Razgrad/Brunswick, OH developed successful projects to meet the needs of the Bulgarian Municipalities in the areas of: *economic development applying the principle of public private partnership, strategic planning, infrastructure management and planning, ecology and solid waste management, citizen participation, community development and others.*

The results of the II Phase of the Program were shared and disseminated among Bulgarian local governments at the Final Seminar “Effective Partnerships for Municipal Development” conducted in Albena in September 1999, with the participation of the four partnerships: Blagoevgrad/Auburn, AL; Gabrovo/Portage, MI; Dobrich/Spokane, WA and Razgrad/Brunswick, OH, Bulgarian Pilot Project cities, representatives of municipal associations and international organizations.

In February 2000 a joint FLGR/ICMA Twinning Program team undertook a study tour to Canada and USA. Meetings, site visits and discussions were held with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Chief Administrators, City Managers, technical staff and

partnership coordinators in the cities of Courtenay, Kamloops, Rossland (Canada) and Scottsdale, Tempe, Tallahassee (USA).

The team was able to study the experience, explore the diversity of models of international technical cooperation on municipal level and widen its understanding of effective international links world wide.

Valuable knowledge was obtained on program methodology, areas of cooperation, factors of sustainability, hindering factors, impact criteria, dissemination and replication of best practices.

Convening a Round Table Meeting between the participants in Phase I and II, hosted by the City of Auburn, AL in the period April 12-15,2000. Representatives of all seven Bulgarian-American partnerships met together to:

- Discuss avenues for self-sustainability of the partnerships;
- Discuss ideas for self-sustaining activities through expanded community involvement and funding for the partnerships;
- Introduce new leaderships to each other and re-establish professional relationships;
- Give opportunity to newly elected/appointed officials to gain better understanding of the program;
- Share updated information on project implementation, achieved results and lessons learned from the technical cooperation
- Draw guidelines on future cooperation between the partnerships
- Expose Bulgarian leaderships to US Local Government practices and discuss universal concepts in local governance.

All participants were challenged to think creatively and develop preliminary Action Plans incorporating activities that they will be able to accomplish without funding and as a second task - activities which supposedly will be supported by external funds, soliciting support from different funding sources for the implementation of the proposed activities. The round table meeting in Auburn achieved its goals. It allowed the leaderships to re-establish personal and professional contacts, where change in management occurred, to continue interactive dialog and commit to further development of the mutual cooperation. Participants in the meeting expressed full support to the idea to conduct regular round - table discussions and a next meeting to be hosted by the Municipality of Blagoevgrad was preliminary scheduled.

Further dissemination of best practices developed under the BTTP

- Based on the accumulated experience from the implementation of the Phase I and II of the Technical Twinning Program, FLGR has developed and published in Bulgarian and English a Handbook on Effective International Cooperation. The Handbook was disseminated among all Bulgarian municipalities, Regional associations and other interested institutions.
- -Successful practices developed under the II phase such as Razgrad Marketing program(under the Razgrad/ Brunswick partnership) and Gabrovo/ Portage second Citizen Participation Project - the annual citizen survey, were prepared and disseminated through the Innovative Practices Project both through Internet and brochures.

Finalizing the development of the Technical Twinning Data Base

The database was launched in Internet on April 29 (link under the FLGR Web Site). It offers updated and prepared targeted information on all participants, areas of cooperation and technical projects developed under I and II phase of the Technical Twinning Program. The database is presenting step by step the development of each technical partnership along with the results achieved by the technical partners. The database is interactive and allows easy access to comments and suggestions made by people who visited the site.

Continued institutional development activities between ICMA and FLGR

Two FLGR program staff representatives participated in the "Best Practices 2000" conference, organized by ICMA and held in Savannah, Georgia. Valuable knowledge was obtained on dissemination techniques and methodology. Wide variety of case studies on effective local governance was selected.

Undertaking further efforts to replicate the BTTP model with neighboring countries

The FLGR is partnering with ICMA as Bulgarian Intermediary Support Organization in the implementation of the Serbia Resource Cities Program.

An introductory meeting between the City of Nis, Serbia and the Municipality of Sofia was held in Sofia on June 1 outlining the first steps in the implementation of the three-lateral partnership program and defining the role of each party - local government representatives, ICMA and FLGR.

FLGR disseminates positive experience and successful practices developed under the Program, provides technical assistance and support to local governments in their efforts to initiate and strengthen twinning links between Bulgarian, European and American municipalities, using the technical twinning model. An important element of the Foundation's efforts is the developed under the program Information Database "Twinning", incorporating international contacts and partnerships of Bulgarian, American and European municipalities, their partner organizations, contact information, areas of cooperation, documents, case studies, publications and others.

The program demonstrates the increase of the technical impact of the international municipal cooperation, enhancement of experience, knowledge and skills of municipal officials, growing effectiveness of the technical projects and greater community involvement.

3. Innovative Practices Project

"Innovative practices in Bulgaria" project, starting September 1998, funded by Open Society Institute - Local Government and Public Services Reform Initiative, Budapest, and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has created a sustainable model for collecting, formatting and dissemination of innovative practices in the sphere of local self-government. The project meets the needs of local authorities for structured information about practices, techniques, methods and instruments, which have

been successfully accomplished in Bulgaria. Mayors, municipal officers and councillors, interested nongovernmental organizations and citizens gain access to information in printed and electronic form about the achievements of their colleagues, and an opportunity to make their activity widely known as practices are published in Bulgarian and English. The strive towards professionalism, transparency, justice and equity underlies all dynamic and interesting stories presented.

FLGR team, together with a working group involving the municipalities of Blagoevgrad, Bourgas, Varna and Sofia, USAID's Local Government Initiative Program, the Ministry of Regional Development and the National Center for Territorial Development, formulated the main principles of the project, defined 16 categories of municipal activity, developed a system of identifying and selection of practices, a unified format for authors' description, a concept for the "Innovative Practices" printed bulletin, as well as a specialized "Innovative practices" web site as part of the Foundation's site. The electronic version of the innovative practices allows readers to browse through the collection, to search by key word, to publish directly into the net, to share their opinion, and to nominate an "Innovation of the Week", which reflects the most useful experience in the field of local government. Interested users can contact innovative practices authors person-to-person to obtain more details, advice or consultation from them.

Throughout the reporting period the project has produced 6 booklets of Innovative Practices, a thematic annual collection in Bulgarian and a desk top published one in English. The promotional leaflet "Innovations? In the Internet? This is how it works!" gives detailed directions on how to use the web site to its full capacity. Innovative Practices Bulletins have a print run of about 1800 copies, reaching all municipalities in Bulgaria, regional associations of municipalities, professional associations of municipal specialists, related ministries and parliamentary committees, and international organizations and institutions.

The Internet site has had more than 2324 visitors since its launch in July 1999, and "Innovations of the week" are 43 altogether.

An extensive promotion of the Innovative Practice project has been conducted at different related forums, including the seminars for newly elected municipal officials and councillors, held by FLGR. The Internet version of the database has created strong interest and a desire to start using this information source. Possibilities have been created for sharing of ideas and contacts between innovators in Bulgaria, drawing information from the source, and applying similar practices in other municipalities. Innovators take part in FLGR trainings and give assistance to the multiplication of practices.

The Innovative Practices project has won three awards by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI), North Carolina, USA, for being the "**Most Innovative**", "**Most Potential for Contributing to Cross Cutting Work**" and "**Most Potential for Use in Other Projects**".

In June 2000 three discussion meetings were held within the Innovative Practices Project:

- **"Citizen Participation in Local Self-Government"** - Koprivshtitsa 23 June, 25 participants. The meeting was conducted in partnership with the Tourism Council, "H. N. Palaveev" Culture Center, and Koprivshtitsa Municipality.

- **"Environment and sustainable Development"** - Velingrad 26 June, 35 participants. The meeting was conducted in partnership with Business Center - Velingrad, and the Municipalities of Velingrad and Assenovgrad.

- **"Information systems and Technologies"** - Dryanovo 27 June, 42 participants
Overall, 102 participants from 32 municipalities and 49 NGOs attended the seminars. The meeting was conducted in partnership with Dryanovo Municipality.

The discussion meetings, held within the Innovative Practices Project, were inspired by the successful practices of Bulgarian municipalities, collected and published by FLGR for over a year now. They provided innovators concerned with the development of sustainable, informed and interacting communities, a forum for sharing their experience and achievements. Participants discussed concrete needs in the area of citizen participation, sustainable development and information technologies, shared practical advice on applicable instruments, systems and products, and presented their materials in the accompanying exhibitions.

FLGR, in cooperation with a broad range of partners, continues to expand the Innovative Practices database, striving to reflect the new models and successful approaches in the work of local authorities. Future development is related to FLGR project - "Local Government Information Network" (LOGIN), funded by Open Society Institute - Budapest. LOGIN founders are Council of Europe, Open Society Institute, USAID, World Bank and UNDP. The project is focused on information exchange between Central and East European countries and the former Soviet Union. Thus the innovative practices attract new readers and the database is currently enriched with the experience of other countries and other points of view.

Publications

- 8 Innovative Practices Billetins
- Annual IP Collection 1999 was disseminated at FLGR training seminars as part of the training pack and to many other partners - it is already out of print;
- Innovative Practices Annual Collection, Books 1 - 6.
- Promotional IP leaflet "Innovations? In the Internet? This is how it works!" and sets of materials about the project.

4. Partners for Local Development Program

Phase I of Partners for Local Development Program was implemented in partnership between FLGR, C.E.G.A. and NOVIB, with the financial support of Phare Democracy

Program and NOVIB. Its main goal is to promote dialogue for action between citizens, local authorities and all other stakeholders in order to stimulate sustainable development in the two Rhodopes municipalities. Based on a needs assessment carried out in 10 municipalities of the region, Devin and Madan were selected as the two pilot communities. An Initiative Committee was created in each municipality, which identified local priorities in the area of ecology, tourism and social problems through consultations with different citizen groups. A process of collaborative planning was conducted through different focus groups. Jointly designed activities within the priority areas were targeted at mobilizing broader public awareness and enhancing public participation, with a focus on young people's involvement. Special attention was paid to the opening of local government to public participation.

A core component of the program was the technical assistance and training provided by C.E.G.A., FLGR and NOVIB, which was designed as an ongoing process based on the principle of learning through doing. It included a series of seminars for local government and municipal councils, focused on different aspects of citizen participation and self-governance, training workshops and day-to-day consultations for effective community work. Both international and in-country expertise was brought to the two communities in the areas of participatory problem identification, collaborative planning of local initiatives, effective communication and problem solving, project design, self-evaluation etc.

Work in each municipality was coordinated by local teams. Their main task was to support the work of the Initiative Committee, facilitate communications with local authorities and with the different stakeholders. In the spring of 1999 the Initiative Committees and the teams registered as two autonomous associations named "Partners for Local Development". In the first two years, the Partners for Local Development in Devin and Madan accomplished the following:

- Involvement of over 8 200 people in various community activities and events
- Organization of over 50 small initiatives (youth activities, holidays, clean up campaigns, renovation of public places - parks and children's playgrounds, meetings on urgent social issues, fundraising events for disadvantaged children, activating local cultural and educational institutions, etc.)
- Good relations with local government
- Publication of leaflets with a total print run of 14 000, and over 36 issues of the two newsletters of Partners for Local Development
- Open classes in citizen participation in schools; creating youth organisations
- Public discussions of the Strategy for Economic Stability and Sustainable Development of the Smolian Region.

Local government was also involved in the process of community change. Mayors, municipal councils and administrations look upon the local citizen organizations as valuable partners in seeking the best solutions of local problems.

Partnership within the program has contributed to an increased capacity of FLGR and C.E.G.A., since it is unique in character among the existing practices of the Bulgarian

NGO sector. The program goals assume a combination of different skills and experience - C.E.G.A. experience in implementing programs for local development through public participation, and FLGR experience in programs enhancing the capacity of local authorities and involving citizens in local self-governance. FLGR incorporates the best practices emerged in its training programs. The program experience is also disseminated at national level through its publications: "Free Entrance" (C.E.G.A.), practical training handbooks (FLGR), "Why not?!" Newsletter (C.E.G.A), Local Government Reform Newsletter (FLGR). A case study of the first two years entitled "Stubbornness for Local Development" will be published.

Based on the evaluation of the first two years, a decision was taken to continue the program for another two years. Phase II is accomplished in partnership by C.E.G.A, FLGR and the two organizations "Partnership for Local Development" in Devin and Madan. It is funded by "Charles Stewart Mott" Foundation and NOVIB. The main goal of the second phase is to stimulate citizen participation in local governance. A third municipality will be included, to demonstrate that the "partnership for local development" approach can work not only in the Rhodopes, but in any community in Bulgaria. The program is a prerequisite for organizational growth and institutionalization of the Partnership for Local Development organizations (relevant for the third organization as well). They are entering a new stage of their development - from the variety of community initiatives implemented in Phase I to long term proactive community building activity for sustainable change and development. For this purpose, in the first months of Phase II the organizations have developed their own strategic plans. The priority areas outlined for Devin are tourism, citizen participation, youth activities, technical assistance, consultations with citizen groups and local institutions mediation. The areas for Madan are employment, youth activities, civil education and renovation.

The Partners for Local Development organizations in Devin and Madan are currently gaining more experience and confidence in implementing their own initiatives, and with the expert assistance of FLGR and C.E.G.A. they are becoming a unifying force of the local potential for development.

Best Practices of Citizen - Local Government Partnership

4 discussion meetings with 88 participants were held in Kurdjali (25 participants), Veliko Turnovo (20 participants), Bourgas (27 participants), and Varna (16 participants).

Kurdjali 1 July 2000

Veliko Turnovo 13 July 2000

Bourgas 14 July 2000

Varna 17 July 2000

The discussion meetings, held within the Partners for Local Development, provided participants with a possibility to learn about existing best practices and to share their experience and point of view with respect to current trends in the cooperation between citizens and local governments. The outcomes from the meetings, together with the collected best practices from different regions of Bulgaria, will be included in the project publication and the FLGR Internet site.

The discussion meetings were funded by Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and NOVIB within the Partners for Local Development Program.

5. Phare Democracy Program

Under the Democracy Project an exchange of expertise was organized between representatives of the municipal councils of Kurdjali and East Staffordshire. Municipal councillors from different political groups took part in the event based on its focus areas during the second year.

The first training trip took place in June. Eight-member multiparty group from Great Britain got acquainted with the practice, tasks and the problems of the Kurdjali municipal councillors on the following issues: inter-party cooperation, relations between the Council and the administration, relations with the public, specific mechanisms for decision-making and providing services to the public.

Based on the collected information and impressions, the British partners prepared a one-week program for training and exchange of experience. The training event took place in September and was attended by seven municipal councillors and one administrative official from the Municipality of Kurdjali. The visit included many business meetings and direct monitoring of the activities of the British councillors in their election boroughs

A specific result of the exchange of know-how was the drafting of a Manual of the Municipal Councillor with key advice, methods and strategies for more effective work and relations with the citizens. The process of exchange and the preparation of the document were facilitated by FLGR.

6. The Role of Parliament in Strengthening Local Self-Government in Bulgaria

The general aim of the Project "The Role of Parliament in Strengthening Local Self-Government in Bulgaria" is to contribute to the process of the further development of local self-government in Bulgaria, by aiding the country's foremost democratic institution - the national Parliament, as well as regional/local self-governing bodies to effectively perform their role in the field of regional development.

The Project is designed to be of direct assistance to:

- Bulgarian legislators, in addressing issues of specific importance to the Parliament's function as an institution which is encouraging local self-government and therefore also the formation of civil society and the consolidation of democracy in Bulgaria;
- Regional/local self-governing bodies (governors, mayors, chairs of municipal councils, councillors), in cooperating on a regional level, as well as with Parliament to realise initiatives in the field of regional policy.

The Project is managed jointly by the East-West Parliamentary Practice (EWPPP) and the Bulgarian Foundation for Local Government Reform (FLGR), and is implemented in close cooperation with the Parliament of Bulgaria.

The first workshop within the Project on the topic "Regional development: management and funding" was held on November 29 - 30, 1999 in Bistritsa, Sofia. Participants in the workshop were members of Parliaments, local self-government and regional institutions representatives, experts from EU member states and representatives from Central and East Europe; Bulgarian National Assembly representatives, experts from the Council of Ministers, district governors and regional administration representatives, mayors of municipalities, municipal councilors, experts and members of citizens organizations and international financing organizations representatives.

The second workshop within the framework of the project was held on May 15 - 16, 2000 in Sofia. Participants were Bulgarian and European Members of Parliament, local government representatives, regional administrations, experts, Ministry of Regional Development representatives, mayors of municipalities, financial institutions representatives and NGO leaders.

The discussion during the plenary sessions was concentrated on the role of the planning regions in the process of regional development and priority setting for infrastructure projects. During the workshop were discussed topics dealing with the partnership between the regions in solving regional and national problems, selection of viable infrastructure projects and the role of public - private partnership and business in setting priorities for developing infrastructure projects.

Within those main topics were discussed the characteristics of the Bulgarian planning regions, together with the problems of the economic and social cohesion and also the practical mechanisms for selection of concrete sites and criteria for their inclusion in the action plan. The participants paid special attention to the overall citizen and NGO participation in the assessment of priorities for infrastructure projects.

The visiting workshop participants were from Ireland, Poland, Hungary, Portugal, the Netherlands and USA - the World Bank. They shared a valuable experience from the field of management and funding of the planning regions and public-private partnerships. The conclusions and the recommendations from the workshop were summarized during the two breakout sessions.

The third inter-parliamentary workshop on the topic "Regional and Local Support to SMEs" was held on 10 and 11 July 2000 in Plovdiv, at St. Petersburg Hotel. The major areas that were covered included: The Role of National Legislation in Strengthening SMEs, Municipal Policy in Support Of Small And Medium-Sized Enterprises, Requirements of The European Union and Programs Supporting SMEs, Recommendations for Government Policy in Support of SMEs, Recommendations for Municipal Policy in Support of SMEs.

7. Improvement of the Social Environment Program

The Improvement of the Social Environment Program is a two-year program aimed at improvement of the social environment for local self-government development. The Program is funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

Program Goals:

- improvement of the living conditions of marginalized social groups;
- integration of marginalized social groups through development of their professional skills;
- encourage initiatives promoting partnerships between local NGOs, local governments, state institutions and business representatives in the process of providing support to marginalized social groups.

Project beneficiaries should be groups of people with limited opportunities for professional and social realization due to:

- health problems;
- negative influence of the social and family environment;
- social prejudice.

8. Specialized Proficiency Course for Municipal Mayors

Jointly with the Center for Public Administration with the New Bulgarian University and the Postgraduate Institute of the University of World and National Economy, FLGR organized the development and organization of a training course for municipal mayors covering the following modules:

Municipal Management – Bankia, 13-16 December 1999, 25 participants

Finances – Bankia, 7-10 February 2000, 26 participants

Municipal Property Management – Hissarya, 20-23 March 2000, 20 participants

Citizen Participation and Partnership with Local Government - Velingrad, 10-12 May 2000, 35 participants.

9. Seminar “The Role of Local Authorities in Creating Favorable Business Environment”

The seminar was held in Gabrovo in February 2000, with the participation of experts from the municipalities of Sofia and Blagoevgrad who shared their experience.

10. Partnership with other NGOs, Programs and Institutions

10.1. Local Government Initiative

The Foundation took an active part in the regular municipal associations meeting on September 10/11, 1998 in Stara Zagora. Since the theme of the meeting was grant proposal procedures and writing techniques the Foundation had been asked to present before the participants its successful experience in grant proposal writing. For the purpose a written grant proposal formula was distributed and explained among all the

municipal associations representatives. The meeting feedback shows that most of the participants has already started using the formula.

Five Bulgarian cities, the Foundation for Local Government reform and the Association of Black Sea Municipalities joined efforts to Acton the commitment to "local government as a friendly and effective provider of information and services to citizens".

Ginka Kapitanova and Tatyana Dimitrova took part in the Citizen Services Improvement Team on September 8, 1998.

The Foundation staff completed a questionnaire on Internet services provided by LGI.

The Executive Director and the Public relations Specialist took part in the study tour to the USA titled "Citizens services and Citizens Participation in Local Self-Government, organized by RTI and World Learning. Both of them took in the 3CMA Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida and visited the City Hall in Portsmouth, Virginia.

Ms. Ginka Kapitanova prepared and gave a special presentation on historic, social-economic development of Bulgaria and local self-government reform before the communication specialists in local government, attending the 3CMA Annual Conference, as the only international presenter

The LGI in cooperation with the Foundation for Local Government Reform and the National association of Municipalities in Republic of Bulgaria organized seminar for Information and Communication Municipal Specialists on Decembers 18, 1998. The seminar was attended by representatives of central government, municipal regional associations, donor organizations, international programs and journalists. The main objective of the seminar was to provide working tools and vehicles for information exchange improvement between the represented institutions and identify crossing points of future professional cooperation.

Four representatives of the Foundation, including the Executive Director, program and Projects Team Leader, Financial Manager and Legal Advisor took active part in the second LGI Partners Meeting. Ms. Ginka Kapitanoba was selected to represent SO Team at the USAID Core Team.

Ms. Ginka Kapitanova met with Russel Webster, MSI in order to discuss Foundation activities and foundation interaction with LGI Program and other USAID programs.

Svetoslav Ivanov, Legal Expert of the FLGR, participated in the work of Strategic Objective Team 1, where a comprehensive report for the Team's activities was prepared and the priorities for the Team's future work were set up

Nikoleta Efremova, Training Coordinator of the FLGR attended the March 11 meeting of Strategic Objective Team 3, where the activities performed so far were reviewed and major topics for further work were identified.

Radostina Purvanova, Innovative Practices Project Coordinator attended the monthly meeting of the regional associations of municipalities, the FLGR and the NAMRB organized by LGI on March 23. She presented to the partners an update on FLGR's activities, focusing on the innovative practices collection and dissemination initiative. Most of the regional associations expressed their will to join the Foundation in its efforts for gathering innovative practices from their member municipalities.

FLGR team members took part in the regular meetings of LGI's Intermediary Result Team 1. Specific actions and steps towards forming a widely represented work team were identified, as well as measures for adapting existing Bulgarian legislation to EU legislation.

FLGR team representatives took part in the work of Intermediary Result Team 2- in the meetings of the team and of the work group on fiscal decentralization related to the changes in healthcare funding and their reflection on budget relationships.

FLGR team members took part in the work session of Intermediary Result team 3 on June 15, 1999. The successful work of the group was reported and new proposals for the action plan until 2000 were made.

On July 7, 1999 at USIS in Sofia, the FLGR in cooperation with LGI organized one-day workshop for municipal PR officers. The over 30 participants were trained in how to use an integrated communication strategy, drafted and implemented in a participatory way. FLGR's PR officer shared the Foundation's experience with its own Communication Strategy.

The Office Manager of FLGR took part as a lecturer in the seminar "Communication and Citizen participation" organized by LGI in Sliven between 19-23 July, 1999. This seminar was the last phase of the training of trainers of this module.

FLGR Executive Director, the Training Coordinator and the Legal Advisor took part in the training of trainers organized by LGI in the period 28-30 July 1999 in Borovets. The new module for newly elected municipal servants was presented at this seminar.

A proficiency training program "Partners for Institutional Training/Training of Trainers" took place in Tuscon, Arizona, USA. The visit was financed by USAID and organized with the support of LGI and World Learning. Organizations actively involved in local government training, such as NAMRB, FLGR, Danube Training Center, NCSA, PLGI and the newly established Center for Improvement of Political Skills, participated in the training. The training coordinator of Foundation participated on the part of FLGR. The Santa Cruise Institute hosted the training. The training philosophy was: "What I hear, I forget. What I see, I remember. What I do, I understand." A group named "Arizona '99" was formed at the end of the training which will continue to work in Bulgaria on the issues related to training in the field of local government.

The Office Manager and the Legal Advisor of FLGR took part in the training organized by LGI on improving trainers' skills. The seminar was organized in Velingrad on 1-2 November 1999.

Christina Kovacheva, FLGR Office Manager participated in the discussion of the training module "Citizens' Participation and Interaction" organized by LGI on 9 November 1999 for all trainers under this module. The future aspects of its development were elaborated and each trainer received a set of training materials to be able to deliver the lectures on his/her own.

Ginka Kapitanova, FLGR Executive Director took part in the Working Group meeting of Intermediate Result 4 and in the meeting of the LGI core team.

FLGR Chief Financial Officer took part in the discussion of Intermediate Result 2 of LGI and participated in a Working Group on evaluation of financial state and adapting of a system for monitoring financial tendencies.

Tatiana Dimitrova, FLGR Public Relations Specialist, participated in discussion meetings in cooperation with LGI on designing a joint brochure presenting all available training workshops for newly elected local officials.

The Executive Director held a series of meetings with Tom Spoffort of the LGI Program, regarding forming a work group on fiscal decentralization.

Four FLGR members participated in the LGI Partners meeting in Veliko Tarnovo. They all took part in the workshops of the Intermediate Results Teams.

Ginka Kapitanova, FLGR Executive Director and Zdravko Sechkov, FLGR Financial Manager took part in the forum on Municipal Loan Markets organized by LGI and the Urban Institute in March 2000 at the Sheraton Hotel.

Tatiana Dimitrova, FLGR Public Relations Officer and Vesselina Kolcheva, FLGR Chief Program Officer took part in the Workshop for Women Mayors organized on 30-31 March 2000 by LGI at the Shipka Hotel in Sofia. They presented the activities of the Foundation and provided information on funding opportunities for municipalities and local NGOs.

Ina Raycheva, FLGR Twinning Program Manager participated in LGI Partners Monthly Meeting where the activities of Coalition 2000 were presented and discussed.

10.2. National Association of Bulgarian Municipalities (NABM)

The Foundation was invited to participate in the Initiative Committee for the Preparation of the Official Celebrations of the Day of Bulgarian Municipality. The Foundation prepared a paper presenting its creative ideas and US experience on celebration of similar events and initiatives Mrs. Ginka Kapitanova presented the paper before the members of

the Initiative Committee at a meeting that took place in Veliko Tarnovo on September 11, 1998 and stated the Foundation willingness to undertake active steps, supporting the national fests on October 12, 1998.

Representatives of the Foundation for Local Government reform took part in the official celebrations of the Day of Bulgarian Municipalities on October 11/13, 1998 in Veliko Tarnovo. The Foundation was the only Bulgarian organization that received the National Association of Municipalities in Republic of Bulgaria Award for continuous support, provided to Bulgarian municipalities and information assistance and qualification development.

The Foundation was presented at the Temporarily Committee on summarizing the municipalities and municipal regional associations proposals for changes in the existing framework of local self-government. The Committee had working sessions before the official awarding ceremony and presented the results of its work before the participants in a Scientific-Practical Conference on Development of Local Self-Governments.

The Programs and Projects team Leader took part in the Perspectives for Regional Development in Bulgaria International Colloquium in November, 1998 in Rouse. Foundation activities and initiatives in the field of regional development were presented before the participants from 12 countries.

On October 12, 1998 Women in 21st Century International Conference took place in Sofia. The Conference might be considered as a follow-up of the International Conference "Women in Democracy: Vital Voices" and united representatives from all over Europe. The Conference was attended by Mrs. Hilary Clinton who met with the Bulgarian delegation in Vienna Conference, member of which is Mrs. Ginka Kapitanova, Executive Director of the Foundation for Local Government Reform.

Mrs. Kapitanova was also one of the nine Bulgarian participants who took part in the round-table on Bulgarian non-governmental organization, organized by the US Ambassador to Bulgaria, her excellence Mrs. Avis Bohlen.

On November 10, 1998 Vital Voices Club was constituted in Sofia. The initial priorities of the Club will be studying the opportunities for strengthening of women role in the development of an opened civic society. The Club will represent the Bulgarian perspective in the world movement "Vital Voices: Women in Democracy". The Foundation is happy to have Mrs. Ginka Kapitanova as one of the founders and active actors of the Bulgarian vital voices movement.

On 28-29 January 1999 Ginka Kapitanova and Svetoslav Ivanov attended the General Assembly of the National Association of Municipalities in Republic of Bulgaria.

Svetoslav Ivanov took part in a working group formed on NAMRB's initiative for the development of a proposal for amendments and supplements to the Local Self-Government and Local Administration Act.

On April 29-30, 1999 NAMRB, with the assistance of FLGR, LGI and the Central Stara Planina Regional Association of Municipalities, organized second discussion forum "For Effective Local Government". FLGR's manager participated in the forum with a report entitled "Encouraging Citizen Participation in Local Government".

FLGR's legal expert was a member of a work group with NAMRB working on a bill for amendments to the Local Self-Government and Local Administration Act. The bill was drafted and presented at a forum organized by NAMRB and attended by mayors and chairpersons of municipal councils. The result from this forum was the development of a strategy for lobbying the bill in the National Assembly.

The Legal Advisor of FLGR took part in a work group on drafting legal commentaries for NAMRB's Handbook for Newly Elected Mayors and Municipal Councilors.

Tatiana Dimitrova, FLGR Public Relations Specialist, provided consultations to NAMRB on the drafting of their Communication Strategy.

FLGR Executive director delivered a welcome address at NAMRB General Assembly.

Mrs Kapitanova also had two aired interviews in "Free Europe" Radio on the problems arisen at NAMRB General Assembly.

10.3. Standing Committee on Local Self-Government, Territorial Development and Public Works, National Assembly

Mrs. Ginka Kapitanova assisted the LGI coordinator, Mr. Jerry Wood, to conduct a meeting with Mr. Ilian Popov, Chair of the Standing Committee on Local Self-Government, Regional Development and Public Utilities.

Mrs. Ginka Kapitanova presented the results from the Fiscal Decentralization Policy Forum and Regional Development Discussion Forums before different members of the Standing Committee.

On 17 February 1999 in Sofia was held a meeting for preparing a National Assembly Draft-Declaration, related to the work of municipalities with youth and youth organizations. Representatives of FLGR, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Committee for Youth, Physical Culture and Sport and legal advisors of the Parliamentary Committee on Local Self-Government, Regional Policy and Public Works participated in the meeting. In the process of drafting the Declaration, the FLGR delivered active support to the Parliamentary Committee on Local Self-Government by providing the Bulgarian text of the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Municipal and Regional Life, as well additional resource materials and advice on the issue. As a result, at its March 10 regular meeting the Committee discussed and

unanimously accepted the Declaration in support of the Charter and recommended it for adoption by the National Assembly.

FLGR Executive Director took part in the General assembly of NAMRB, which was held on September 23-24, 1999 in Rousse. As it was a last forum of this mandate, the participants drew lessons from the activities of the municipal authorities during the period 1995- 1999 and adopted an appeal to the future municipal elected officials.

On March 16, 2000 the Chief Program Officer attended the session of the Standing Committee for the discussion of the Draft Law on the Territorial Structure of the Republic of Bulgaria.

10.4. PLEDGE

Mr. Zdravko Sechkov, Financial Manger and Ms. Liubomira Kolcheva took part in the PLEDGE Training Seminar on regional economic development, which took part on November 16/20, 1998 in Plovdiv.

On March 8-9, 1999 Lubomira Kolcheva participated in the training seminars of PLEDGE for experts in industrial readjustment for Resource Analysis.

FLGR Executive Director and the Chief Financial Officer took part in an workshop for the selection of municipalities in North-West Bulgaria for the implementation of projects in the second stage of PLEDGE program.

PLEDGE organized a meeting with Macedonian partners on September 12-15, 1999. The Industrial Adjustment Specialist from FLGR took active part in the discussions and exchange of experience. On the final day a summary was made of achievements and lessons learnt.

On November 17th, 1999 Lubomira Kolcheva, FLGR Sub-grant coordinator participated in a meeting, organized by PLEDGE on Regional Government Training Coordination with representatives of the British Know How Fund, Council of Ministers, Council of Europe Information Centre in Veliko Tarnovo, National Assembly (Committee on Local Self-Government, Regional Policy and Public Works). Useful information on ongoing activities and priorities of the above-mentioned organizations with regard to their work with regional and local authorities was exchanged.

10.5. Council of Europe

At the invitation of Council of Europe the Foundation for Local Government Reform organized the participation of two Bulgarian mayors, Mrs. Penka Yorfanova- Mayor of Montana and Mr. Nikolai Kolev - Mayor of Gorna Oryahovitza, in Local Finances Seminar, September 12/20, 1998-Budapest under the Fiscal decentralization Initiative for Central and Eastern Europe.

At the invitation of Congress of Local and regional Authorities, Council of Europe the Foundation distributed a specialized questionnaire to the three biggest Bulgarian cities - Plovdiv, Varna and Sofia. The Questionnaires aimed at gathering information on the cultural and artistic profile of these cities.

10.6. United Nations Development Program

Mrs. Ginka Kapitanova met with Mr. German Correa and discussed the decentralization processes in Bulgaria. She provided her main observations and recommendations with regard to the decentralization options in the process.

The Executive Director participated in the Reader's group meeting for the UNDP Report "The Aspirations of the Nation" - results from the survey of the Bulgarians' and Bulgarian elite's vision of "desired Bulgaria".

FLGR Executive Director participated in a brainstorming workshop for gathering information on best practices in local government and identifying the areas for directing donors' aid.

FLGR Executive Director and Chief Program Officer participated in the visits and the preparation of the Project Proposal for a Model Municipality in Razlog.

10.7. Other Important Meetings and Facts

Ms. Daniela Mihovska took part in the Consulting Skills Training of Trainers Seminar, September 5-19, Romania. The seminar is part of the training series of the Regional program for Capacity Building in Governance and Local Leadership, Open Society Institute-Budapest.

Final meeting "Let's Be Partners", Pamporovo, 28-29 June 1999. The meeting was held under the Partners for Local Development and involved 90 participants. The established two autonomous associations named "Partners for Local Development" in Madan and Devin share their experience from the first two years of the project with representatives of the local authorities and the non-governmental organizations from the region.

The Foundation joined a working group under the "Elaboration of a Conception of a Law on Access to Information" Project, initiated by "Access to Information" Foundation and funded by Open Society Foundation. The Project aims at preparation of a theoretic framework of legislation on access to information. The elaborated text will be presented at a conference that will take place in December 1998.

The Foundation assisted in the preparation of the Balkan Youth Festival that took place on August 20/25, 1998 in Gabrovo. Mrs. Rositza Raicheva took part in the working

program of the Festival as facilitator of a youth discussion round table. Valuable technical support was provided regarding the design of several informational and promotional materials on the Festival.

The Foundation assisted the Koprivshitz Foundation in the organization of National Folk Days, September 1998. The Foundation also provided financial support for the printed materials of the festival.

The Foundation assisted the Municipality of Sliven to prepare the design and conceptual policy of Municipal Newsletter.

The Foundation was invited by the Charity Know How Foundation to participate in the process of selection of "Knowledge, Success, Change" Project nominees and to be actively involved in the information campaign on the Project popularization.

The Foundation participated in the "Methods and Forms for Implementation Policy of the Municipalities", organized by the Inter-Assists Foundation in City of Troyan at the end of September. Mrs. Ginka Kapitanova took part in the discussions on the public relationships and media policies of the municipalities. Swiss experience in the field was presented at the meeting.

The Foundation accepted the invitation of the INGCEE/Local Government Training Center of Latvia and Denmark to participate in a joint project, aiming at providing young local government employees and politicians with an insight and knowledge on how local/regional governments operate in various countries and establish a network for exchange of experience among members of INGCEE.

The Foundation assisted the Agency for Economic Development, Center for Development of Zlatograd and Gabrovo Youth Information Center in their efforts to prepare their strategic plans for the next year. The Programs and Projects Team Leader with the support of the rest of the Foundation staff provided technical directions and advice to the centers and the agency.

Mrs. Ginka Kapitanova met with representatives of MOTT Foundation in order to discuss funding opportunities for Bulgarian municipalities under the Centers for information and Citizens Services Project.

Mrs. Ginka Kapitanova gave a presentation on Local Authorities-Citizens Partnership before the participants in International Conference, organized by NOVIB in November 1998 in the Hague.

Mrs. Ginka Kapitanova took part in the "Mobilizing Public resources for Local Economic development" on November 9/12, 1998 in Bucharest. She facilitated one of the working sessions of the Conference.

Mrs. Ginka Kapitanova met with New Bulgarian University and Center for Postgraduates Studies/World and National Economy University to discuss a project for long-term

municipal officials training which to be submitted for funding before Open Society Foundation.

Mrs. Ginka Kapitanova took active part in the work of the meeting of chairs of municipal councils on December, 1998. She gave a presentation on the status of the reforms in local self-government and forthcoming reforms in regional development policies.

Mrs. Ginka Kapitanova met with her excellence Evis Bohlen, USA Ambassador regarding the founding of Bulgarian Club of Vital Voices.

Representatives of the Foundation for Local Government Reform took part in the official opening ceremony of Community Service Center in Stara Zagora on October 10, 1998.

Mrs. Rositza Raicheva, Information Team Leader and Ms. Lubomira Kolcheva, Subgrant Program Coordinator took part in the "Access to Information - International Standards and Bulgarian Legislation" International Conference on December 7/8, 1998.

Ms. Elena Paskaleva, Chief Accountant, took part in "accounting System and audit of Non-Governmental Organization" seminar, organized by Center for Study of Democracy on November 25, 1998.

Ms. Daniela Mihovska, Programs and Projects team Leader took part and facilitated a session of the annual Assembly of National Union of Bulgarian Foundations and Associations on December 5, 1998.

Ms. Radostina Parvanova, Innovative Practices Project Coordinator took part in the "Internet and New Information Technologies-Advantages and Disadvantages" Seminar, organized by the Researches and Communication Foundation.

Mrs. Ina Raicheva, Technical Twinning Coordinator took part in the International Congress of Twinned Cities on November 11/14, 1998 Ferrara, Italy.

Mrs. Ginka Kapitanova and Mrs. Ina Raicheva took part in the annual Conference of Association of Rhodope Municipalities "Trans-Boarder Cooperation" on November 5-7, 1998 in Pamporovo.

Mrs. Hristina Kovacheva, Office Manager took part in the Participatory Training, organized by Fulbright training Center on November 27/28, 1998.

Ginka Kapitanova, Executive Director of the FLGR participated in the weekly sessions of the Standing Committee on Local Self-Government, Territorial Development and Public Works with the National Assembly;

The Executive Director participated in a "Prevention and Crime Fighting" discussion organized by the Civil Society Development Foundation.

Ginka Kapitanova took part in a meeting with the representatives of the British Know-How Fund for Central and Eastern Europe on the Bulgarian priorities and possible areas for technical and financial assistance.

Ginka Kapitanova took part in a broadcast of Radio Express on FLGR's European projects and their impact on the development of democratic local government.

Ginka Kapitanova hosted a meeting with the DEXIA Banking Group to discuss Bulgarian legislation and opportunities for investments in municipal capital projects.

Ginka Kapitanova participated in a seminar organized by the Delegation of the European Commission - "The Role of Sub-National Government Levels in the Process of EU Integration".

The Executive Director attended a USAID meeting on monitoring the activities of USAID-funded organizations.

The Executive Director had a meeting with Jerry Wood and Hal Minis on the ways of improving LGI's training programs and on future initiatives in this field.

The Executive Director participated in the 34th Congress of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) in Barcelona, delivering a presentation on Bulgarian experience in the panel of "East-West International Cooperation".

Lubomira Kolcheva, Subgrant Program Coordinator of the FLGR assisted the Municipality of Perushtitsa in the preparation of a project proposal to the MATRA/CAP Program of the Royal Netherlands Embassy. The project aims at social integration of Roma citizens and strengthening the relations between citizens and local authorities.

Lubomira Kolcheva participated in two meetings of the Advisory Board of Charity Know How in Bulgaria. The first meeting involved a discussion of project proposals submitted for funding by Charity Know How trainees (NGOs, informal groups, etc). The second meeting presented an opportunity for the members of the Advisory Board to meet the Director of Charity Know How.

Lubomira Kolcheva advised Rositsa Panova, representative of the Anti-Poverty Center, a newly created NGO, on how to establish contacts with municipal officers, working in the field of social services, as well as on donor organizations.

Tatiana Dimitrova, Public Relations Officer of the FLGR participated in the opening of the Public Center for Citizen Initiatives in the Izgrev district of Sofia Municipality. She assisted Izgrev district with information on other similar initiatives. and presented the center's sociologist with resource information on developing citizen questionnaires.

Tatiana Dimitrova held working meeting with with David Krushe, National Democratic Institute, and Liudmila Georgieva, Law Professor at Sofia University for soliciting expert advice and best information for a How to Lobby booklet to be published by the FLGR.

Tatiana Dimitrova participated in the meeting (19 January 1999) of Sliven Municipality management with local NGOs for defining local priorities for joint work in 1999. She presented the activities of the FLGR, and established contacts with NGOs, interested to cooperate with the FLGR.

Tatiana Dimitrova participated in a meeting for NGOs, organized by the British Know-how Fund on January 26. She shared FLGR's experience and took part in working groups for assisting the Fund define and develop future programs and activities in Bulgaria.

Tatiana Dimitrova assisted the Union of Bulgarian Foundations and Associations in reaching the mayors of the 27 biggest Bulgarian municipalities, soliciting their support to a national campaign in favor of a new draft law for the non-governmental (third) sector.

FLGR staff attended the Tenth General Assembly of the Union of Bulgarian Foundations and Associations, held on April 24, 1999. The financial report and the program activities of UBFA were discussed, UBFA's strategic plan until 2002 was adopted, and amendments to the by-laws were made.

FLGR representatives took part with a report entitled "The Access to Information - a Prerequisite for Effective Citizen Participation in Local Government" in a "Access to Information - Practices and Regulations at Local Level" seminar, organized by the Access to Information Program and held on June 25, 1999 in Stara Zagora.

Within the framework of the Program "Initiative for Fiscal Decentralization for Central and Eastern Europe", the Council of Europe organized an international conference on the problems of the national associations of local authorities. It was held on 16-18 September in Georgia as a joint initiative of the World Bank, OECD and the Council of Europe. FLGR Office Manager took part in the event. The goal of the conference was to discuss the structure of the associations and the services they have to provide to their members. There were participants from 19 countries who exchanged experience, best practices and considered solutions to the problems of the associations.

An international seminar on "The Cultural Policy and the Problems of Decentralization" was held on 24-25 September in Varna within the framework of the MOSAIC Project of the Council of Europe. The seminar was jointly organized by the Ministry of Culture and the Council of Europe. The main topics of discussion were: preconditions for exchange and cooperation at local and regional level; the role of civil society in the process of horizontal decentralization; financing urban and regional policy, etc. FLGR Office Manager took part in the event.

On September 25-29 ICMA held its Annual Conference in Portland, Oregon, USA. Mrs. Ginka Kapitanova, Executive director of FLGR represented Bulgaria at the event and the

Foundation was welcomed as member of the Association. New contacts were established and experience exchanged in the organization of training seminars and discussion fora, as well as accompanying exhibits of firms offering goods and services for the municipalities. FLGR has at its disposal audio and video recordings of a part of the meetings, as well as relevant literature, which is being used by the whole team.

On September 29-30, 1999 the East-West Institute and the Carpathian Foundation organized a seminar on "Border Region Development" in Budapest, Hungary. The event was a meeting point of policy-makers, representatives of NGOs and businessmen whose task was to analyze and outline policy guidelines for the future development of the border regions in Central and South Eastern Europe, as special attention was given to the southern, central and northern sub-regions. At the forum FLGR was represented by the Coordinator of the "Support for the Local Government Reform" Subgrant Program.

On October 3-5, 1999 USAID organized a conference on "Partners in Transition: Lessons for the Next Decade" in Warsaw, Poland. It was attended by policy leaders active in the political, economic and social areas from 27 countries undergoing transition to democracy and market economy. The main speakers at the forum were Mr. Peter Stoyanov, President of Republic of Bulgaria, Mr. Buzek, Prime Minister of Poland, Mr. Balcerowicz, the Polish Minister of Finance, Mr. Yakovlev, President Advisor and Chairman of the "Democracy" Foundation from the Russian Federation, etc. Bulgaria was represented by 11 participants including FLGR Executive Director. Stefan Sofianski, Martin Zaimov and Ginka Kapitanova made presentations on specific topics. In her presentation, Mrs. Kapitanova shared the Bulgarian experience of local government decentralization, the mechanisms for dialogue with the government and the parliament, the interaction among the organizations working in support of local government, as well as FLGR specific experience from the past four years.

A seminar on citizen participation in local self-government was held in Smolyan on 2-3 December 1999 jointly with the Open Society Clubs. Christina Kovacheva, FLGR Office Manager, conducted the training of the representatives of the Open Society Clubs in Bulgaria.

The Union of Bulgarian Foundations and Associations held its XI General Assembly to discuss the report of the Executive Board for its two-year mandate (1997-1999), the two-year report of the Oversight Council, changes in the UBFA Statutes and selection of new managing bodies. Christina Kovacheva represented FLGR at the meeting.

Christina Kovacheva and Zdravko Sechkov took part in the National Conference on the opportunities for funding projects by the European Social Fund in the Pre-accession period which was held on 1-2 October 1999 in Park Hotel "Moskva". The conference was organized by the European Training Foundation and the European Commission.

In October 1999 Ginka Kapitanova, FLGR Executive Director, participated in the series of meetings, organized for ambassadors by USAID at the Center for the Study of

Democracy, where prominent Bulgarian sociologists and political scientists presented their analyses of the local elections results.

In October 1999 FLGR Executive Director also took part in USAID Strategy Review Meeting to discuss their long-term strategy in Bulgaria.

On November 23-24, 1999 Christina Kovacheva participated in an International Conference on the topic "The Role of Social Studies for Resuscitating Economic and Social Policy" organized by Sofia University "St. Climent Ohridski" and the Bulgarian Institute for Development. The FLGR representative took part in the workshop on "Social Studies and the NGO/Foundations Development Projects in Bulgaria".

In November 1999 Ginka Kapitanova, FLGR Executive Director, Vesselina Kolcheva, FLGR Chief Program Officer and Bogdana Shopova, Innovative Practices Project Manager met with Alessandro Manchini from the Council of Europe at FLGR premises. The topics of discussion included: the opportunities to fund the organization of two regional or one international conferences on youth participation in local self-government, the LOGIN project and the release of a CD with Innovative Practices.

Between November 1-5, 1999, Lubomira Kolcheva participated in a training course "Cities Matter: Local Economic Development", sponsored by the USAID and organized in collaboration with ICMA in Budapest, Hungary.

On November 29-30, 1999 Vesselina Kolcheva, FLGR Chief Program Officer, took part in the 12th ENTO (European Network of Training Organizations for Local and Regional Authorities) Seminar and Annual General Meeting held in Florence, Italy. The Seminar was entitled "New Information Technologies and Training for Local and Regional Authorities" and covered the following topics: Introducing the value of knowledge sharing with a community; The multiplier effect and implementing reforms; Experience in training at the European Commission using new technology; Documentation and Research; The multiplier effect in Central and Eastern Europe, etc. As a result of this participation many new contacts were established and an application was filed for ENTO membership by FLGR.

In December 1999 Ginka Kapitanova met with representatives of the Japanese Embassy for presentation the funding programs of the Japanese government in the area of local government. The information was subsequently published in FLGR Newsletter.

In December 1999 FLGR Executive Director made a presentation on the topic: "The Role of Local Authorities in Partnership with NGOs in the Fight against Corruption" at the forum organized by Coalition 2000 in Boyana residence for diplomats, parliamentarians, ministers, regional governors, mayors and representatives of NGOs.

FLGR is a member of the European Forum, which incorporates Bulgarian NGOs whose expertise might be valuable in the process of negotiations with the European Union. FLGR prepared a profile of the organization and specifically of its activities in the field of regional development that could be useful. Members of the team regularly attend the

meetings of the European Forum and participate in other events organized by the other organizations involved.

On March 30 FLGR Chief Program Officer and Subgrants Program Manager facilitated the organization and took part in a Seminar organized by the International Center for Non-for-Profit Law on the topic: NGOs and Social Services in Bulgaria – Essential Relationship with an Unutilized Potential.

Ginka Kapitanova, FLGR Executive Director, met with representatives of the British Know How Fund and discussed the possibilities for cooperation within the framework of their program for the development of the South East Planning Region. Mrs Kapitanova presented the idea for preparing a program for the municipalities focused on redeployment and SME development following the structural reform.

The Executive Director met with representatives of the National Democratic Institute to introduce the Foundation's experience in cooperation with the National Assembly and discuss further opportunities for joint work.

Mrs Kapitanova took part in a radio show "100 Days after the Local Elections", aired on "Horizont" Program of the Bulgarian National Radio.

FLGR Executive Director participated in a conference on Transborder Cooperation - Bulgaria - Macedonia, organized by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works in Sandanski where she shared FLGR experience in the area of international cooperation.

Mrs Kapitanova took part in a discussion meeting with John Tennant from USAID, Washington.

Mrs Kapitanova made a presentation on "Economic and Financial Management - Provision of Local Services: Practical Problems and Ways of Solving Them" at the Stability Pact Forum on "Decentralization, Democracy and Stability".

The Executive Director met the Regional Governor of Kjustendil and agreed to organize a seminar for the municipalities the preparation of their strategic development plans and to provide technical assistance for their regional development plans.

Because of the great interest on the part of the regional authorities, Mrs Kapitanova met with the regional governors of Silistra and the deputy regional governor of Haskovo to discuss opportunities for cooperation.

There were many visits and meetings with mayors and chairmen of municipal councils from Sapareva Bania, Zlatitsa, Nessebar, Slivnitsa, Gabrovo, Razlog, Gorna Malina and Ihtiman.

Mrs Kapitanova met the Executive Director of the Polish Know How Fund and discussed the exchange of experience between Bulgarian and Polish municipalities regarding the

preparation of marketing strategies and the ways to attract investments, as there exist many best practices in Poland in this field).

Mrs Kapitanova had a conference call with Bonnie Walter on adapting the Manual on Local Economic Development prepared by her for a seminar held in Budapest. The materials for the modules will be adapted and used for seminars organized by FLGR within the framework of the Danube River Initiative Program in September.