



Quarterly Progress Report

KOSOVO COMMUNITY RECONCILIATION PROGRAM

Cooperative Agreement Number: **167- A - 00 - 06 - 00105 - 00**

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I. Executive Summary

The *Kosovo Community Reconciliation Program* (KCRP) strengthens the ability of civil society to advocate for reconciliation and build the capacity of grassroots Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Kosovo. Specifically, the program deepens CSOs' use of reconciliation tools and encourages the formation of coalitions and networks to increase the reach and impact of individual projects. The program addresses locally identified issues of common concern related to public education, advocacy on behalf of minorities, inter-ethnic relations, youth projects, freedom of movement, human rights monitoring, free and objective media reporting on human rights, cultural events with multi-ethnic communities, and cross-community cooperation.

Over the past quarter, through a combination of ongoing grants, mentoring and technical assistance, Freedom House has helped 10 CSOs and their partner organizations to register significant results towards achieving the program's objectives.

For example:

- The KOSMA media network produced news programs three times a day, covering 80 percent of Kosovo's territory and reaching the entire non-Albanian audience, as well as a large number of Kosovar (K) Albanians;
- In Prizren, Rahovec/Orahovac, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, and Gračanica/Graçanicë, ELSA/Media Pulse engaged youth groups from different ethnic communities in four public debates on problems and perspectives of young people;
- In Vërboc/Vrbovac, Lipjan/Lipljan, Gračanica/Graçanicë, Plemetinë/Plemetina, Parteš/Partesh, Ranillug/Ranilug, Rahovec/Orahovac, Štrpce/Shterpce, Zvečan/Zveçan, Novoberde/Novo Brdo and Zubin Potok, the CSO *Our Home* has made available to the public the draft Constitution in all three languages;
- In Lapje Selo and Gračanica/Graçanicë the K. Serbian group Ghetto Theater staged the play *Bridge* in Serbian;
- In Prizren and Prishtina/Pristina, the Center for the Development of Children's Theater, a K. Albanian CSO, presented the play *Bridge* in Albanian;
- In Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, an exhibition of photographs and new billboard concepts continued through January; this positive example of youth inter-ethnic cooperation was presented on "Deutsche Welle" and "London Channel 3";
- In Kamenicë/Kamenica, the K. Serbian CSO *Kosovka Devojka*, and its K. Albanian partner, successfully established an Anti-corruption Working Committee;
- In Gjilan/Gnjilan and Rahovec/Orahovac, youth from different ethnic groups are learning more about each other by studying language, music and art.

II. Activities

A. Advocacy Coalitions

During this reporting period, Freedom House concluded the project proposal evaluation process, selecting projects that address the KCRP priority areas. Freedom House focused on proposals that sought to: (a) Raise awareness among minority groups to help them become more actively engaged outside their enclaves, and (b) Create a strategy to engage decision-makers in key



Kosovo institutions. Media participation in projects is expected to facilitate interaction and understanding among minority communities and between the minority and majority.

The contracts with sub-grantees were signed on January 18, 2008. The CSO Our Home (“Nasa kuca”) and 24 radio stations of the Kosovo non-Albanian Media Association - KOSMA network (21 K. Serbian, 2 K. Bosniak, and one multi-ethnic radio station) implement a project entitled *Kosovo Serbian Communities: Advocating for Better Institutional Representation*. A group of CSOs from Mitrovicë/ Mitrovica (*ELSA/Media Pulse*), Prizren (*Zenit*), Rahovec/Orahovac (*Konak*) and Novi Sad (*ELSA/Youth Dialogue Program*) implement *Advocating for Future Sustainable Multi-ethnic Societies in Kosovo*.

Both coalition projects involve significant public education and advocacy, address specific issues concerning reconciliation and cooperation among citizens, CSOs, and local governments to improve inter-ethnic relations. The implementation of the partner projects started at the end of January 2008. (See: **Appendix I – Kosovo Map: Project Implementation Sites**).

1. *Advocating for Better Institutional Representation*

Although the unilateral declaration of independence in Kosovo and the events that followed considerably reduced the engagement of the Kosovo Serbian communities in civil society-led activities, *Our Home* and the *Center for Migration Studies* organized successful preparatory meeting among the 11 branch offices of the CSO Our Home and the members of the KOSMA network. As of March 10, the draft Constitution in all three languages is available to the public at *Our Home* offices, while meetings with the relevant Kosovo institutions have been scheduled for the second half of April to allow for the gathering of materials regarding draft legislation of interest to minority communities. Due to the highly tense political situation in the enclaves and the feeling of general uncertainty, the amount of time the draft constitution is available to the public was extended to the first half of April. To avoid possible negative impact on the staff of “Our Home” and eventual discrediting of the CSO’s achievements in the enclaves, the meetings in Pristina will be organized in cooperation with the Center for Migration Studies, a respected CSO among K. Serbian politicians and the local community.

The project envisions four public debates on the status of ethnic minorities and draft legislation of interest to the community, the results of which will be made available to relevant institutions in Kosovo. Topics for debate will cover issues related to upcoming legislation relevant to minority communities now under discussion in the Kosovo Assembly.

2. *Advocating for Future Sustainable Multi-ethnic Societies in Kosovo*

Four panel discussions were organized in Prizren, Rahovec/Orahovac, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, and Gračanica/Graçanicë as an integral part of the project entitled *Advocating for Future Sustainable Multi-ethnic Societies in Kosovo*. The discussions focused on: (a) raising awareness of minority groups to ensure active engagement outside their enclaves; (b) exerting positive pressure with the aim of exercising their civic rights at all levels of governance; (c) greater involvement of youth in these processes, and (d) creating a lobbying strategy to bring their interests closer to the agenda of the institutions in Kosovo.

Recommendations from each public discussion have been prepared by the organizers, who will approach local/central government and the international community. The outcome of each debate with a list of identified problems and recommended actions is summarized below:

Panel discussion in Rahovec /Orahovac:



A Rahovec/Orahovac panel discussion was held on the premises of the Youth Centre on March 7 and was attended by 25 young members of the local community, K. Serbs, K. RAE and K. Albanians. The panel discussion was focused on *Problems and Perspectives of Young People in Rahovec/Orahovac and Velika Hoča/Hoca*.

List of problems identified (in order of importance):

- Unemployment;
- Freedom of movement;
- Youth drain from Orahovac and V.Hoca;
- Lack of ability to work in the CSO sector;
- Education of the RAE community;
- Lack of leisure facilities for youth

List of recommendations:

- Establish channels for informal education;
- Increase the number of certified foreign language training courses, which are necessary for employment (there were/are language courses available, but without credited certification);
- Student and youth exchanges in the region;
- More cultural and sport events;
- Increase capacities of youth for work in the CSO sector.

Panel discussion in Prizren:



A public discussion in Prizren was held on March 8 and attended by 29 guests from various civil society groups (K. Bosniak, Turkish, Serbian, Albanian and Gorani communities) from the municipalities of Prizren, Dragash/Dragaš and Rahovec/Orahovac.

Participants openly addressed their concerns, problems, and put forward recommendations. They cited examples of good cooperation and initiatives bringing together various communities from the

Prizren region to promote coexistence and advocacy for improved living and social conditions.

List of problems identified (in order of importance):

- Lack of available logistical resources & infrastructure for CSO activities;
- Lack of extra curricula activities for minority students;
- Students from minority communities are not organized in forums and associations;
- Minority groups from the CSO sector in Prizren are totally disconnected from regional and international activities in which they could participate;
- Insufficient support from Kosovo institutions and

List of recommendations:

- More training courses and capacity building activities for minority CSOs and students;
- Students from minority communities (Bosniacs, Turks, Roma and Gorani) in Prizren to establish Students' associations;
- Lobby the Municipality of Prizren and Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport on providing a resource centre for minority CSOs.

international donors for CSO and student projects in Prizren.

Panel discussion in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica



The panel discussion on *Youth in Northern Kosovo – Problems and Perspectives* was held in north Mitrovica on March 15 on the premises of KTA and was attended by 15 participants (K. Serbs and K. RAE). The panel included a presentation on

ELSA and its role in this project. This was particularly important because this region of Kosovo is characterized by strong resistance to any form of constructive cooperation with state institutions.

List of problems identified (in order of importance):

- Inactivity of students and student organizations and their exclusion from decision making processes;
- Possible exclusion / isolation of northern Kosovo from youth policies;
- High youth unemployment rate and minimal access to employment within the public sector;
- Minimal access to educational exchange programs and funding opportunities due to the current situation in northern Kosovo and its effect on Mitrovica university (insufficient communication with the universities in the region).

List of recommendations:

- Create a common policy as a guide for student organizations and the basis for advocacy regarding university management and institutions;
- Establish a Youth Work Group, which will propose concrete ideas to authorities tasked with creating youth policy;
- Direct advocacy targeting institutions in both Pristina and Belgrade on transparent employment policies;
- Develop mechanisms to include Kosovo in all international academic activities and exchanges;
- Open communication with international student exchange networks and donors at the university level.

Panel discussion in Gračanica/Graçanicë



The fourth panel discussion on *Youth and Development of Multi-ethnic Societies in Kosovo* was organized in Gračanica/Graçanicë on March 29. There were 15 guests (12 K. Serbs, 2 K. Gorani and 1 K. Bosniak) and five panelists. The public debate promoted the overall project on Advocacy for the Future of Sustainable Multi-ethnic Societies in Kosovo. Particular focus was given to the forthcoming training sessions on advocacy for 25 members representing all minority communities in Kosovo.

List of problems identified (in order of importance):

- High unemployment rate among youth and little access to employment within the public sector;
- Students from minority communities not organized in forums or associations;
- Lack of available logistical resources & infrastructure for CSO work;
- Lack of support from Kosovo institutions and international donors for projects run by CSOs and

List of recommendations:

- More training and capacity building activities for minority CSOs and students in Gračanica;
- Lobby the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport to provide resource centres for minority groups;
- Develop an advocacy strategy aimed at international institutions, UNMIK, and Serbian representatives in the Kosovo Government and Assembly.

students;

- Need for training seminars on capacity building, human rights issues, youth leadership in Gracanica;
- Lack of organized extra curricula activities for minority students in Gracanica.

B. Ongoing Grants

Six KCRP-supported projects from year one have continued through to year two: Center for Migration Studies (*Keeping the Picture in Focus*), Hareja (*Discovering New Talents*); Lansdown (*Language as a Unity Bridge*); Center for Development of Children's Theatre (*ARROW Kosova/o*); Youth of JAZAS Kosovo (*Equal Opportunities for All: I have Right to Know*) and Kosovka Devojka (*Stop Corruption*).

1. Free and Objective Media Reporting

Keeping the Picture in Focus: Transparent Unbiased Information on Kosovo Status: In January, the KOSMA network produced news programs three times a day, reaching 80 percent



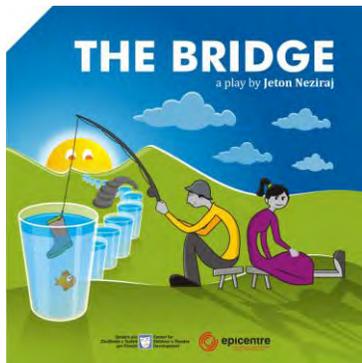
of Kosovo's territory and reaching the entire non-Albanian audience, as well as a large number of K. Albanians. The network covered topics of importance to the minority communities in Kosovo and main political and status-related issues.

Interview with Tina Kaidanow, Chief of Mission of the U.S. Office in Pristina, Radio Contact Plus

As a result of this project, the Kosovo non-Albanian media network was established and was expanded with two K. Bosniak and one multi-ethnic radio station. The overall program quality improved by introducing a harmonized news program produced on an association level. The project has enabled entire populations in the enclaves to have access to balanced, relevant and tangible information on all social and political issues. The Center for Migration Studies has carried out extensive consultations with association members to upgrade the quality of their work. CMS also organized three skills development training seminars and monitored program implementation on a monthly basis. Large international corporations in Kosovo have been approached to provide advertising (Carlsberg, Telenor, Telekom, Reiffeisen Bank, ProCredit Bank), to ensure future economic sustainability. (See: **Appendix II - Guest participants in KOSMA-Produced Programs in January 2008**).

2. Artistic Projects

ARROW Kosova/o: The partnership between the K. Albanian *Centre for the Development of Children's Theatre* (CDCT) and the K. Serbian *Ghetto Theater* continued as they toured throughout the region. During the reporting period, the play *Bridge* performed in Albanian was staged three times in Pristina (Dodona Theater) and twice in Prizren (Prizren Theater and the Loyola Gymnasium). The Serbian version of the same play was staged four times (twice in Gracanica and twice in Lapje Selo).



Cover page, *THE BRIDGE*, forthcoming

Both organizations have been invited to participate in three regional festivals in Serbia (Lapje Selo) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (CDCT). The publication of the *Bridge* in English, Albanian and Serbian is now underway and will appear in May 2008.

The Bridge has contradictions, humor, and discussion worthy of Ibsen yet the sparkling wit of Shakespeare. I say this as a charm for a play that reaches a happy conclusion through truth, yet contains disguise of identity and false difference. I challenge any citizen of the new society to identify which of its two families is Serbian and which is Albanian. Both are as Serbian and Albanian as Shakespeare himself, if only Shakespeare were not African or Irish.

David Gothard, English Theater Director

3. Cross-community cooperation

Stop Corruption: The K. Serbian CSO *Kosovka Devojka*, and the K. Albanian *Lidhja e Gruas*, raised awareness among the inhabitants of the municipality of Kamenica on ways of tackling corruption, one of the most complex problems facing the community. Alongside advocacy work at the community level (meetings and debates on corruption twice a month), a Municipal Anti-Corruption Committee is now being established and is expected to be instated during the coming months. Citizens were encouraged to make use of the anti-corruption boxes installed in the villages to report specific cases. Although people in Kosovo are fully aware of the existing corruption, they are still afraid to talk openly or to condemn corruption cases.



Meeting with the representative of the Municipal Assembly to initiate the establishment of the Municipal Anti-corruption Committee, March 2008.

4. Cultural exchanges

Discovering New Talents: In March, the CSO *Hareja* conducted a cultural program which included a concert and exhibition, organized for Albanian and Serbian children and their parents from Rahovec. The event was attended by representatives of the KFOR–CIMIC office in Rahovec, the Department for Education and the Culture House of Rahovec. The music and art courses for 40 children, age 7 to 11, organized over a 12-month period, were aimed at creating friendships among children from different communities while they learned to play musical instruments, dance and paint.



Final event: Children who participated in the project

Discovering New Talents, Hareja Center.

Language as a Unity Bridge: Lansdown, a multi-ethnic CSO from Gjilan, continued to provide language courses. The courses were nine weeks long and included instruction in Albanian for Serbian participants and Serbian for Albanian participants. Both took English courses together. During the last week of February all students were tested to evaluate their progress in Albanian, Serbian and English. On March 15th, students were presented with certificates at a closing ceremony. During the implementation, *Koha Ditore*, *Kosova Sot* and the KFOR Magazine *4You*

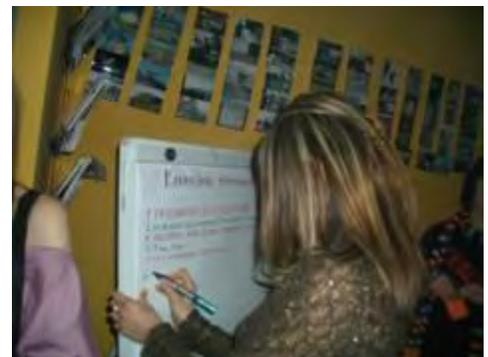
published positive articles about this project. Alongside this event, a debate on *Tolerance and Co-existence* and a students' *Art Exhibition* were held, with the participation of 83 people (50 students and 33 guests from local institutions, KFOR, OSCE, and local CSOs).



Students of the language courses show their certificates

Active youth engagement

Equal Opportunities for All; I Have Right to Know: This exhibition of photographs and billboards, opened in Mitrovica in December 2007, and has continued through January 2008. This exhibition was followed by a capacity building seminar on *Human Rights Education and Tolerance Building* and workshops on *Tolerance, Discrimination, Culture – Customs and Inter-ethnic Relations* for the youth from both north and south Mitrovica. Though the project team was initially reluctant to jointly publish photographs taken on both sides of town by youth from different ethnic communities, fearing negative reactions from hardliners, the exhibition was held without incident. More than 95 percent of comments given by visitors were positive and encouraging. The exhibition, organized by partner CSOs, the K. Serbian Youth of JAZAS Kosovo and the K. Albanian *With Hand on the Heart*, attracted not only media from the south and the north of the town, but from abroad. This positive example of youth inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation was presented on *Deutsche Welle* and *London Channel 3*.



Media presence at the exhibition

C. Baseline Survey

Preparations for a follow-up survey are underway. The Kosovo Chamber of Commerce (KCC) will carry out the survey in Gjilan, Lipjan, Rahovec, Skenderaj, Mitrovica North and South,



Pristina, Kamenica, Ferizaj/Uroševac, Janjevë/Janjevo, and Kline/Klina in April and May 2008. It will gather community perceptions of actual problems, such as: reconciliation, inter-ethnic relations after 2004, freedom of movement, cross-community cooperation, business relations, education, cultural exchanges, living conditions, property issues, IDPs, and opportunities for young people in municipalities covered by the program.

D. Community visits

In partnership with the Foundation for Democratic Initiatives (FDI), Freedom House has continued monitoring oCSOing projects. In March 2008, Freedom House visited Kosovka Devojka in Kamenica, Hareja in Rahovec and Landsdown in Gnjilan to provide advice on issues of financial management. This technical assistance helped local partners to successfully prepare their final finance reports in accordance with both Freedom House and USAID procedures.

III. Upcoming activities

During the next quarter, Freedom House will:

- Participate in the preparation of the four public debates on the status process and draft legislation of interest to the community, in cooperation with the Center for Migration Studies (CMS) and Our Home;
- Take part in organizing three training sessions on advocacy for 25 members representing all minority communities in Kosovo, in cooperation with ELSA/Media Pulse;
- Continue to monitor projects in cooperation with the Foundation for Democratic Initiatives (FDI);
- Evaluate the overall impact of the Center for the Development of Children's Theater, Our Home, ELSA/Media Pulse, and the Center for Migration Studies upon conclusion of their projects;
- Present the results of the survey in July 2008.

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PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION SITES





Appendix II
Guest participants in KOSMA-Produced Programs

January 2, 2008

Dragan Veljic, Coordination Center for Kosovo

January 4, 2008

Slobodan Petrovic, SLS

January 7, 2008

Bishop Artemije

Milutin Mrkonjic, SPS

January 8, 2008

Bishop Teodosije

Dragan Djilas, Serbian Minister without Portfolio

Skeljzen Maliqi, Political Analyst

January 9, 2008

Radojko Dunic, Pejë/Peć District Coordinator

January 11, 2008

Roy Reeve, Head of EU Preparatory Team

January 22, 2008

Murselj Haljilji, Gorani Initiative

February 22, 2008 (postponed from the end of January)

Tina Kaidanow, Chief of Mission of the U.S. Office in Pristina*

** The interview was broadcast both on radio and TV.*