The GWU Capstone Research: Evaluations of “Supporting Peace and Stability in Kosovo” and “Initiating Positive Change”

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From December 2009 to May 2010, a team of graduate students from the International Development Studies program at the George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs was asked by the Academy for Educational Development’s (AED) Center for Civil Society and Governance, to conduct evaluations of best practices for two AED projects in Kosovo: the Supporting Peace and Stability in Kosovo (SPSK) project, which ended in 2008 and the Initiating Positive Change (IPC) project, which is slated to end in 2011. Both projects are task orders under the Instability, Crisis, and Recovery Program (ICRP) indefinite quantity contract funded by USAID.

In implementing their evaluation, the research team initially worked with staff at AED headquarters to collect project documents and reports and conduct independent background research. Initial findings for the evaluation were presented to AED in early March 2010. Later that month, the research team traveled to Kosovo and conducted field research on SPSK and IPC. Upon their return to the United States, the research team compiled their findings into a final report and presentation for AED, providing lessons learned and recommendations. In addition to meeting the contractual needs of AED, the research team was also tasked with fulfilling requirements related to GWU’s International Development Studies program’s Capstone assignment. This final report is a combination of findings from and reflections on the Capstone experience.

SPSK Research, Best Practices and Lessons Learned
Research for SPSK primarily involved examining project contracts and modifications as well as final reports and quarterly reports. In the field, the research team conducted in-person interviews with key personnel under SPSK. These individuals consisted of a former member of the Subgroup on Public Outreach, a former AED Kosovo staff member, a member of ATRC, and staff from USAID Kosovo. In addition, the research team interviewed a former Chief of Party for SPSK upon returning to the United States.

Based on information gathered from these interviews, the research team identified several practices which were instrumental to AED’s successful implementation of SPSK: careful planning of activities; strong AED leadership and staff; a non-political and objective approach to activities; strong facilitation of relationships among project stakeholders; and expertise and knowledge of AED. Based on these best practices, the research team identified several lessons learned from the SPSK project.

IPC Research Observations, Best Practices and Recommendations
Initial research for IPC began with the examination of project contracts and quarterly reports. While in Kosovo, the research team visited the sites of several IPC activities, conducted focus groups with community groups and met with organizations that had received grants from AED. Although the team was able to cover a lot of ground, several research limitations existed, mainly due to translation difficulties, small focus group sizes and time constraints.

Through observations and field visits, the research team identified the following best practices for IPC: the project’s ability to adequately identify and meet the needs of minority communities;
AED’s ability to build trust among minority communities; AED’s ability to build partnerships with local organizations and community groups; and the non-political approach to the project. Based on these best practices, the field research team identified several overall recommendations, as well as specific monitoring and evaluation recommendations, for IPC.
BACKGROUND

Kosovo History
Kosovo is a former autonomous province of Serbia that gained its independence in 2008. Like many countries in the Balkans, Kosovo has been greatly affected by war. Kosovo came into the international spotlight when Serbia’s former president, Slobadan Milosevic unleashed an ethnic cleansing campaign in late 1998 against the majority Albanians in this area. As a result, many Albanians were killed or displaced by Serbian forces. In an attempt to prevent another mass genocide situation like that of Bosnia, NATO forces intervened and heavily bombed Serbia, which led to Milosevic’s surrender in 1999.

Since that time, the presence of international forces and agencies has been common in Kosovo. When the country gained its independence in 2008, it received strong support from the international community. However, some countries such as Serbia refuse to acknowledge Kosovo’s independence and the legitimacy of its government, and continue to support parallel institutions in the Serbian majority areas. While ethnic tension is no longer common in the country, there is still a certain level of distrust between the two ethnic groups. The majority of people in Kosovo continue to remain within their own ethnic enclaves, rarely intermingling with other ethnic groups.

AED and CCSG
The Academy for Educational Development (AED) is an international nonprofit organization based in Washington, DC that focuses on education, health, civil society and economic development. With over 250 human and social development programs, AED operates in over 60 countries within Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa. The Center for Civil Society and Governance (CCSG) at AED implements projects that support “citizens to mobilize effectively to influence policy, improve lives, and build peace.” Essentially, CCSG’s goal is to help citizens take initiative to bring about change in their lives. The center operates in approximately five regions and implements projects focused on strengthening civil society and government linkages, protecting human rights, increasing NGO network capacity and building peace.

CCSG and Capstone
For their Capstone research project, the research team worked with CCSG to evaluate two projects in Kosovo and provide CCSG with recommendations on how to improve their bids for future projects. The two projects CCSG asked the research team to evaluate were Supporting Peace and Stability in Kosovo (SPSK) and Initiating Positive Change (IPC), both of which received funding from USAID. SPSK, which ended in 2008, focused on implementing a media and public outreach campaign centered on the independence process in Kosovo. IPC, which is currently ongoing, reaches out to minority communities in Kosovo by implementing activities

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2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
that bring improvements to their daily lives. For both these projects, the research team was tasked to conduct preliminary research and field research and utilize the information from their research to create a final report and presentation for the AED team in Kosovo and in DC.

SUPPORTING PEACE AND STABILITY IN KOSOVO (SPSK)

Description of Research

Activities in the Field

While a great deal of the research for SPSK was conducted ahead of time, the research team did spend one day conducting interviews with various participants in the SPSK project. While the research team was unable to locate any direct beneficiaries of the project, they were able to interview both project staff and USAID personnel associated with the project. For the first round of interviews, the research team split into two groups and interviewed Dina Ćernobregu from USAID and Senad Sabovic, a former Subgroup member. Following that, the research team met with Urim Ahmeti, another representative from USAID. In the afternoon, the research team split into two groups to conduct interviews with a former local AED staff member and a former member of ATRC’s staff. Finally, the research team conducted a focus group consisting of several key Serb Weeks of Culture grantees. Overall, the interviews were very informative. Over the course of the interviews, a few trends emerged, the most distinctive of which was that all individuals and groups interviewed thought that AED did an excellent job facilitating the project, and this had been essential to the project’s success. Additionally, a number of interviewees also emphasized how the performance of key staff members greatly enhanced and carried the project to its full potential.

Research Constraints

The greatest constraint faced by the research team was the fact that SPSK was already closed, and many of the people involved in the project had moved on to other jobs. The team was limited by time and the interviewees’ availability. Also, the interviews were conducted about a year after SPSK’s close-out. The interviewees all expressed their opinions freely, but when probed for details, the interviewees often could not recall specifics. There were also instances where the interviewees self-censored their answers because of the positions they held in their current organizations. Despite these constraints, the team thought they were able to glean some valuable information from those involved in SPSK.

Best Practices

Through interviews with individuals involved in SPSK, the research team identified several practices conducted by AED that contributed to the successful implementation of the project. These best practices include: careful planning of activities; strong AED leadership and staff; a non-political and objective approach to project activities; the facilitation of relationships with project stakeholders; and expertise and knowledge of AED.

According to one interviewee, part of the success of SPSK was due to the careful planning of the media campaign. This opinion was echoed by another interviewee who said that the public outreach campaign was done particularly well. An important factor in the careful planning of these project activities is the strength of the AED leadership and staff. One interviewee stated
that the SPSK project did well because it had “the right person at the right place at the right time.” Essentially, the biggest asset for AED in SPSK was its staff. In addition to having strong leadership, AED also had a strong inter-ethnic staff that contributed a great deal of energy and commitment to the project.

The non-political and objective approach to project activities was also a strong point for SPSK. One interviewee commented on AED’s ability to maintain independence and non-partisanship throughout implementation. Another interviewee also noted that the use of positive messages that were complementary for both Albanians and Serbs was essential to the success of the media campaigns. The media campaign, according to this interviewee, was able to incorporate everyone by using the same campaign slogans in different languages. In this way, the project was not making different promises to different groups. Essentially, according to a third interviewee, this was a direct approach for encouraging people to understand the Ahtisaari proposal.

Another key element to SPSK’s success was AED’s ability to facilitate relationships among the project’s stakeholders. According to interviewees, AED was successful in balancing the large number of players in the field and bringing these communities and groups together. AED facilitated contact among organizations in Kosovo and collaborated with many local non-governmental organizations in implementing the project activities. Additionally, maintaining a close relationship with the USAID Mission in Kosovo was important in facilitating the smooth implementation of SPSK despite its many modifications.

Finally, the expertise and knowledge of AED as an institution was also instrumental to the successful implementation of SPSK. According to one interviewee, AED’s expertise in media and advocacy was helpful in developing the interactive materials, social marketing campaigns, and communication techniques needed for SPSK. Additionally, the local AED staff’s knowledge of local politics and history was essential to understanding how project activities would be accepted by the community.

Lessons Learned
On the whole, SPSK was an important project that successfully brought together stakeholders to develop positive messages about Kosovo’s independence process. Though it may be difficult to gauge the true, long-term impact of the project, several key lessons may be taken away.

- **Flexibility is key in project implementation:** As noted above, an important strength of SPSK was AED’s ability to collaborate with a diverse group of partners and donors. Because of these positive relationships, AED Kosovo was successful in adjusting to the multiple donor-driven changes in SPSK’s scope of work throughout the duration of the project. Managing expectations and remaining consistent with the implementation of SPSK’s activities was a major challenge that could not have been overcome without a spirit of openness and adaptability.

- **Local community input is critical for culturally sensitive programming:** Many interviewees point to SPSK’s non-political, ethnically neutral and positive programming as a major accomplishment within pre- and post-independence Kosovo. However, the project has also been criticized for lacking in creativity and failing to address the issues
of critical importance to communities. The AED Center for Civil Society and Governance (CCSG), under which SPSK was implemented, had limited experience with managing national level campaigns and relied on the technical and cultural expertise of local partners and staff members. This community input was invaluable to the design of many of SPSK’s outreach activities. In spite of this best practice, AED could have also utilized more representative focus groups to gain feedback about the cultural ramifications of their outreach techniques and the appropriateness of their activities. For example, it was pointed out by one interviewee that informational brochures were a “Western conception” that were not widely desired by Kosovars.

- **Targeting different groups in different ways can be beneficial:** Although SPSK sought to engage both Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs (and other minority groups) in similar ways, it appears that the ethnic populations responded positively to different activities. Based on several interviews with key SPSK personnel (a lack of data on SPSK’s impact on public perceptions exists), the Albanians were especially appreciative of the various media campaigns and willingly participated in the town hall meetings. Serbs, on the other hand, were wary of the independence-related campaigns and instead felt much more engaged in the cultural activities (such as the Serbian Weeks of Culture). It was essential to incorporate the interests of both Albanians and Serbs in all of SPSK’s outreach activities, but it is also important to note that different activities were more relevant to specific target populations.

**INITIATING POSITIVE CHANGE (IPC)**

**Research Observations**

**Community Progress Forums (CPF)s**

**Domorovce Road Project**

The research team conducted street interviews on the morning of March 18, 2010 in Domorovce. The research team asked questions (see Appendix G) to 14 villagers, the majority of which were male. After the street interviews, the research team conducted two focus groups, one with CPF members (3 participants) and one with non-CPF members (10 participants). All focus groups participants were male.

Overall, several cross-cutting themes emerged from the interviews. All of the interviewees thought the road improved Domorovce. They also cited the fact that the road was extremely beneficial to the children of the village as they no longer had to walk through rocks and mud to get to school. Finally, very few people could identify the organization that financed the road’s construction. Many said a US organization funded the project, but the research team believes that answer was driven by the fact that the members of the research team were American and USAID placards were visible in the vehicles used by the research team. Both CPF and non-CPF community members also commented that the road had not been designed properly because the construction company would not listen to the villagers’ input. Finally, the community members stated that more pressing needs, such as running water and sewage, existed within the community; unfortunately, funding constraints did not allow for them.
**Korminjane Playground**
On the afternoon of March 18, the research team conducted both street interviews and focus groups in Korminjane. They asked questions to 21 villagers, which were evenly divided by gender and varied greatly by age. They also interviewed 3 CPF members, all of whom were male.

Most people interviewed were satisfied with the quality of the construction of the playground. Once again, the playground was not cited as the most pressing need in the community but was deemed the most appropriate with the available funding. The CPF members stated that it would be beneficial to have an additional playground on the other side of the village as well as a soccer field for older children. Community members said that they used the playground often; some women brought their children every day. However, villagers also commented that the maintenance of the facility could be improved and that there should be stricter enforcement of the 2-6-year-old age limit.

**Velika Hoca Music Equipment**
The research team conducted interviews on the morning of March 19 in Velika Hoca. The CPF in Velika Hoca received a $4000 rapid start-up grant to purchase music equipment to enhance their cultural society’s musical performances. There were several non-CPF members and only one CPF member at the interviews, as many of the community members were working in the vineyards and were not available. The interviewees said that the additional equipment greatly improved the quality of their cultural performances and helped to attract tourists to the village, which has a monastery that is a pilgrimage site for many Serbians.

**Klina Agriculture Equipment**
The last site the research team visited was a small town outside of Klina. They conducted two focus groups, one with CPF members and one with non-CPF members. Once again, the villagers were greatly satisfied with the equipment; however, they stated that too many people need to use the single piece of equipment. There are approximately 100 people who currently share the machinery. Though usage is managed by the agricultural union, most interviewees felt that there is an inadequate window of time in which to plow and seed the land. This short timeframe makes it difficult to allow everyone to use the equipment and keep it well maintained.

**USAID-Directed Grantees**
**Humanitarian Law Center (HLC)**
The Humanitarian Law Center has been awarded a grant by AED to complete its Kosovo Memory Book, commemorating the deaths of thousands of Albanians and minority populations during the conflict in the late 1990s. Integral to its mission is setting the record straight about these deaths. The research team attended a Public Verification Hearing in Shtime and observed field investigation. Originally, the team planned to interview families who used HLC’s collection of data to locate missing family members. However, HLC’s director revealed the data is available almost exclusively to prosecutors and municipalities. Though there are plans to electronically publish the information, it is unclear whether these will come to fruition. The research team also shadowed an HLC field investigator to observe the organization’s data collection techniques. They concluded that while the data collection was beneficial to the completion of the Memory Book, the research could continue without a clearly defined stopping
point. The research team concluded that HLC needs to move forward with the information already obtained and continually update the information with future editions of the Memory Book, as well as a regularly updated electronic version.

**Helsinki Committee**

To analyze the effectiveness of the cultural trips operated by the Helsinki Committee, it was decided that two different activities were optimal. The research team planned to interview trip participants, in order to gauge their reactions to the activity, and conduct street interviews, in order to find out how many people had heard of the program, and if so, what their impressions of them were.

Unfortunately, due to inclement weather, the street interviews were canceled and a slightly modified group discussion was held. Representative from the Helsinki Committee were very accommodating and managed to gather several individuals who had not been on the trip to talk with the research team. The group was made up of a total of 12 individuals, with six males and six females. This was a far more equitable breakdown than the research team had seen in many of the other focus groups. Overall there were very positive reactions to the trip, with most expressing that they felt safe during it and would like to see similar trips held. As with the other focus groups, there is some concern over the lack of independent translation, but in this case the group’s knowledge of English was a little better, and the coordinators assisted the AED staff member in providing timely translation for the team members. Participants knew that an American organization had funded the trip but were not sure which one.

**Mitrovica Rock School**

For this portion of the IPC evaluation, the research team’s original plan was to interview faculty, students, and parents from both the North (primarily Serbian) and South (primarily Albanian) Rock Schools in separate groups. Due to security-related circumstances, the research team was forced to revise their plan. On the day the team was scheduled to travel to Mitrovica, an extremely divided city, the Department of State issued a strong alert advising Americans to avoid the area due to protests commemorating the anniversary of the start of the NATO bombing campaign. Prior to traveling to Mitrovica, it was decided that it would be most appropriate to proceed only with the interviews in the South.

Despite these changes, the operators of the Rock School managed to bring together staff from both schools, for a focus group that went quite well. For the most part, the staff spoke at least some English and many spoke it well, making translation much less of an issue than it had been for previous interviews. In addition to the staff interviews, the research team was permitted to watch some of the students from the South side perform and conduct a focus group with them as well. While an AED staff member did translate portions of the interview for the team, a few of the students also spoke English. Although the students do not perform or practice together inside of Kosovo due to security concerns, they do interact via social media websites and during an annual summer camp held in Macedonia.

**Documentary Screenings and Focus Groups**

For the documentary series, the team split into two separate groups to show “In the Neighborhood, without an Escort” and “Serbian Documents: Valid or Not?” in Gjilan and
Gracanica. Both locations were to be shown both documentaries and conduct focus groups separated by gender. These focus groups were to be given the same pre and post-viewing quizzes. The aim was to gather individuals who had not previously seen either film and gauge their reactions both before and after.

While clear instructions were passed to the organizers ahead of time, there were a number of problems that arose that made the validity of the findings questionable. First and foremost, both films were not shown in the two locations, but rather just one in each. A second problem that arose was that in both locations, a number of the individuals who had been gathered for the focus groups had seen the films beforehand, making it impossible to gauge how their reaction changed after watching the films. In one instance it appears that one of the participants actually worked on the film, also making their opinions invalid for the team’s purposes. Finally, both groups encountered a number of translation issues. In both cases, there were few independent translators, and a number of statements went untranslated. For the women’s focus group in Gjilan, the translator provided spoke very little English, making accurate translation impossible. In the end, the documentaries were met with positive responses, though the validity of the information is highly circumspect.

**Cross-Cutting Themes**

**CPF Activities**

There were three themes that emerged from the interviews with villagers in each community visited by the research team. In each context, the majority of the people interviewed could not identify AED as the organization that funded the project. Often, people would say that it was some American organization, but the research team thought this response was due in large part to the visibility of USAID placards during interviews and the citizenship of the team members.

Secondly, youth were identified as important beneficiaries of the projects. In Domorovce, the road was deemed a successful project because it provided children with a safe, dry path to school. The playground in Korminjane was important to the community because it provided a safe place for children to play off the streets. Velika Hoca’s cultural society benefitted from the music equipment because it enhanced their performances, attracting more youth to the cultural society. Finally, the villagers near Klina were using the agricultural equipment to improve the community’s economy to attract exiled youth back to the village.

The most important theme encountered was that the projects undertaken were not the most pressing priority in the any of the communities. Interviewees identified infrastructure needs such as sewage, running water, and sport facilities as more critical community priorities. However, both CPF and non-CPF members understood that funding constraints were the main determinant when prioritizing projects. Given the limited funds available, the interviewees commented that IPC’s activities targeted important community needs and improved the quality of life and safety of each village.

**Documentary Series**

Despite the issues of internal validity, there was one issue that was broached in all of the focus groups – the participants wanted to see a documentary about the hardships youth faced with unemployment. Participants discussed the difficulties faced by youth who have graduated from
school but are unable to find employment opportunities. While these documentaries addressed issues pertinent to the Serbian minority, the issue of youth unemployment was the one requested by the focus groups in both locations.

**Grantees**
The themes among grantees varied greatly. All the grantees differed in their strategic visions, missions, and beneficiaries. However, one issue that cut across all three was a lack of AED and USAID’s visibility with their activities. Additionally, all the grantees were very innovative in their approaches to helping the people of Kosovo. The Helsinki Committee addressed issues of quality of life and freedom of movement by taking Serbians out of the enclaves to Albanian-majority areas to cultural heritage sites they would not have otherwise visited. The Humanitarian Law Center attempts to reconcile the horror of ethnic cleansing by documenting all of the casualties suffered during the conflict. Finally, the Mitrovica Rock School attempts to prevent conflict by fostering the musical talents of youth on both sides of the ethnic divide. Unfortunately, their innovation is constrained by funding issues, strategic vision, and the current political reality of Kosovo.

**Research Constraints**
Although the majority of the project proceeded well, there are a number of research constraints to consider that impact the validity of the data collected by the research team. The first two, which are interconnected, regarded the sample sizes of all the groups and the timeframe in which the fieldwork was completed. Due to short timeframes, it was not possible for the research team to cultivate the needed contacts within Kosovo that would allow them to assemble and run larger numbers of focus groups. This also constrained the diversity of participants. In addition to the first two constraints, the research team also encountered issues with the translation assistance we received. In all cases, it was an AED staff member who assisted team members with translation. Although the research team believes that much of the translation was correct, this lack of an outside translator must be considered, since it is not possible to prove that full impartiality was observed. In addition to this, in a few of the cases where an AED staff member was not available for translation assistance, the translators who were provided by some of the local groups were unable to give adequate translation assistance.

**Best Practices**
Through field research, the research team identified four best practices of IPC: the project’s ability to adequately identify and meet the needs of the minority communities it aims to serve; AED’s ability to build trust among the minority communities; AED’s ability to build partnerships with local NGO’s; and the non-political approach to the project.

The project’s ability to identify and meet the needs of the minority communities has led to strong buy-in from the communities it serves. For example, utilization of the Community Progress Forums (CPF) allows communities to identify for themselves the activities that are needed to develop their communities. As a result, the projects implemented by the CPF grants, such as the road in Domorovce, the playground in Korminjane, or the agricultural instruments in Klina, have been strongly utilized by their respective villages. Similarly, among the grantee organizations such as the Helsinki Committee or Mitrovica Rock School, their ability to correctly identify the
needs of minority communities has led to strong participation in the organizations’ activities by this target group.

A key component of achieving buy-in from minority communities is AED’s ability to build trust among the minority population. This is partially due to the inter-ethnic staff at AED Kosovo. Approximately 43% of the AED Kosovo staff is non-Albanian, comprising of Serbs, Croats and Montenegrins. Additionally, among AED’s Albanian staff, approximately 63% can speak Serbian. This diversity in ethnicity and language allows AED Kosovo to instill trust among the minority groups that IPC aims to serve. Also, AED’s ability to follow through with the commitments it makes to minority communities reinforces that sense of trust. For example, the villagers of Domorovce, who were initially suspicious of AED and skeptical that they would actually build the road, are now quite please with the organization and the new road that they have.

Related to AED’s ability to build trust among minority communities is AED’s ability to build partnerships with local organizations. More specifically, a best practice of IPC is the support to organizations that utilize innovative approaches to engaging minority communities. For the Helsinki Community, the organization and implementation of excursions for minority communities to visit other parts of Kosovo is something that these groups would not have tried on their own. The Helsinki Committee’s engagement in a simple act was a way to renew a sense of pride and empowerment among the minority communities. Another organization, the Mitrovica Rock School, uses music as a tool to bring communities together. IPC’s support of these organizations is a strong point of this project and one that should be continued and expanded.

Finally, a best practice of IPC is the projects non-political approach in bringing about change to Kosovo. The activities under IPC, though non-political in nature, have the potential to elicit major changes in the lives of both Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo. The CPF grant process allows minority communities to have a voice in what they believe is needed for their communities. Similarly, Link Production’s documentaries allow minority communities to see that the issues relevant to them are being acknowledged and understood. Another organization, the Humanitarian Law Center, while not specifically targeting minority communities, provides an unbiased service to both Albanians and Serbs. Finally, the Mitrovica Rock School utilizes music to initiate dialogue between Albanians and Serbs. These activities are not overtly or blatantly political, but they do contain some political elements which help bring about change in Kosovo.

These above mentioned best practices are useful to highlight when evaluating IPC. They illustrate USAID and AED’s commitment to reaching out to minority groups and should be continued and expanded upon for future projects in Kosovo.

Recommendations

Overall Recommendations

- **Continue reaching out to minority communities:** Though the activities of IPC are engaging minority communities in creative and effective ways, there is still room for improvement as the project continues. It is important for AED to continue to reach out to
Kosovo’s minorities in a variety of ways, including awarding grants, supporting local decision-making bodies (especially CPFs), and creating targeted media tools (such as documentaries). A major strength of the IPC project is its ability to target different beneficiaries by supporting a number of unique activities. Through these activities, AED has the opportunity to set an example of innovation and capacity-building among its local partners.

- **Improve communication with local partners and groups:** Although AED successfully partners with local organizations and engages in activities with minority communities, substantial communication with these groups is sometimes lacking. During field visits to villages receiving CPF grants, villagers reported that there was little or no communication about the project before its implementation. For example, villagers in Domorovce cited that they were not aware that a road was being built in their village until after it was built. Additionally, there appears to be differences in perception about the level of communication and participation between the CPF members and the community. While CPF members stated that they were able to engage the majority of the village to participate in the CPF project, village members who were interviewed by the research team stated that they asked to provide input to the planning and implementation of the project.

- **Provide additional assistance to grantee organizations as necessary:** In terms of communication with the grantee organizations, some organizations require more than others. For example, based on the observations of the research team, the Humanitarian Law Center requires additional assistance from AED to complete its project in a timely manner. Observations of their data collection process revealed one of the inefficiencies of their project: the organization currently only has one person dedicated to gathering testimonials of thousands of victims, and usually only gathers two to three testimonials per day. Additionally, interviews with their project director revealed that most of the information gathered for the project is not easily accessible to the general public and is often only used by prosecutors and government officials. Other grantee organizations, on the other hand, require less assistance from AED and are implementing their projects in a timely and efficient manner.

- **Improve marketing and branding techniques:** Another area in which AED Kosovo can improve is in its marketing and branding techniques. Based on the focus group and interview reflections, many of the communities in which AED is currently working have had negative experiences with international organizations in the past but appreciate the current efforts of AED Kosovo’s team. Unfortunately, many interviewees, especially those uninvolved in the CPFs, were unable to identify the implementers or donors of AED’s various projects. It is important to increase the visibility of AED and its funders locally. This will enhance the legitimacy of AED Kosovo and USAID and will provide interested Kosovars with valuable information about AED’s resources.

**Monitoring and Evaluation Recommendations**

**Focus Groups**

- **Utilize a more thorough, unbiased selection process for focus group participants and diversify focus groups by gender and community affiliation:** Throughout the research team’s time in Kosovo, they observed that the distribution of males and females among CPF members (or direct family members) and other community leaders were quite
disproportionate and predominantly male. Involving more women and community members in non-leadership roles will be essential for obtaining a truly representative sample of the beneficiary groups for evaluation purposes.

- **While conducting focus groups, separate groups by gender and/or community affiliation:** Men, especially those already established as community leaders, tend to dominate conversation. Greater free-flowing conversation is likely when participants are broken up into more intimate and comfortable environments.

- **Organize appropriate venues ahead of time:** Many communities are ill-equipped to provide multiple appropriate sites for conducting focus groups. Venues should be prearranged to ensure availability of space do not negatively impact the evaluation.

- **Utilize control groups:** Comparison groups are vital for ensuring a valid study. Especially when evaluating the effect of the information provided in documentaries, control groups should be used to offset the potential biases and inherent differences of the participants.

- **Test (and translate if necessary) sample questions before using them in the field:** There is always a risk that questions used to invoke discussion among focus group participants are unclear, insensitive or simply unimportant. Testing questions beforehand can maximize the efficiency and relevance of each focus group session.

**General**

- **Use experienced, independent evaluators, facilitators and translators (if necessary):** In conducting evaluations of projects, it is important to utilize independent evaluators, such as the research team, that are not connected to the actual implementation of the project. However, when using independent evaluators, it is also important to utilize independent translators if necessary. For the research team, the bulk of the translation during their visit to Kosovo was made by members of the AED Kosovo team, potentially creating a research bias. Though the in-country AED team members were very competent and were preferred over other local translators, it is ideal to only involve independent persons who are in no way involved with the subject of the evaluation.

- **Continue to monitor community-level decision-making processes:** It is clear that there is variation in how decisions are made within each community, CPF and municipality. In order for the CPFs to be effective and not simply a mechanism for individual power consolidation, true participatory processes for choosing priorities and grantees are required. This may require additional technical assistant for community members or mandated community meetings.

- **Take advantage of existing institutional knowledge:** AED Kosovo has already conducted focus groups, particularly for SPSK. Though potentially not feasible, reusing past focus group questions or interviewees may augment IPC’s evaluation efficiency and legitimacy.

**REFLECTIONS**

*Working with the Client: A Perspective from Georgie*

When embarking on the Capstone project, we were well warned that interacting with the clients could be challenging. Previous groups stressed flexibility, and this advice proved valuable to our...
Capstone team when it came to working with AED. Due to the nature of our work, evaluating two separate programs with two separate program heads, the team was forced to adopt very different strategies to handle communication with AED depending on which program we were currently working on.

Working with AED’s home office was at times highly frustrating. Throughout the process, we found ourselves having a number of problems getting staff to return our emails and calls, schedule meetings, or make decisions about what deliverables they would like. The team’s foremost problem was convincing AED’s home staff to respond to our communications; often the team would have to email our contacts a number of times, simply to remind them to send the documents that we had been promised during previous conversations. Our second greatest obstacle was convincing our client to make a decision about what specific things they wanted as deliverables. It was common throughout February for our client to tell us that they wanted one thing one week and something rather different the following. This happened up until the meeting immediately before we left, with them considering adding an additional parameter to our work. While we understood that this project was not the staff’s top priority, it seemed that indecision and the lack of consistent communication made both of our jobs harder and less efficient than they would have been otherwise. We think the lack of interest had to do with the fact that SPSK has been closed for some time now, and our findings will mostly be targeted towards an upcoming USAID contract rebid. The team dealt with these issues by being polite but persistent via email until we had all of the problems worked out.

Our team had a much better time working with the field office in Kosovo, both when in-country and while back in the United States. While in the US we found the COP for IPC, Matthew Pietz, to be very receptive to our work. Not only did he demonstrate verbal enthusiasm for our work, but his actions and assistance with arranging interviews and travel plans demonstrated this as well. In particular, we appreciated that he always responded to our emails in a timely manner and was clear and concise about what he was looking for. Prior to our arrival in Kosovo, he worked with the team to create a detailed work plan that was suitable for all involved.

In regards to the rest of the field staff, we found that they, like Matt, were easy to work with and sought to help make our time in Kosovo as pleasant and productive as possible. At the outset we were not sure if the language barrier would be an issue, as none of us knew any Serbian or Albanian. We were pleased to discover that since the entire staff spoke English very well, this was not an issue. The staff was particularly helpful in arranging meetings with the groups we needed to contact, making sure we got to the meetings, and making sure we had the necessary translation services. One of the main reasons that communications with the field staff were so successful had to do with their perceptions of the project; because IPC is ongoing, there is still time to make improvements. Our evaluation of IPC should be much more relevant and valuable now than our reflections on SPSK, a closed project.

**Obstacles, Challenges and Identity Crises: A Perspective from Brooke**

I’m generally a pretty positive person, so writing about obstacles we faced is difficult. As I eagerly tell anyone willing to listen, our time in Kosovo was amazing and truly a life-changing experience. We really had no idea what we were getting ourselves into, but that also made exceeding our expectations quite easy. I think we will all look back on this Capstone experience
as something that truly shaped our academic and early professional lives by opening our eyes to a new geographic, cultural and human perspective of development.

With that said, the overall Capstone process was not exactly effortless. When Georgie, Ryan, Astrid and I chose to work together in the summer of 2009, it is an understatement to say we were a bit overwhelmed by the enormity of the project we would eventually take on. We had almost no idea how to go about finding a client, and I think all of us felt a bit apprehensive about trying to prove to development professionals that we as students could be a true asset through the Capstone program. I’m not sure if the feeling of being slightly unqualified to do this type of work ever went away, though I do believe I now have a new set of practical skills that will certainly help me as I transition into the professional world.

When we finally and gratefully decided to work with AED after dozens of other dead-end emails and disappointments, there was little time to celebrate. All of a sudden we were faced with a major obstacle: AED wanted us to go to Kosovo, and none of us knew anything about it. Our group was supposed to begin background research and evaluation on a marginally-recognized country and two development projects that were totally unfamiliar to us. We pushed through it and remarkably managed to come up with some solid initial findings, in large part due to Astrid’s organizational skills. But we were given little feedback from our client, and our field research schedule was woefully uncertain until a few days prior to departure. When we all boarded the plane at Dulles to make our way over to Kosovo, we still had little idea about what our actual field research would look like and how we were to do anything of actual value.

Fortunately, we knew going in that being flexible was key, so we were prepared for the worst. In the end, our time in the field was beyond anything we ever imagined. Our scheduling concerns were mitigated by the diligence of the in-country staff, and we were able to see and learn about a wide range of AED’s activities. The major challenge was actually being in Kosovo for such a short period of time. We were only able to spend a few hours with each community or organization we were attempting to evaluate. We were able to appreciate the breadth of AED’s current IPC project, but any sort of in-depth analysis was really infeasible.

In honor of my optimistic outlook on life despite challenges, I’ll stop there. Maybe I haven’t even done a great job of describing the obstacles we faced. But I think that’s because what really matters is the fact that we overcame them. Despite the identity crises, the inconsistent communication with our client and the anxieties that are inherent with international travel, we had a great time. The challenges involved shaped our experience and provided us important lessons to take away. If I could do it all over again, I don’t know if I would change anything. So at the end of the day, I am left with a single thought: does anyone want to go to Kosovo with me again?

**Working in the Field: A Perspective from Ryan**

At the beginning of Capstone, if you had asked the four of us where we thought we would be doing our fieldwork, you would have gotten the following answers – Ghana, Zambia, Tanzania, or Burkina Faso. We all wanted to go to Africa. Georgie, Astrid, and Brooke each spent significant amounts of time on the continent and have a love that runs deep for its people, its beauty, and its warmer climate. I wanted to go to Africa for the simple fact that I had never been
there and I love studying it. Little did we know that our shared interests in Africa, governance, and health would lead us to Kosovo.

After securing our client, AED, we were given a range of projects from which we could rank our choices. After careful consideration our interests and their needs, AED would make the decision as to which project we would work on. Honestly, Kosovo was our last choice because it did not fit with our original focus on the nexus of governance and health issues, and it was in the Balkans—not exactly Zambia. However, the staff at AED had different plans for us, and we were informed that we would indeed be going to Kosovo.

The first thing out of my father’s mouth when I told him I was going to Kosovo was, “Is it safe? Weren’t we (the US) bombing it ten years ago?” My response to him was, “I don’t know and yes, but I’m going anyway.” I tell you this story because I think it sums up all of our reactions to Kosovo. None of had extensive experience in the Balkans, academic or otherwise, prior to this project. In some ways we were starting from scratch—cursory knowledge of the context, no proficiency in the local languages, and curiosity in the unknown.

We arrived at the Pristina airport on a dreary day, and we really did not know what to expect for the next ten days, as AED had been quite vague about what our field research would entail. The next day we immediately jumped into our work, meeting the AED Kosovo staff, finalizing surveys, and solidifying our field schedule. The AED Kosovo staff was very professional and willing to help with any issues we had. It was great that we were able to establish a good rapport with the staff from the beginning of the trip, since we would be spending a lot of time with several of them while in the field.

We spent a day on our own conducting interviews for SPSK, but then the rest of the time we relied on the AED staff to take us to all the site visits. We have discussed at length the validity issues that existed with our research and the challenges the language barrier presented. This paper contains descriptions of the work we did, so I will not rehash it here. I want to focus more on my impressions of the people of Kosovo.

Every person we met, from the 23-year-old Serbian woman in the documentary focus group to our illustrious logistics officer, Fatmir, had incredible stories of loss, love, and fear during “the War.” All the history and background we read before the trip paled in comparison to the real-life accounts people openly shared with us. Conducting field research truly brought the information to life since we were able to talk to people and understand the implications of ethnic tensions, international interventions, and misunderstandings that people incorporated into their everyday lives. There is something about seeing a person’s face as they talk about not having safe, running water for their families or wanting to simply drive their car from point A to point B without being harassed that elicits sympathy for these situations. We got into the development field for this very reason—to understand a community’s problems and find a way to help its people.

We thought we would go into the field, complete our research, and see some interesting things, but we bonded with each other as we overcame the challenges of field research. We came to appreciate the country’s beauty as well as the serious problems that exist in the wake of violent
conflict. We were impressed by the passion of the different people we met, and their willingness to move forward from the tragedy of the late 1990s. Obviously, we only got a snapshot of the Kosovar people. However, the overall impression we came away with for every group we met was they wanted to move forward to make a better life for the next generation, while still remembering the past so as not to repeat it. We met skeptics, but the majority of people were hopeful for a peaceful future and were ready to work for it. Kosovo, as a state and as a society, still has a long way to go before it truly overcomes the atrocities perpetrated there.

I think our team had the technical skills to conduct the fieldwork effectively, and the trip was a great way to practice those skills; however, I think we learned more from the interpersonal connections we made. None of us expected to love Kosovo – its people, its landscape, and its food – but we do. I know I wanted to stay and work with these communities who are passionate about creating a better life for themselves and their children. We will never forget the people we met, the stories they told us, and the kindness they showed us. For all of the challenges we faced in completing our research, I do not think we trade the experience for anything.

Suggestions for Improving Capstone: A Perspective from Astrid

In general, the Capstone experience was one of the most worthwhile elements of our graduate school experience. Capstone not only provided us with hands-on experience in the field, but it also gave us an opportunity to understand the process of engaging in a consultancy project with a client organization. Looking back, the majority of our Capstone experience was quite positive, and we gained a handful of valuable skills in the process, which is what makes the IDS program so unique.

One of the reasons our Capstone experience was so positive was that our team worked well as a group. We each brought our own individual perspectives, skills, and experiences to the table, and were able to work with each other to complete the tasks that were necessary for the project. Additionally, we were very conscious of the division of responsibilities among the group, and made sure there was always an equitable distribution of tasks among each member. This helped ensure that our group was utilizing our time wisely to ensure that our project was moving along. For students engaging in future Capstone projects, choosing team members who complement each other and work well together is key to a positive and worthwhile Capstone experience.

Despite our strong teamwork, our Capstone experience was not always a smooth ride. One of the major challenges we faced as a team was simply scheduling. Since all four members of our team were employed either part-time or full-time, and our classes were dispersed throughout the week, it was often difficult to coordinate a time when all of us could meet in one place. Sometimes one member of the team was not able to attend a meeting and would call in, and other times, it was impossible for everyone to be in one place, so we would utilize Skype or have a virtual meeting. Given our hectic schedules, these tactics were the best we could come up with, though they were definitely far from ideal.

For the Capstone program as a whole, there is certainly room for improvement. Having more resources available to us before beginning our Capstone projects would have helped immensely. Additionally, we would have liked to see better client resources available to us and more
guidance from our faculty advisor. Finally, more opportunities for the class to meet together as a group to exchange experiences would have been helpful during our Capstone project.

- **Provide more resources before implementing Capstone projects:** At times, our group felt as if we were putting together our project haphazardly. Although we were tasked to conduct an evaluation, we really did not have any solid background on conducting evaluations. What we needed from the IDS program as a whole was more skills-based courses that would allow us to practice and develop the skills necessary for our Capstone projects. For example, our group needed a class that could focus on specific techniques and skills such as conducting focus groups, designing an evaluation plan, or conducting a project evaluation. Although we admit there is a lot of diversity in the kinds of tasks that Capstone groups are asked to do for their projects, there are also certain themes, like project management or evaluation techniques, that cut across all groups. A suggestion for the IDS program is to replace the Development Policy and Practice course with a course that focuses solely on helping students practice designing and implementing projects.

- **Provide better client resources:** Given the relative youth of our group, we really lacked many connections in the nonprofit and nongovernmental world of DC. We ended up finding our client through connections with the IDS program rather than through our own connections. Part of our difficulties in finding a client was that we were not really sure what organizations were in DC and what kinds of programs they were engaged in. Additionally, we were really unsure of how to approach potential clients and present our Capstone project to them. Better guidance from the IDS program, in the form of a list of organizations in DC or a session on how to best approach clients, would have been helpful for our group.

- **Provide more guidance from the faculty advisor:** On the whole, we were very satisfied with our faculty advisor. She was very flexible with our time schedule and encouraging of the work that we were doing for our Capstone project. However, sometimes it felt as if we were not given enough support in the form of suggestions for books, materials, or resources for conducting our evaluations. Our suggestion for the faculty advisor is to guide their students in the right direction in terms of finding the resources necessary to prepare and implement their Capstone projects. These resources could include suggestions for books, websites, classes, or people to get in touch with.

- **Provide more opportunities for the class to meet and exchange experiences:** While our group enjoyed the time we were given to work on our Capstone project, we would have liked more opportunities to meet with other groups and compare our Capstone projects. More specifically, a session where groups can exchange their experiences working with their clients would have been helpful. Additionally, a session after all the groups had returned from their Capstone trips but before the presentations would have been a good opportunity for all the groups to decompress and hear about each other’s experiences in the field.
APPENDIX A: Supporting Peace and Stability in Kosovo – Historical Context
Project period examined: February 2007 – September 2008

INTRODUCTION
Project evaluation does not occur in a vacuum. Instead, project evaluation occurs while taking into consideration the political and historical context in which a project is operating in. The project Supporting Peace and Stability in Kosovo faced several major transitions throughout its implementation, both within the project and the operating environment. With this project brief, we aim to identify the relevant issues that Kosovo in general and the project in particular faced at the time, and how AED addressed those key issues.

POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT
The period in which this project was implemented was a significant time for Kosovo. In November 2005, Martti Ahtisaari was appointed by the UN to lead a future status settlement process and develop a comprehensive proposal for Kosovo’s future status. In April 2007, after nearly two years of preparation, Ahtisaari presented his plan to the international community, but received a mixed response. While some countries supported his plan, others, especially Russia and Serbia, showed resistance to it. Despite this resistance, the international community continued to work towards reaching an agreement, and on February 17, 2008, Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia. Many countries, including the United States, recognized Kosovo’s status as an independent state, but predictably, Serbia did not. In April 2008, the Kosovo Constitution was approved by the Kosovo Assembly, and by June 15, 2008, it was enacted into law.

The main provisions of Ahtisaari’s final status proposal revealed a major effort on Ahtisaari’s part to engage ethnic Kosovo Serbs in the idea of Kosovo as a unified nation. The proposal called for a multi-ethnic and democratic Kosovo that respected the rights of minority groups and promoted their participation in public institutions. Other provisions included Kosovo’s participation in the international community, and the presence of the international community in the affairs of Kosovo, particularly in domestic security and judicial matters. Another major provision was decentralization - a direct concession towards Kosovo Serbs - that allowed the Serbian minority to maintain responsibility over its own affairs.

The Ahtisaari final status proposal was used as a guide to the drafting of the Kosovo Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Many of the provisions in the proposal were incorporated into these documents. For instance the Declaration of Independence declares Kosovo a democratic, secular, and multi-ethnic republic that welcomes the support of the international

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7 “Background Note: Kosovo.”
8 “Background Note: Kosovo.”
community. Additionally, the Kosovo Constitution puts this declaration into practice with provisions that highlight equality of citizens under the law, the maintenance of cultural and religious heritage, the rights of communities and their member, and local self-government. Similar to the Ahtisaari final status proposal, the Kosovo government has taken great care to ensure that Kosovo Serbs and other minorities are given a certain sense of autonomy, while still being included in Kosovo institutions.

**RELEVANT ISSUES**

During this particular time in Kosovo’s history, several key issues emerge. The first issue involves the consequences of decentralization, which was a major provision in the Ahtisaari final status proposal, and also plays a role in the Kosovo Constitution. Allowing ethnic minorities such as Kosovo Serbs to have the responsibility of governing their own areas decreases the legitimacy of Kosovo government institutions among Kosovo Serbs. The integration of minorities into government institutions is important in promoting the longevity of Kosovo as an independent state. Related to this issue is the issue of Kosovo Serbian acceptance of Kosovo institutions. The emergence of Kosovo as a new state depended in part on ethnic Serbs’ buy-in to the independence process and their promotion of Kosovar nationalism. It was important that the state building process be supported by the Serbs to avoid the perception that the state was imposed on the Serbs. Additionally, the international community’s perception of Kosovo’s ability to manage its own affairs is another relevant issue to consider. Continued tension between Albanian and Serbian population only serves to promote dependence on intervention by the international community. A final relevant issue is Kosovo Albanians’ acceptance of the Ahtisaari final status proposal and the Kosovo Constitution, which blatantly provides many concessions for Kosovo Serbs.

**ADDRESSING THE ISSUES**

Many of the activities implemented under the SPSK project inadvertently addressed these relevant issues. AED addressed the need for minority integration through its promotion of the Serbian Weeks of Culture. Engaging Serbian communities in these activities served to instill a sense among Kosovo Serbs that their culture and heritage will remain protected under an independent Kosovo. Additionally, these activities promoted a sense of trust among Kosovo Serbs towards AED, paving the way for the possibility of integration of the Serbian community into Kosovo institutions. This integration, however, is still a distant idea in the future, and requires much more effort than simply the promotion of cultural events.

In terms of promoting Serbian acceptance of Kosovo institutions, AED’s activities under SPSK addressed this issue through its media campaigns which sought to provide outreach for minority Serbs. Project documents reveal the difficulties in conducting outreach activities within the Serbian majority areas of Kosovo. Kosovo Serbs had the tendency to consider outside organizations, such as AED, as sympathetic to Albanians, and therefore were less willing to trust

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AED and participate in their activities. With this in mind, it was increasingly important to include more time and effort in gaining the trust of Kosovo Serbs. For example, the community round tables in the Serb areas could have been improved with prior supplementary outreach.

The international community’s perception of Kosovo’s ability to govern and manage itself was a large concern for AED’s client, USAID. This was manifested in the activities that USAID outlined for AED: the provision of support to the Constitutional Commission, the assistance to Kosovo institutions in engaging the public on discussion surrounding the independence process through town hall meetings, and advisory assistance to Kosovo institutions. These activities represented USAID’s attempt, through AED, to build the capacity of Kosovo institutions. Since the United States was one of the largest supporters of an independent Kosovo, the strength of Kosovo’s institutions reflected the country’s ability to govern itself, thereby justifying the United States’ efforts in the independence process.

Finally, AED succeeded in promoting Albanian understanding of the Ahtisaari final status proposal, the independence process, and the Constitution through its various project activities: the implementation of the media campaign surrounding the independence process; community roundtables on Ahtisaari final status proposal; and public town hall meetings on the Ahtisaari final status proposal. Based on the project documents, it seems that these activities adequately informed the Albanian population of the provisions of the Ahtisaari final status proposal, as well as provided them with the information necessary to understand the independence process.

CONCLUSION

In general, the activities that AED conducted reflected the needs that were present in Kosovo at the time: a need to promote a tolerant and multi-ethnic polity; a need to promote the provisions of the Ahtisaari final status proposal and later the Kosovo Constitution; and a need to promote acceptance of Kosovo institutions by Kosovo Serbs. However, AED’s activities, under the guidance of the USAID mission in Kosovo, while strongly addressing the second need, only touched lightly upon the first and third need. In a country where the potential for ethnic unrest is high, and trust among ethnic groups is weak, the promotion of tolerance and the integration of all ethnic groups becomes increasingly important for the cohesion and continuation of a newly independent Kosovo.

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APPENDIX B: Initiating Positive Change in Kosovo Program - Context

Project period examined: October 2008 – December 2009

INTRODUCTION

The Initiating Positive Change (IPC) program was developed as a way to address the major issues facing Kosovo in the post-independence era, as determined by the USAID Mission in Kosovo. This project brief is an independent evaluation of the relevant issues and needs evident within the current political climate in Kosovo, and a brief evaluation of AED’s ability to address those issues and needs through the IPC project.

CURRENT SITUATION IN KOSOVO

The post-independence transition period in Kosovo has been rocky, at best. After Kosovo declared its independence, Russia and Serbia refused to recognize its statehood, thereby weakening the international support for Kosovo.16 Many of the Serbian majority areas within Kosovo have also refused to accept the legitimacy of Kosovo’s institutions (particularly Mitrovica in the north, the area north of the Ibar river, and some areas in the south) and have created their own parallel institutions in these areas.17

Additionally, Kosovo’s institutions remain weak due to the lack of support and assistance from the international community that was previously expected. Uncertainty remains in terms of the management of rule-of-law institutions in Kosovo. While the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has been losing credibility and legitimacy among Kosovo Albanians, the newly established European Rule of Law Commission (EULEX), deployed by the European Union, is lacking acceptance among Kosovo Serbs18. However, there are also signs of progress for Kosovo. Over sixty countries have now accepted Kosovo as an independent state, and by the time its Constitution was accepted, the Kosovo Assembly had already passed 41 new laws.19

Positive developments aside, the integration of Kosovo Serbs remains an issue. Serbia continues to provide financing to the Serb-majority areas in Kosovo in the form of support to healthcare, education, social welfare, local governance and infrastructure investment.20 These are areas in which the Kosovo government has made little effort in providing for the Serbian communities. For the Kosovo Serbs who do not live in the Serbian-majority areas, many still utilize Kosovo institutions, possessing Kosovo bank accounts or taking jobs within the Kosovo government. However, for the majority of Kosovo Serbs, distrust in the Kosovo government still, and uncertainty about their safety in non-Serbian majority areas remains a common issue.

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RELEVANT ISSUES AND NEEDS
It is clear that the greatest needs for Kosovo at the moment is strengthening the Kosovo government and improving relations with Kosovo Serbs. In particular, the Kosovo government must make an effort to address the issues relevant to the Serbian population, reassuring their safety and well-being. Additionally, Kosovo must also strengthen its government institutions. This is especially important in order to strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of the Kosovo government in the eyes of the international community and Kosovo Serbs. Finally, there needs to be a greater effort to incorporate Kosovo Serbs into Kosovo government institutions. The Kosovo Serbs need to feel like they are being provided for by Kosovo, rather than by Serbia, and they need to feel as if they are being accepted by the Albanian majority.

ADDRESSING THE ISSUES AND NEEDS
In terms of addressing the issues relevant to Kosovo Serbs, AED made some initial steps in approaching this topic through their video ombudsman series and the KPAN activities, however more activities in this area are needed. The video series was a positive way to encourage people in Kosovo to begin thinking about minority issues, but these videos should reach out to a much larger audience than simply Serbians in order to have a more positive effect. As a suggestion, AED can screen these videos in other languages as a way to reach out to non-Serbian communities and encourage understanding of the issues that are pertinent to the Serbian community in Kosovo.

In terms of the KPAN activities, the issues being addressed (freedom of movement, economic insecurity, and quality of life) reflect the priorities of the USAID Mission in Kosovo. However, these are also the issues that affect Kosovo Serbs on a daily basis. A suggestion for the KPAN activities is to continue to work on addressing these issues, and expand their reach to these communities.

The IPC work plan suggests that the strengthening of Kosovo institutions will be addressed through AED’s support and assistance to the Prime Minister’s Office for Community Affairs. However, based on the IPC quarterly reports, it appears that progress on this activity has been somewhat slow, due to a lack of qualified candidates for positions within PMOCA. Thus AED has not been as active in addressing this need as it could be. AED can continue to engage the Kosovo government in pursuing this activity, but the Kosovo government must also exhibit interest in continuing with this activity.

Finally, the incorporation of Kosovo Serbs into Kosovo institutions is another need that AED can work to address more. Currently, two project activities address this need: the establishment of the Community Progress Forums and the Rapid Start grants, both of which are aimed at supporting community projects for non-majority groups and strengthening the infrastructure in

non-majority areas. These two activities are important first steps towards reaching out to Kosovo Serbs and other minority groups in Kosovo. AED needs to continue with these types of activities that reach out to non-Albanian groups through the improvement of community infrastructure and institutions.

CONCLUSION
Given the requests of the priorities USAID Mission in Kosovo, AED succeeds in fulfilling its task of reaching out to minority communities through the IPC program. Clearly, integration of the Serbian community into Kosovo is an important issue. This integration can be achieved in several ways, mainly by through addressing and providing for the needs of the Serbian community. AED should work to expand their outreach to minority communities, and encourage Kosovo government institutions to become more involved in these activities. In this way, the government is taking the steps it needs towards better integration of Kosovo Serbs.

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APPENDIX C: Context, Challenges and Best Practices of Strategic Communication
Project examined: Supporting Peace and Stability in Kosovo (SPSK)

INTRODUCTION
Strategic communication refers to coordinated, planned and innovative activities that seek to communicate information in an efficient and valuable way. Many development practitioners have recognized the importance of these strategies in strengthening the capacity of governments and organizations to effectively communicate with their constituents and building broad-based support for policies and programs. It is important to take a brief look at the context of strategic communication within the development field to better understand the role of SPSK in effecting change in Kosovo.

Strategic communication was a key mechanism for addressing SPSK’s objectives. AED sought to utilize collaborative and inventive communication activities to promote open inter-ethnic dialogue and inform public opinion concerning the Ahtisaari proposal and eventually independence. In preparation for the upcoming ICRP IQC re-bid process, AED desires to evaluate SPSK’s project components in terms of innovation and effectiveness. Ultimately, SPSK would like to prove itself as an important program that successfully utilized strategic communication strategies and uniquely addressed the needs of pre- and post-independence Kosovo.

CHALLENGES
Effective communication can play a major role in increasing people’s access to information, encouraging dialogue and providing opportunities for informed choice. However, the diverse, complex and ever-changing social, political and economic conditions of conflict environments can prevent the exchange of informative, accurate and appropriate information. Development projects that employ strategic communication activities often face obstacles to the following:

- Ensuring local stakeholder participation in design and implementation
- Informing and legitimizing processes of change
- Engaging populations with varying interests, needs and priorities and building broad coalitions of “pro-change influentials”
- Creating low-cost, self-sustaining activities
- Framing the main issues appropriately according to the local context and culture rather than injecting donor interests and agendas
- Utilizing multiple effective outreach strategies to reach different populations
- Fostering a participatory environment in which dialogue is open and public

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ADDITIONAL PROJECTS/BEST PRACTICES
Strategic communication has become an integral part of many development mechanisms, even outside of conflict or crisis contexts. The World Bank, for example, disseminated a Strategic Communications Toolkit in 2003 to address the needs of its public health programs.\textsuperscript{29} The report stressed the importance of not only creating awareness but also bringing about changed behavior. In order to understand the scope of strategic communication activities in addressing a broad set of objectives within diverse environments, it is helpful to consider a snapshot of projects with goals or components similar to SPSK:

Projects Targeting Kosovo
- “Kosovo: Strategic Communications and Public Diplomacy Regarding Standards for Kosovo” – Albany Associates
  o May 2005 – October 2005
  o Contracted by Government of Kosovo (Presidency, Office of the Prime Minister)
  o Developed of Directorate of Public Information, provided advice on managing international perceptions of final status discussions
- “Kosovo: Strategic Communications for Internal Security Sector Review” – Albany Associates
  o May 2006 – November 2006
  o Contracted by UNDP
  o Provided on-site assistance to UNDP’s Public Communications Team on the Internal Security Sector Review process, produced series of radio and television programs, organized media events
- “Support to Minority-Language Broadcasting Media; Preparatory Assistance” – UNDP
  o January 2009 – January 2010
  o Directed stakeholders in needs assessment, supported the design and implementation of a Kosovo-wide Serbian/minority language TV channel

Projects Targeting Other Conflict Situations
- “OTI in Serbia” – USAID
  o 1997 – 2002
  o Connected local and international media outlets to support resistance to Milosevic regime, conducted extensive media training, disseminated messages pushing for immediate political change
- “Guatemala Demobilization and Assistance Program” – USAID
  o November 1996 – November 1998
  o Conducted leadership workshops and radio campaigns to inform the public about the peace accords and ex-combatant incorporation process
- “OTI in East Timor” – USAID
  o December 1999 – 2002
  o Established reliable print consortium, trained journalists, built the capacity of the national radio entity to support the transition to independence

General Best Practices in and Recommendations for Strategic Communication Projects

- Allowing the design and implementation of community-driven activities
- Working with credible, appropriate implementing partners
- Utilizing and building upon existing media outlets
- Supporting and managing outreach efforts by local, regional and national leaders
- Providing training in basic journalism
- Involving minority groups in dialogue and informational campaigns
- Targeting youth (especially through the use of social networking media and MOBI tools)

CONCLUSION

The concept of utilizing various communication vectors in times of crisis and instability to promote peace and collaboration is not new. While this brief provides only a cursory look at the documentation of specific projects and findings involving strategic communication, it is important to understand the cross-cutting potential of these strategies. Given this context, we would like to determine how this AED program is situated among the spectrum of similar projects in conflict settings. While the SPSK program appears to have similar objectives to other conflict-based programs, a number of specific activities involved appear rather unique.

For example, the community outreach grant program that awarded financial assistance to local civil society and media organizations ensured that key messages concerning the final status proposal were disseminated in locally relevant and collaborative ways. Stakeholder roundtables and public town hall meetings were also held throughout the country, bringing together Kosovo’s citizens and civil and political leaders to augment understanding about the pre-independence process. Surveys conducted by AED and its partners in 2007 highlighted an overwhelming desire among the general public to participate in more events with senior international and government officials.

Additionally, the various media campaigns involved a number of Kosovar-driven brainstorming and editing phases that sought to create effective, balanced and positive messages. During in-country interviews with former partners and staff members involved with SPSK, interviewees commented on the overall favorable responses to the media campaign from both Kosovar Albanians and Serbs. AED and its partners were very careful to use consistent campaign slogans and themes, despite dissemination in multiple languages, so as not to alienate any of the targeted populations. Interviewees also pointed to the success of the campaign in providing comprehensive information about the independence process while still crafting a politically neutral stance on independence itself. This enhanced the legitimacy of the campaign among the general public.

In light of these findings, AED has invariably implemented innovative and effective strategies to improve inter-ethnic relations and mitigate conflict in Kosovo.

INTRODUCTION
Conflict mitigation is defined as “activities that seek to reduce the threat of violent conflict by promoting peaceful resolution, reducing violence if it has already broken out, or establishing a framework for peace and reconciliation in an ongoing conflict.” Development projects have used infrastructure construction as a means to reduce conflict. Building the infrastructure of an area is seen as an opportunity to improve the area’s economy and, therefore, the population’s quality of life. It is thought that improving these two aspects of life will discourage people from engaging in violent conflict. When trying to mitigate conflict by constructing infrastructure, it is vitally important that those efforts be coupled with empowerment and reform.

In order to maintain the peaceful transition to an independent, fully recognized Kosovo, AED’s Initiating Positive Change Program uses infrastructure construction to improve the quality of life and develop the economy of Kosovo’s minority populations. AED uses participatory processes to engage Serbian, Turk, and Roma communities in dialogue to identify, prioritize, and address the needs facing their communities. The Community Progress Forums (CPFs) allow communities to determine their needs, write a proposal, compete for, and ultimately execute the project financed by IPC.

CHALLENGES
There are several challenges that post-conflict nations face as they try to transition to peace. Lack of capacity, mistrust, and continued tensions all contribute to an overall hostile environment. When implementing these types of projects, development practitioners often face the following challenges:

- Adversarial political environment in the country
- Rapidly changing political priorities of both the domestic and international communities
- Trade-off between speed of construction efforts and fostering empowerment and participation
- Misunderstanding between groups in conflict
- Financial constraints
- Fostering community buy-in by using participatory processes to address needs
- Coordination of activities

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS/BEST PRACTICES
Infrastructure projects have become a way for development projects to address the needs of communities while fostering participation, buy-in, and trust in the communities. There are several examples of infrastructure programming in post-conflict contexts. The following are examples of what the donor community has undertaken:

The GWU Capstone Research

- Small Infrastructure for Water and Sanitation (SIWS) Program in Kosovo – USAID – $6,240,000
  - Utilized cost-sharing initiatives to install, rehabilitate, expand, and upgrade water and sewage systems in four municipalities by mobilizing and committing $6,240,000 (with $3 million in cost-sharing), to benefit approximately 85,000 citizens of Kosovo with better access to safe water and sanitation.33
- Municipal Infrastructure Support Initiative (MISI) in Kosovo – USAID – $2,500,000
  - 2004-2005
  - Aided in the reconstruction efforts of municipalities which were working for the reintegration of minority communities.34
- Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Program – AusAID – $27,800,000 over 5 years
  - Uses local leaders to initiate and maintain over 400 plumbing and water pumping systems in rural areas of East Timor.35
- Iraq Infrastructure Reconstruction Program – Bechtel Corporation – $2.31 billion
  - 2003-2006
  - Utilizes a comprehensive approach to address community needs, including the construction of roads, schools and telecommunications infrastructure
  - Illustrative of the trade-off between the speed of emergency reconstruction and empowerment of local communities.36
- Building Stability through Sustainable Job Creation and Infrastructure Rehabilitation – USAID - $104,000,000
  - 2006-2010
  - Involves the community in rehabilitating and constructing infrastructure by building the capacity of local industry and community leaders in Haiti.37

General Best Practices

- Utilizing a participatory process
- Building the capacity of local community leaders
- Starting with a strategic vision shared by both groups in conjunction with reconciliation
- Coordination of activities between donors, communities, and the national government
- Identifying entrepreneurs who are willing to work with groups on both sides of the conflict
- Engaging women and youth in a substantive manner
- Engaging civil society groups and/or the government to work to provide services to disadvantaged groups
- Utilizing linkages between the informal and formal economies.38

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CONCLUSION
Using infrastructure reconstruction is a practice that is often used in post-conflict situations. Timing is the most pressing and difficult issue with this type of project. Too much action taken too fast by the international community can severely undermine community buy-in. It is also important for these efforts to occur in conjunction with social reconciliation. Improving the economy and bettering a population’s quality of life will not happen if there is distrust among communities.

AED’s efforts through IPC use several of the above best practices. By engaging communities at the village-level they foster local buy-in and ownership of the process. Participation is a key facet of the program, and communities are involved in prioritizing needs and awarding grants. Additionally, AED’s staff is comprised of a mix of different ethnicities – Albanian, Serbian, Croatian, and Montenegrin. The diversity of the staff serves as a model for the communities, demonstrating that people from both sides of the ethnic divide can work cooperatively. One area where IPC could improve is in its engagement of female community members; it is evident that few women are involved in community-level decision-making processes. Overall, IPC has already seen success with its activities in Kosovo. The key challenge is finding a balance between completing the project within the relatively short timeframe of the project and fostering community ownership.

Finally, this brief is meant to give an overview of activities which use infrastructure development as a way to mitigate conflict. Infrastructure is by no means the only way to manage conflict. It must be part of an integrated and coordinated effort by the international community, national government, and local entities to foster trust, improve people’s quality of live, and begin to rebuild that which was destroyed by conflict.

APPENDIX E: Best Practices for Community Mobilization: Empowering Communities
Project examined: Initiating Positive Change Program (IPC)

INTRODUCTION
Often the skills and knowledge of communities receiving development assistance is overlooked. Community mobilization programs seek to involve and encourage community members to identify, design, and implement projects, using the rationale that communities often possess much of the needed institutional capacity and know best what problems within their communities need solving. Programs such as these can be highly beneficial in cases where a community has been particularly disenfranchised or in post-conflict situations, where building the capacity of the community is necessary to getting that community back on its feet. Understanding how community mobilization is used in varying situations both within and outside of Kosovo could provide productive insights for AED’s IPC program in Kosovo.

Community mobilization projects often focus on a single topic in order to encourage mobilization, with the chosen topic serving as a means to an end of achieving the ultimate goal of mobilizing the community. There are a number of both short-term and long-term benefits that make this a desirable tactic. In the short term, benefits include increasing dependence on local resources (both human and material), greater inclusion of minority groups, fostering stronger relationships between local governing institutions and the populations that they serve, ensuring a greater amount of local ownership, and promoting an active and empowered citizenry. In the longer term, community mobilization approaches help communities to reduce their dependence on outside aid, be better prepared to respond to emerging challenges through previously generated systems, and create a foundation to reduce conflict within the communities through open dialogue amongst the various sectors.

CHALLENGES
Engaging the community in identifying, developing, and implementing projects can provide both short-term and long-term improvements to the community. That said, this type of project is rarely easy, and there are a number of challenges that can greatly limit the effectiveness of the programs. Developing projects that employ community mobilization techniques often experience some of the following problems:

- Equal participation by the majority of community members: It can often prove very difficult to involve all or most members of the community in the mobilization process. Two groups that are particularly at risk of being excluded are women and minorities, who often do not feel comfortable partaking in the process or are purposely excluded by other community members.

- Community members may identify different problems and projects than the donors: The benefit of community mobilization practices is that the communities are able to identify

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42 Ibid.
what is most important and feasible to the community, and there are times that donors may feel differently about the chosen projects.\textsuperscript{44}

- Balancing internal community resources with external resources: Often there is a lot of pressure to produce tangible results; if the program is aimed at making the project sustainable, the operators must take into consideration this balance.\textsuperscript{45}

- Communication issues: In a number of cases, programs fail to focus enough on keeping open lines of communication throughout the duration of a project. This includes not only the development stages of the project, but the tendering and monitoring stages as well.

**ADDITIONAL PROJECTS/ BEST PRACTICES**

While community mobilization projects often utilize similar tactics, the range of issues they are employed to address is extremely diverse. As noted in the Mercy Corps publication on Lessons Learned in Community Mobilization, the topics they choose to address are in reality the secondary goal, while the primary focus remains to teach communities how to mobilize in order to obtain a common development goal.\textsuperscript{46} Below is a snapshot of programs that have either similar goals or components to IPC that may be helpful in the future:

**Projects Involving Kosovo:**

- Healthy Community Initiative – Mercy Corps
  - 2001 – 2003
  - Used health training for women and other health focused projects to train and encourage communities how to mobilize
- Local Development for Community Stabilization – UNDP
  - 2007 – 2011
  - Supports the recovery and stabilization process in Mitrovica and Zvecan by using community mobilization methods focusing on education, health, civil society and minority integration, and local economic development
- Support for Kosovo’s Young Leaders (SKYL) program – Mercy Corps
  - Involves civic engagement and community mobilization training to help create young leaders for Kosovar communities

**Projects in Other Countries:**

- The Nehemiah Initiative – HEAL Africa
  - 2004 – present
  - Assists communities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to incorporate vulnerable groups into their communities
- Child Nutrition Program: Indonesia – Mercy Corps
  - 2004 – 2008


Utilized community mobilization tools to improve nutrition programs in rural and urban Indonesia

- East Georgia Community Mobilization Imitative – Mercy Corps
  - 2000 – 2004
  - Used community mobilization techniques to encourage community development in East Georgia, focusing on minority communities

**General Best Practices and Recommendations:**
- Focusing on innovative solutions for engaging women and minorities, which includes a focus not only on the groups themselves but also on encouraging their acceptance among majority populations
- Being aware of potential minority concerns from the outset of the project
- Incorporating a diverse staff that can work with multiple stakeholders
- Incorporating community members in all parts of the process, including the tendering and monitoring processes
- Encouraging both donors and recipients to be open minded and willing to discuss what priorities the community has and how to go about reaching them
- Working with local governing institutions to enhance sustainability
- Focusing on positive cultural issues in order to strengthen the community
- Recognizing the internal resource capacity of each community and finding an appropriate balance with the utilization of outside resources

**CONCLUSION**
While this brief provides only a cursory look at the documentation of specific projects and findings involving community mobilization, it is important to assess how this AED program is situated among the spectrum of similar projects that utilize these strategies. While the IPC program appears to use similar community mobilization techniques to other organizations, its overall approach appears distinctive.

AED’s IPC program appears to be the only current program in Kosovo focusing on using community mobilization techniques in combination with infrastructure projects. By focusing on infrastructure, AED is providing stakeholders a good deal of leeway in determining what their communities need, which incorporates the flexibility aspect of community mobilization very well. In addition, IPC’s focus on minority communities speaks to one of the core tenants of community mobilization: strengthening marginalized communities. In particular, the IPC program’s diverse staff is a considerable asset in this regard, as it improves communication and trust between the beneficiaries and the staff.

While AED’s IPC program has managed to avoid many of the pitfalls that other programs have encountered, there is still room for improvement. In particular, focusing on incorporating women more efficiently into the decision-making process may improve outcomes for the entire community. During interviews with community leaders and stakeholders, it became apparent that women are not partaking in the process at the same rates that men are, even though they represent at least 50% of overall beneficiaries. In upcoming evaluations of the project, AED might seek more innovative ways to increase female participation within its activities and encourage men to accept this more representative participatory process.
APPENDIX F: The GWU Capstone Research Team Fieldwork Plan

GW Consultancy Group
Process Evaluations for Kosovo Fieldwork Plan
3.1.2010

Introduction:
The purpose of our proposed fieldwork plan is to perform process evaluations of two of AED’s projects in Kosovo: SPSK and IPCP. The project Supporting Peace and Stability in Kosovo faced many major transitions, both within the project and in the operating environment before its close in September 2008. Initiating Positive Change in Kosovo Program began in October 2008 and is slated to continue through September 2011. The GWU consultancy team intends to conduct interviews, focus groups, and use other research methods to understand the strengths and weaknesses of both programs. The dates of the proposed fieldwork are March 14-March 25, 2010.

Research Questions:

SPSK:
1) What aspects of AED’s SPSK program were the most beneficial?
2) What components of SPSK could have been strengthened to improve innovation and implementation?
3) Having taken into account the results of questions one and two, how can AED best position themselves for the upcoming ICRP IQC proposal?

IPC:
1) Thus far, what aspects of AED’s IPC program have been the most beneficial?
2) Thus far, what are the strengths and weaknesses of implementation of IPC?
3) Thus far, what are some unexpected obstacles and opportunities encountered by the IPC program?
4) Having taken into account the results of questions one, two, and three, how can AED best position themselves for the upcoming ICRP IQC proposal?

Methods and Measures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPSK</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Measures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What aspects of AED’s SPSK program were the most beneficial?</td>
<td>Beneficiary’s perceptions of the most beneficial aspects of the program.</td>
<td>Interviews of key beneficiaries who participated in various components</td>
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<td>Key AED staff’s perceptions of the most beneficial aspects of the program.</td>
<td>Interviews of implementing partners.</td>
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<th>IPC</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thus far, what aspects of AED’s IPC program have been the most beneficial?</td>
<td>Beneficiary’s perceptions of the most beneficial aspects of the program.</td>
<td>Interviews with beneficiaries.</td>
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<td>Key AED staff’s perceptions of the most beneficial aspects of the program.</td>
<td>Interviews with implementing partners.</td>
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<td>Implementing partner’s perceptions of the most beneficial aspects of the program.</td>
<td>Interviews with Key staff members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thus far, what are the strengths and weaknesses of implementation of IPC?</td>
<td>Key personnel’s informed opinions on project</td>
<td>Interviews with beneficiaries.</td>
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<td>Implementation partners impressions of programmatic strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td>Interviews with implementing partners.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beneficiary's impressions of programmatic strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td>Interviews with Key staff members.</td>
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| What components of SPSK could have been strengthened to improve innovation and implementation? | Key personnel’s informed opinions | Interviews with key personnel |
| | Review of concurrent programs in thematic area | Documentation review |

| Having taken into account the results of questions one and two, how can AED best position themselves for the upcoming ICRP IQC proposal? | Review of evaluation questions outcomes and consultancy group’s impressions. | Review of information from first two programs. |
| | | Document review |

| Implementing partner’s perceptions of the most beneficial aspects of the program. | Interviews with key staff members. |
Thus far, what are some unexpected obstacles and opportunities encountered by the IPC program?

- Key personnel’s informed opinions
- Review of program documents
- Interviews with key personnel
- Documentation review

Having taken into account the results of questions one, two, and three, how can AED best position themselves for the upcoming ICRP IQC proposal?

- Review of evaluation questions outcomes and consultancy group’s impressions.
- Review of information from first two programs.
- Document review

Limitations of the Fieldwork Research:
There are a few constraints that we foresee posing some minor problems for the evaluations. The first will be a limited ability to contact potential interviewees from the SPSK project; this constraint emanates from this evaluation being conducted more than a year after the conclusion of the project. A second limitation that places limitations on the conduction of fieldwork is the time constraint of only having two weeks to conduct in-country interviews for both evaluations.

Time Schedule:
The GWU consultancy team proposes conducting interviews and focus groups during both the morning and the afternoon. These meetings are intended to be approximately an hour long, and we hope to conduct three or four of them each day while in the field. Ideally, we would like schedule meetings in two-hour time slots to account for travel time and any delays that may occur. We envision conducting a total of 22-28 interviews and focus groups.

At the end of each day, the GWU consultancy team will hold a daily recap session to review the day’s activities. We also propose working days on Saturday, March 20, 2010 and the afternoon of Wednesday March 24, 2010 in order to compile our initial findings and work on our field presentation. The date of the field presentation is the morning of Thursday March 25, 2010.
Below is a copy of the proposed GWU research schedule:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
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<tr>
<td>Arrival in Pristina</td>
<td><strong>SPSK</strong> Morning: AED - Introductions with AED Team - Staff meeting</td>
<td><strong>SPSK</strong> 10am: Odyssea - Dina (R&amp;G) – USAID - Senad (A&amp;B) – former SubGroup member</td>
<td><strong>IPC</strong> Morning/Afternoon: Humanitarian Law Center - Public Verification Meeting - Users of HLC data interviews - Public (missing family members) interviews</td>
<td><strong>IPC</strong> CPF visit 1 - Morning: Domorovce road project - 10am: Street interviews - 11am: Non-CPF focus groups - 11am: CPF discussions</td>
<td><strong>IPC</strong> CPF visit 2 - Morning: Velika Hoxha music equipment/culture center project - 10:30am: User interviews - 10:30am: CPF discussions</td>
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<td><strong>SPSK</strong> Afternoon: AED - SPSK research</td>
<td>Morning: AED - Nejme Kotere (A&amp;R) – former AED local staff member - Natrya (B&amp;G) – former ATRC staff member - 3:30pm: Gracanica - NGO participants for Serb “Week of Culture” projects</td>
<td><strong>IPC</strong> Afternoon: Helsinki Committee (R&amp;G) - Participant interviews</td>
<td><strong>IPC</strong> Afternoon: Korminjane playground project - 1:45pm: Street interviews (G&amp;B) - 2pm: CPF discussions</td>
<td><strong>IPC</strong> Morning: Present to IPCP team</td>
<td><strong>IPC</strong> Afternoon: Departure</td>
<td>Group work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group work</td>
<td><strong>IPC</strong> Documentary focus groups - Gjilan (B&amp;G) - Gracanica (R&amp;A)</td>
<td>Morning/Afternoon: HLC - Field research (A&amp;B) Afternoon: Helsinki Committee (R&amp;G) - Participant interviews</td>
<td><strong>IPC</strong> Afternoon: Mitrovica School of Rock project - Staff interviews - Student interviews</td>
<td><strong>IPC</strong> Morning: Group work</td>
<td><strong>IPC</strong> Afternoon: Departure</td>
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IPC Research Outline

Community Progress Forums

- Thursday, March 18, morning: Field visit to Domorovce to evaluate road built by project
  - Conduct focus group with citizens who are not CPF-members
    - Determine satisfaction with project
    - Ask about knowledge of origins of project
  - Conduct street interviews with passersby
    - Determine satisfaction with project
    - Ask about knowledge of origins of project
  - Conduct discussion with CPF members
    - Determine satisfaction with project
    - Determine satisfaction with process, whether members felt their input was solicited, whether the community had input into implementation

- Thursday, March 18, afternoon: Field visit to Korminjane to evaluate playground built by project
  - Conduct street interviews with passersby
    - Determine satisfaction with project
    - Ask about knowledge of origins of project
  - Conduct discussion with CPF members
    - Determine satisfaction with project
    - Determine satisfaction with process, whether members felt their input was solicited, whether the community had input into implementation

- Friday, March 19, morning: Field visit to Klina to evaluate rapid grant of agricultural equipment
  - Conduct interviews with end users
    - Determine condition of equipment
    - Verify that it is being used as intended
    - Ask about knowledge of origins of equipment
    - Ask about impact of equipment of economic security and quality of life of recipients
    - Determine whether there are secondary beneficiaries, i.e. consumers of increased agricultural output
  - Conduct discussion with CPF members
    - Determine satisfaction with project
    - Determine satisfaction with process, whether members felt their input was solicited, whether the community had input into implementation

- Friday, March 19, afternoon: Field visit to Velika Hoxha to evaluate rapid grant of music equipment for culture center
  - Conduct interviews with users of the equipment
    - Estimate the real number of users
    - Determine condition of equipment
- Determine satisfaction with equipment
- Verify that it is being used as intended (not sold, for example)
  - Conduct discussion with CPF members
- Determine satisfaction with project
- Determine satisfaction with process, whether members felt their input was solicited, whether the community had input into implementation

**Video Ombudsman series**
- Monday, March 22: Simultaneous field visits (2 team members each) to Gjilan and Gracanica to evaluate impact of two documentaries, “Serbian Documents: Valid or not?” and “Traveling without an Escort”
  - Conduct two focus groups on “Serbian Documents: Valid or not?”
    - Each focus group has 5-7 members
    - Segregated by gender
    - Give pre-viewing quiz on rules about Serbian document acceptance, and conduct discussion on perceptions
    - Give post-viewing quiz and conduct discussion to verify whether perceptions have changed
    - Solicit input on format, style and content of program
  - Conduct two focus groups on “Traveling without an Escort”
    - Each focus group has 5-7 members
    - Segregated by gender
    - Give pre-viewing survey on freedom of movement, and conduct discussion on perceptions
    - Give post-viewing survey and conduct discussion to verify whether perceptions have changed
    - Solicit input on format, style and content of program

**Civil Society Grants**
- Tuesday, March 23, morning: Travel to [location TBD] to evaluate activities of Helsinki Committee
  - Conduct interviews with participants of both genders and varying ages
    - Determine whether perceptions of freedom of movement changed before and after participation
    - Determine whether behavior has changed after participation
    - Ask whether they have told other people about their changed perception
  - Conduct street interviews with passersby
    - Determine whether they have heard of the program
      - If not, tell them about the program and ask them whether they think it is wise to undertake an activity
      - If so, ask them whether they think it was wise, and if what they have heard about it has affected their perception of freedom of movement
- Determine whether they would be interested to participate in a similar activity
  - Tuesday, March 23, afternoon: Travel to [location TBD] to evaluate activities of Humanitarian Law Center
    - Conduct interviews with users of HLC data for human rights court cases
      - Determine usefulness of data to them
      - Solicit perceptions of neutrality and accuracy of data
      - Ask about ease of access to data
    - Conduct interviews with members of public who received information about missing family members from HLC
      - Ask about ease of access to data
      - Determine impact of the availability of the data
      - Solicit any input for improving the service
    - Determine feasibility of putting data online
  - Wednesday, March 24th: Field visit to Mitrovica South to evaluate Community Building Mitrovica’s School of Rock activity
    - Conduct interviews with students
      - Determine impact of program to participants
      - Ask about their interactions with members of other ethnicity
      - Determine reasons for wanting to participate
      - Solicit any input for improving the activity
      - Determine whether students have had any negative impact, such as from non-participating peers
    - Conduct interviews with teachers and parents
      - Solicit perceptions of impact on students, or of behavior change
      - Ask about their feelings of usefulness of activity for increasing interethnic tolerance
      - Determine whether they feel any threat is posed to the students by their participation
      - Solicit any input for improving the activity
APPENDIX G: Pre-Drafted Fieldwork Interview and Focus Group Questions

SPSK

Interview with Dina Cernobregu, USAID Kosovo

Interview with Urim Ahmeti, USAID Kosovo

Preliminary: How long were you involved with SPSK?
1. Please describe your involvement in SPSK.
2. In your opinion, what were USAID’s objectives for SPSK?
3. In your opinion, what parts of the program contributed most to achieving those objectives? In your opinion, which parts of the program contributed least to achieving those objectives?
4. What were the strengths of AED’s programming?
5. What were the weaknesses?
   a. How did AED Kosovo address those weaknesses?
   b. How could AED Kosovo have bettered addressed those weaknesses?
6. How did AED Kosovo respond to the modifications to the SPSK task order?
   a. Were they able to change programming in a timely manner?
   b. Was modified programming stronger or weaker in your opinion? Can you give an example?
7. In your opinion, how were SPSK’s activities received by the public?
   a. Were there differences in Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb opinions about the project?
8. What could AED have done better?
9. In comparison to your other implementing partners in Kosovo, how were AED’s activities different from (or similar to) their activities in Kosovo at the time?
10. Overall, how would you characterize AED’s performance with SPSK?

Interview with Senad Sabovic, OSCE (former SubGroup member)

Preliminary: What years did you work on this project (or work with AED)?
1. On which activities did you work with AED?
2. How would you characterize the public’s response to the media campaigns?
   a. How did Albanians respond to them?
   b. How did Serbs respond to them?
   c. How did other ethnic groups respond to them?
3. What were some of the strengths of the media campaigns?
4. What were some of the weaknesses of the media campaigns?
   a. In your opinion, what caused the weaknesses?
   b. What were other challenges you faced with the media campaigns?
5. How did the SubGroup and/or AED address these weaknesses?
   a. How could the SubGroup and/or AED addressed those weaknesses differently?
6. After reading the progress reports from SPSK, we noticed there was another PSA that you were planning to produce which intended to present reassuring messages to Kosovo Serbs. In your opinion, why did the SubGroup choose not to create this PSA?
   a. How do you think you could have addressed this issue differently?
7. How did the public respond to the informational brochures about the Ahtisaari proposal?
   a. How did Albanians respond to them?
b. How did Serbs respond to them?
c. How did other ethnic groups respond to them?
8. How do you think these informational brochures addressed the needs of people in Kosovo at the time?
9. How did your work with AED evolve throughout the course of the project (or the period of time you were involved in the project)?
10. Looking back, what would you have done differently in implementing the activities of this project?
11. How did your activities for this project different from (or were similar to) the activities that other community groups or organizations were implementing in Kosovo at the time?
12. Looking at this project as a whole, how did the SubGroup’s activities address the needs of the people of Kosovo at the time in a new or different way?

Interview with Nejme Kotere (former AED Kosovo staff member)

Preliminary question: What years did you work on this project?
1. In what capacity did you contribute to the SPSK project?
2. In your opinion, what were the ultimate goals of the project?
3. What were the activities that best achieved these goals? Can you describe them?
4. What were three or more strengths of the project?
5. What were three or more weaknesses of the project?
6. How did AED Kosovo address those weaknesses, or how could AED Kosovo have better addressed those weaknesses?
7. What do you think were the public's perceptions of the project?
8. What activities received the most favorable reactions from the public?
9. What activities received the least favorable reactions from the public?
10. How do you think AED's activities within this project differ from (or were similar to) the activities that other organizations were implementing in Kosovo at the time?
11. How do you think AED's activities within this project address the needs of people in Kosovo at the time in a new and different way?

Interview with Natyra Zhjeqi, ATRC

Preliminary question: What years did you work on this project or with AED?
1. What was your involvement with the SPSK project?
2. How did ATRC contribute to the PIP group? How was ATRC's involvement in the planning group beneficial (or not) to your organization?
3. What do you think were the public's response to the community roundtables and public town hall meetings designed to answer questions about the Ahtisaari proposal?
   a. How did Albanians respond to them?
   b. How did Serbs respond to them?
   c. How did other ethnic groups respond to them?
4. What were the strengths of these projects?
5. What challenges did you come across in implementing these community outreach programs?
6. How successful do you think these programs were in achieving your goals to create awareness about the Ahtisaari proposal? Would you have changed anything?
7. Do you feel that these outreach programs were innovative? Do you know of any similar public outreach programs run by other organizations?
8. How was ATRC involved in public outreach concerning the Constitution beginning in January 2008?
9. How successful do you think the media campaign was? Did it address the needs of people in Kosovo at the time?
10. What lessons learned from ATRC's involvement in the Ahtisaari community campaign were helpful in implementing the Constitution outreach programs?
11. What challenges did you face in implementing the public information campaign? How did ATRC or your partners address these problems?
12. How did the public respond to the informational brochures about the Ahtisaari proposal and later the Constitution?
   a. How did Albanians respond to them?
   b. How did Serbs respond to them?
   c. How did other ethnic groups respond to them?
13. How did your work with AED change and evolve throughout the course of the project (or the period of time you were involved in the project)?
14. Looking back, what would you have done differently in implementing the activities of this project?
15. In your opinion, in what ways did this project address the needs of the people of Kosovo at the time in a new or different way?

**Focus Group with Participants in Serb Weeks of Culture**

1. Could you explain your involvement in the program?
   a. How did you become involved in the program?
2. How do you think the public perceived Serbian culture, based on the events during these two weeks?
3. What do you feel was the greatest benefit from the Weeks of Culture?
4. Please describe the communities' involvement with the Weeks of Culture and their investment in the outcomes.
   a. What would you have done differently in order to increase community investment?
5. How do you think these activities addressed the needs of Kosovo Serbs?
   b. What was different or unique about the activities being implemented?
   c. Were there other people/organizations who addressed the situation at the time in a better way?
6. Do you feel that hosting similar events in the future would be beneficial in helping to secure Serb identity in Kosovo?
7. What did you like and/or dislike about working in collaboration with both AED and other local partners?
   a. What would you have changed about the process?
   b. Would you participate in a collaborative experience again? If so, in what context?
8. How were these activities promoted within the communities? Were these promotion efforts adequate?
9. What things would you have changed in order to make the programming more effective?
10. Do you have any other comments or concerns regarding this programming?
IPC

*Interviews with HLC Data Users*

1. How did you find out about the information that HLC is providing?
2. How useful have you found the data provided by HLC to be?
3. How easy is it to utilize HLC information to find missing family members?
4. Would this data be easier to access if it was online?
5. How reliable do you think HLC’s data is and why?
6. How confident are you that the information HLC is gathering about the missing is accurate?
7. Do you have any recommendations for improving HLC’s services?

*Interviews with HLC Staff Members*

1. How did you become involved with HLC?
2. How would you characterize AED’s support of your project?
3. What would you say has been most helpful about their involvement?
4. What would you say has been the least helpful about their involvement?
5. How do you determine the number of people who are using your data?
6. How do you determine what types of individuals are accessing your data?
7. What do you think about the proposal of putting your data online?
   - Do you anticipate any challenges in doing this?
8. What steps do you need to take to make this a permanent online database?
9. Currently you only have 60% of the narratives on the registry; how are you going about including the other 40%?
   - What challenges do you see in completing this task?

*Street Interviews with Community Members (Domorovce Road Project)*

Demographics:
- What is your age? _________
- Makeup of group: Number of adults: ___________
  - Number of children: ___________

Topical Questions:
1. How often would you say you use this road per month?
2. What do you think this project brings to the community and do you think this road was a major problem before it was repaired?
3. Do you think this project improved the community? How?
4. Who built this road?

*Focus Group with CPF Members (Domorovce Road Project)*

Welcome. We would like to thank you all in advance for coming to this discussion. Your input will be very helpful in making this program more responsive to your needs. During the next hour or so, we will be asking you a series of questions and would like you to answer and discuss with the other participants in this group. If you would like to make a comment, please raise your hand and we will call on you for your comments. We are open to any questions you may have and will be happy to answer them to the best of our abilities.
1. How did you determine the need for a new road, and how did you decide where to put the road?
2. What do you remember about how the decision process worked? Do you think the project chosen was the most pressing need of the community at that time?
3. How much did the community contribute to the planning and implementation of the project? (Follow up: Can you elaborate on how the community contributed financially, physically and through discussion?)
4. How do you think the community benefited from the new road? What obstacles did you face in building the road? (Follow up: How did you handle these obstacles?)
5. On a scale of 0 to 5 (0 being no satisfaction and 5 being the highest satisfaction), please describe the community’s level of satisfaction with the process of developing and implementing this project. In your opinion, why do community members feel this way?

Focus Group with Non-CPF Community Members (Domorovce Road Project)
Welcome. We would like to thank you all in advance for coming to this discussion. Your input will be very helpful in making this program more responsive to your needs. During the next hour or so, we will be asking you a series of questions and would like you to answer and discuss with the other participants in this group. If you would like to make a comment, please raise your hand and we will call on you for your comments. We are open to any questions you may have and will be happy to answer them to the best of our abilities.

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1. Have you ever heard of the CPF?
2. How much input did your community have in determining where this road was going to be built?
3. What was your communication with the CPF prior to the road being built?
4. Did the members of the CPF consult with community leaders and other community members before building this road?
5. Do you think the road was a major problem before it was repaired? How has this road project affected your life? What positive effects have there been? What about negative effects?

Street Interviews with Community Members (Korminjane Playground Project)
Demographics:
What is your age? __________
Makeup of group: Number of adults: ___________
Number of children: ___________
Topical Questions:
1. Have you ever used this playground?
   If yes, how often?
2. Do you like this playground? Is there anything you don’t like about this playground?
3. Did this project improve the community? How?
4. Who do you think was involved in bringing this playground? Where do you think the funding for this playground came from?

Focus Group with CPF Members (Korminjane Playground Project)
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1. How did you determine the need for a new playground, and how did you decide where to put the playground?
2. What input did you receive from the community regarding this need?
3. How much did the community contribute to the planning and implementation of the project? (Follow up: Can you elaborate on how the community contributed financially, physically and through discussion?)
4. How do you think the community benefited from the new playground? Do you feel that the need that existed before has been met?
5. On a scale of 0 to 5 (0 being no satisfaction and 5 being the highest satisfaction), please describe the community’s level of satisfaction with the process of developing and implementing this project. In your opinion, why do community members feel this way?

Interviews with Community Members (Velika Hoca Music Equipment Project)
Demographics:
What is your age? _________
Makeup of group: Number of adults: ____________
   Number of children: ____________
Topical Questions:
1. How often do you use this equipment (days/hours per week)?
2. In what condition was the music equipment when you received it?
3. What do you like about this project?
4. What do you dislike (or would change) about it?
5. In your opinion, where did this music equipment come from? Why was it given to you?
6. Do you know who the CPF is?
**Focus Group with CPF Members (Velika Hoca Music Equipment Project)**

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1. How did you determine the need for music equipment? (Follow up: Do you think this project was the most pressing need of the community at the time?)
2. Who did you determine were part of your target community?
3. What input did you receive from the community regarding their needs?
4. What do you remember about the decision-making process? (Follow up: What input did you receive from the community in planning the project?)
5. How much did the community contribute (financially, physically) to the project?
6. How does the community benefit from the music equipment?
7. On a scale of 0 to 5 (0 being no satisfaction and 5 being the highest satisfaction), please describe the community’s level of satisfaction with the process of developing and implementing this project. In your opinion, why do community members feel this way?

**Focus Group with Non-CPF Community Members (Klina Agricultural Equipment Project)**

Welcome. We would like to thank you all in advance for coming to this discussion. Your input will be very helpful in making this program more responsive to your needs. During the next hour or so, we will be asking you a series of questions and would like you to answer and discuss with the other participants in this group. If you would like to make a comment, please raise your hand and we will call on you for your comments. We are open to any questions you may have and will be happy to answer them to the best of our abilities.

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1. What kinds of agricultural machinery did you receive through the grant?
2. In what condition was the machinery when you received it?
3. What do you currently use the machinery for? Who else uses the machinery?
4. In your opinion, where did this agricultural machinery come from? Why was it given to you?
5. Do you know who the CPF is?
6. How has receiving this new machinery made a difference in your life, especially economically? How else has it impacted your life?
7. What kind of effect has the new agricultural machinery had on your productivity and agricultural output?
8. Who do you think has also benefited from this change in agricultural output?

Focus Group with CPF Members (Klina Agricultural Equipment Project)
Welcome. We would like to thank you all in advance for coming to this discussion. Your input will be very helpful in making this program more responsive to your needs. During the next hour or so, we will be asking you a series of questions and would like you to answer and discuss with the other participants in this group. If you would like to make a comment, please raise your hand and we will call on you for your comments. We are open to any questions you may have and will be happy to answer them to the best of our abilities.

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1. How did you determine the need for new agricultural machinery? (Follow up: Do you think this project was the most pressing need of the community at the time?)
2. Who did you determine were part of your target community?
3. What input did you receive from the community regarding their machinery needs?
4. What do you remember about the decision-making process? (Follow up: What input did you receive from the community in planning the project?)
5. How much did the community contribute (financially, physically) to the project?
6. How do the farmers and the community benefit from the agricultural machinery?
7. On a scale of 0 to 5 (0 being no satisfaction and 5 being the highest satisfaction), please describe the community’s level of satisfaction with the process of developing and implementing this project. In your opinion, why do community members feel this way?

Focus Group for Documentary Screening of “In the Neighborhood, without an Escort”
Welcome. We would like to thank you all in advance for coming to this discussion. We are a group of students from George Washington University in the United States doing research, and your participation will be very helpful to us. If you would like to make a comment, please raise your hand and we will call on you for your comments. We are open to any questions you may have and will be happy to answer them to the best of our ability.

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Pre-Quiz:
1. Is it possible for Serbs to travel to areas outside of the enclaves without risking their safety?
2. Are there buses that travel from Serbian majority areas to other parts of the country?
3. Do you think it is difficult to visit Serbian cultural sites throughout the country?
4. Would you feel safe speaking Serbian in public outside of a Serbian majority area?
5. If a friend told you he/she was going to travel to Prizren, would you advise against it?

Pre-Viewing Discussion Questions:
1. How safe do you feel leaving your village?
2. What are your perceptions of freedom of movement in Kosovo?
3. How many of you have traveled outside of your village in the past five years?
   a. Where did you travel?
   b. What was your experience?

Post-Quiz:
1. Is it possible for Serbs to travel to areas outside of the enclaves without risking their safety?
2. Are there buses that travel from Serbian majority areas to other parts of the country?
3. Do you think it is it difficult to visit Serbian cultural sites throughout the country?
4. Would you feel safe speaking Serbian in public outside of a Serbian majority area?
5. If a friend told you he/she was going to travel to Prizren, would you advise against it?

Post-Viewing Discussion Questions:
1. Has this documentary changed your perception of freedom of movement for Serbs in Kosovo? How?
2. Would you participate in an activity such as the one presented in the documentary?
3. What did you think about the documentary?
   a. Was it good, informative, too long?
   b. What would you change about the film
4. Are there any other topics (Serbian freedom of movement, economic security, quality of life) that you would like to see in a documentary like the one you watched today?

**Focus Group for Documentary Screening of “Serbian Documents: Valid or Not?”**

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**Pre-Quiz:**
1. What documents are necessary for Serbian drivers to enter/exit or travel throughout Kosovo?
2. Does Kosovo accept (driver) travel documents issued by the Serbian government?
3. Can Serbian drivers use old documents (prior to Kosovo independence) to enter/exit or travel throughout Kosovo?
4. Is Kosovar insurance necessary for foreign drivers to enter Kosovo?

Pre-Viewing Discussion Questions:
1. How easy do you think is it to travel throughout Kosovo with Serbian documents (driver's licenses or license plates)?
2. What are some difficulties that people may encounter crossing the border into Kosovo if they have Serbian documents?
3. What are some differences between what is considered valid documentation for Serbian drivers, according to your knowledge of the law, and what is being practiced by Kosovo police on the roads?
4. Why, in your opinion, is there uncertainty about which documents are valid and which documents are not valid?

Post-Quiz:
1. What documents are necessary for Serbian drivers to enter/exit or travel throughout Kosovo?
2. Does Kosovo accept (driver) travel documents issued by the Serbian government?
3. Can Serbian drivers use old documents (prior to Kosovo independence) to enter/exit or travel throughout Kosovo?
4. Is Kosovar insurance necessary for foreign drivers to enter Kosovo?

Post-Viewing Discussion Questions:
1. Based on the documentary, how easy is it to travel throughout Kosovo with Serbian documents (driver's licenses, license plates, green cards, non-local insurance)? Do you think it accurately depicted the real situation?
2. From viewing the documentary, how has the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) interacted with drivers in Kosovo who hold Serbian documents? Have you had experiences with KPS regarding your documents, either within Kosovo or at the border? Do you think the documentary reflected reality?
3. In your opinion, what are some ways to solve the question of valid documents for drivers in Kosovo?
4. What uncertainties do you have about the validity of Serbian or Montenegrin documents after watching this documentary?
5. What did you think about the documentary?
   a. Was it good, informative, too long?
   b. What would you change about the film?
6. Are there any other topics (Serbian freedom of movement, economic security, quality of life) that you would like to see in a documentary like the one you watched today?

Focus Group with Participants of Helsinki Committee Trips
Welcome. We would like to thank you all in advance for coming to this discussion. Your input will be very helpful in making this program more responsive to your needs. During the next hour or so, we will be asking you a series of questions and would like you to answer and discuss with the other participants in this group. If you would like to make a comment, please raise your hand and we will call on you for your comments. We are open to any questions you may have and will be happy to answer them to the best of our abilities.
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1. How many of you participated in Helsinki Committee activities? How were you selected? Why did you agree to participate?
2. Did this trip change your perceptions of freedom of movement for minority populations in Kosovo? If yes, then how?
3. After having participated in this trip, do you travel more to non-Serbian areas of Kosovo? (Follow up: If not, would you if you had the opportunity or need?)
4. How would you describe this trip to your friends, family, and neighbors? (Follow up: Did you talk to your friends, family, neighbors about how the trip changed your perceptions?)
5. Do you know who funded this trip?
6. If you could change anything about the trip, what would you change? Would you add anything? Would you leave out anything?
7. What was your experience with other ethnic groups while on the trip?

**Discussion Group with Staff at Mitrovica School of Rock**

1. What do you think is the purpose of the School of Rock program?
2. Do you think this program does a good job of promoting tolerance amongst different ethnic groups? Why or why not?
3. Do you think it is important for more students to participate in a program like this?
   a. In addition to a music school, do you have any ideas for programs that would facilitate participation in multi-ethnic activities?
4. In your opinion, has this program had any impact upon student’s behaviors?
   a. If yes, in what way?
   b. If no, why not?
5. Do you feel that there is any threat to the students who participate in this program?
   a. If yes, from whom?
6. Is there anything about the program you would change? How?

**Discussion Group with Students at Mitrovica School of Rock**

1. Why did you join the School of Rock?
2. What is your favorite part about the program?
3. How often do you rehearse?
4. How often do you play with kids from the other School of Rock?
   a. Where do you play with them?
   b. Do you like playing with them?
5. Do you ever interact with students from the other School of Rock outside of rehearsal or playing time?
6. Do other students react to your participation in the School of Rock Program? Is it a positive or a negative reaction?
   a. What about from adults?
7. What would you change about the program?
SOURCES


