



CAPACITY BUILDING HUB PROGRAMME FINAL REPORT

1. BACKGROUND

The Capacity Building Hub was initiated in 2000 as a part of the World Council of Churches South-East Europe Ecumenical Partnership (WCC SEEPP) that aimed at promoting co-ordination and co-operation among churches, related organisations and other civil society organizations in the South East Europe (SEE) region. The WCC SEEPP seeks to facilitate an effective response to needs, and to promote a lasting contribution to peace, development and integration in the region. It consists of three hubs: Peace and Reconciliation; Refugee & IDP Return, Repatriation and Integration; and Capacity Building.

Capacity Building Hub is a network, which aims to foster co-ordination and networking of capacity-building activities on the one hand, and utilize the resources with the civil society organizations and ecumenical partners in the SEE, as a contribution to lasting peace and stability in the region. The network fosters relevant, effective, accessible, affordable and sustainable package of capacity building services. The Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), supported by ICCO, acts as the lead agency in management and administration of the network and its activities.

The Capacity Building Hub Programme is aimed at analysing the existing situation in the third sector in SEE, challenges present in the sector and resources it offers. Based on these, the Programme develops a package of services needed in order to strengthen the third sector and enhance its skills and role in the region. Packages consist of different activities, among them: partner meetings, exchange/study visits, tailor-made training, coaching or backstopping/consultancies, networking and information-sharing. Areas of expertise are: networking, advocacy and lobbying, NGO management, strategic planning, institutional development, organizational strengthening, intercultural learning, gender in development and training of trainers.

After initiation of the SEEPP mechanism and starting delay due to the conflict in Macedonia, Capacity Building Hub activities were started in second half of 2001. After country visits by the Hub Coordinator Besim Nebiu, a plan of needed packages of capacity building activities was developed at the First Partnership meeting in April 2002. The implementation of planned activities extended in 2003. Four additional projects were developed and implemented by the end of the year as well. Second Partnership meeting in March 2003 evaluated the Programme and partner organizations decided to continue their cooperation. As recommended in the Annual Report 2002, an external assessment of the Programme was conducted by INTRAC's consultant Martina Hunt. A new Hub Coordinator, Tanja Hafner, was appointed in October 2003 to plan and implement networks activities in the next phase.

2. PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

2. 1. Overall objective

Programme overall objective is to contribute to the strengthening the third sector and enhance its skills and role in the SEE region. In doing this, the Programme contributes to strengthening of co-ordination, co-operation and facilitating a closer linkage between relief, reconciliation and development/diakonia among churches and related ecumenical partners in South East Europe (SEE), as a contribution to lasting peace and stability in the region.

2. 2. Programme purpose

Programme purpose is to foster co-ordination and networking of capacity-building activities on the one hand, and utilize that resource with the civil society organizations and ecumenical partners in the SEE, as a contribution to lasting peace and stability in the region.

2. 3. Tasks (components)

Tasks fulfilled are:

- Identification of tailor-made capacity-building activities;
- Planning of capacity building activities;
- Implementation and monitoring of the training and other capacity building activities.

2. 4. Target group

The Programme is aimed at a two-fold target group:

- NGO Support centres:
 - Romania: Opportunity Associates;
 - Bulgaria: Women's Alliance for Development (WAD);
 - Albania: Albanian Civil Society Foundation (ACSF);
 - Macedonia: Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC);
 - Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo): Center for Civil Initiatives - Tim Tri (T3), We are With You (WAWY);
 - Croatia: NIT, EOS.
- Church related organisations/ecumenical partners:
 - Albania: Diakonia Agapes;
 - Bulgaria: the Pokrov Foundation;
 - Romania: AIDROM;
 - Yugoslavia: Philanthropy, Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation (EHO).

All church related organisations/ecumenical partners and NGO support centres listed above participated in the Hub activities.

3. ACTIVITIES

3. 1. Planned activities

Activities planned in the Programme were: partners' meetings, capacity building activities (training for NGO support structures and for church related organisations; exchange visits and backstopping/coaching) and information sharing (web database and ecumenical addressbook).

As decided at the First Partnership meeting (April 2002), the initial scheduling and implementation of activities was extended into 2003 due to late start of the Programme, set-backed by the Macedonian crisis in 2001. Further new activities were initiated and implemented in 2003, based on identified needs of partner organizations for tailor-made capacity building packages.

3. 2. Realised activities

MCIC implemented six projects till the end of planned period (March 2003), of which two started in 2002 and the remaining four were initiated by partner organizations in 2003. All together, 11 projects were implemented as part of this Programme. List of all projects is given in Annex 1.

Country visits

MCIC completed activities started in 2001 as part of project Visits to the regional partners (01-12 MGK 101). After visits to partners in Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia during 2001, Hub Coordinator completed the introductory circle, with visits to Romania and Croatia in the first quarter of 2002. Country reports were produced after each visit.

Partners meetings

First Partners Meeting was held in Ohrid (Macedonia), on 18-21 April 2002, with representatives of church related organisations/ecumenical partners and selected NGO support centres, as stated above (see part 2.4. Target group).

The two days meeting aimed at introduction of participating agencies, group building and action planning, finished with the development of a draft plan of activities for the first year of the Hub.

During the next month, partners were given time to comment/review the original plan of activities. No comments were presented during this period. However, a number of the actions planned, were either initiated late, or the organization(s) that proposed them at the meeting lacked a follow up.

As planned on this meeting, the Second Partnership Meeting was held in Mavrovo, Macedonia, on 27-30 March 2003. The meeting was realized as part of the Partners study visit project, no. 02-12 MGK 101. The aim of this meeting was to evaluate the progress of the programme during the period 2001-2003 and to initiate a new planning cycle for follow-up and new activities for the next period.

During the two days meeting, participants agreed to continue their cooperation after the end of the programme. They developed a basic strategic plan for the next phase of cooperation. It was decided that a foundation meeting of the new network would be convened in early June 2003 by minimum of four partner organizations from four different countries.

However, a new partnership meeting for continued cooperation was held in Feketic, Serbia and Montenegro only on 19-21 December, 2003. Here, participation of more than a half of partner organizations at the meeting confirmed the commitment to continue with network's activities and plans were made with regards to future organizational and programme activities.

Exchange visits and backstopping / coaching

All together, seven study visits were realized during the duration of the Programme. Out of six planned at the First Partnership meeting, three were realized.

Six study visits agreed at the First Partnership meeting were:

- EHO, Philantropy and Pokrov Foundation (in one of the organisations);
- NIT and WAD (two bilateral visits to Croatia and Bulgaria);
- Pokrov Foundation and Diakonia Agapes (in Bulgaria);
- EOS and Tim Tri (in Yugoslavia);
- ACSF and MCIC (in Macedonia);
- AIDRom and Opportunity Associates (in Romania).

However, out of those six planned, only two were realised in 2002. First was AidROM with Opportunity Associates, as part of the Training of Trainers held in Bucharest; and the other one was ACSF visit to MCIC, during NGO Fair in Macedonia.

In 2003 partner organization NIT from Croatia organized "Consultancy and TOT on Advocacy" for six representative from partner organization WAD.

As part of this project, also four consultancies were planned:

- Diakonia Agapes - development of training curriculum;
- EOS - strategic planning;
- EHO - advocacy and lobbying (to be delivered by Tim Tri);
- NIT - new training methodologies.

The last of these activities was realised, with visit of one NIT trainer to MCIC training on institutional development and organisational strengthening.

Based on needs of partner organizations, two additional study visits were realized in 2003. Namely, training and consultation mission on project cycle management and strategic planning of one MCIC trainer to the Pokrov Foundation and support of the meeting of network of Balkan civil society organizations FEBANGO, which took place in Sofia, Bulgaria on June 28, 2003. All of the above activities were realized as part of the Partners study visit project, no. 02-12 MGK 101. All exchange visits aimed at exchanging experience and skills between partner organizations.

Visit of Croatian NGO fair was realized as a separate project (project no. 03-12 MGK 101) on February 13-18, 2003. The aim of the visit was to gain new experience and exchange contacts between MCIC staff, accompanied by several representatives from governmental institutions and local organizations with their Croatian counterparts.

Trainings

All together six trainings were realized. Additionally to four trainings implemented in 2002, two trainings were realized in 2003:

a) Training of Trainers – Bucharest Romania 26-30 August 2002

The first one, was a five days ToT organized jointly by AIDROM and Opportunity Associates Romania. Eleven participants representing different partner agencies attended. The training team was composed of two organizing agencies. As the report and individual impressions of participants express generally satisfaction and agree on the effectiveness and usefulness from this training, it is developing one prospective track for future development of activities in the hub (using regional expertise), in what seems to be a general need of all the hub agencies (expanding their pools of trainers).

b) Training of Trainers – Skopje, Macedonia 14-20 October 2002

This was the second ToT event within the Hub, attended by 7 of the Hub agencies. MCIC organized the event, and the trainer was from Management for Development Foundations (MDF). All the participants were practicing trainers seeking for enhancement of their training skills. As noted above, most of the agencies lack trainers (both in number and quality) to address the growing demand for capacity building activities. This event, characterizes the second channel of training activities used so far (using Western European trainers to deepen knowledge and advance skills).

c) Training for pensioners form Macedonia and Albania

In the framework of the hub regional cooperation activities, three-day gathering of representatives of Union's of pensioners from Macedonia and Albania, with tailor-made (based on ID/OS curriculum) course, was held in Ohrid (17-20.10.2002).

d) Training on Project Cycle Management – Skopje 24-29 November 2002

The fourth training in the Hub was again organized by MCIC. The training team consisted of one trainer from MDF and a co-trainer from MCIC. Eleven participants had an opportunity to learn PCM based on Objective Oriented Project Panning (OOPP). Most of these organizations have project management as a basic feature in their training and consul-

tancy portfolio. This course has helped them, either to enhance their skills, or to re-configure their approach on the subject matter. The training as such, combines benefits from the first two activities (advanced skills, combined team of trainers).

e) Institutional development and organizational strengthening (ID/OS) training for church-related organisation (project no. 03-12 MGK 201) was organised in Sofia, Bulgaria on 16-23 March 2003, by the Pokrov Foundation.

f) Based on needs of regional office of Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), church-related agency that works in Kosovo, a package of two tailor-made trainings on Project Cycle Management (PCM) was implemented during the period April-May 2003 (project no. 03-12 MGK 202). The training aimed at building capacity of local and international staff in Decani and Mitrovica office on different aspects of the project cycle management.

Information sharing

Two projects were realized in 2003 as a part of information-sharing activities. First was the creation of web-page of training resources (project no. 02-12 MGK 301). Based on developed concept for the web-page on training resources in 2002, MCIC found a company that developed a suitable software package for implementing the training database. The web-page consists of database on training resources provided by partner organizations. The site was additionally developed to include material from partners' events, their publications, discussion forums and links to sites of interest to its users.

Addressbook for ecumenical partners (project no. 03-12 MGK 301) was the second project realized as a further information-sharing activity. The aim of the project was to strengthen cooperation between ecumenical partners in CEE through ensuring needed information in building their mutual relations. The addressbook consists of the following information: mission, objectives and goals, contacts, main and regional activities, organizational structure, human and material resources of WCC ecumenical partners in the CEE region. It was printed in electronic and hard-copy version and distributed free-of-charge to all relevant organizations.

4. ORGANISATION

4. 1. Governance and Management

All undertaken activities (formulated as projects) were approved by MCIC Governing Board. Overall responsibility for the programme management was with the Executive Director. The Hub coordinator, hired by MCIC on a part-time basis was responsible for programme coordination. For operational (daily) coordination and administration, MCIC appointed two staff members (both with occasional engagement).

MCIC has well defined procedures, including financial ones.

The Executive Director is responsible for overall management while the Accountant is in charge of financial management of the organization. Expenditures above a certain amount (as stated in Rules of Procedure) must be approved by the Governing Board (programme as well as operational). MCIC also has a Supervisory Board that has the right to control the management of finances.

Invoices are checked on 3 levels (Responsible officer, Accountant, Exec. Director).

Annual financial statements are audited by PriceWaterhouseCoopers.

4. 2. Procedures

MCIC developed a regular procedure to initiate, fund, monitor and report on Hub activities. This was necessary to create a simple and effective procedure to manage relationships between MCIC and the other agencies in the Hub, as well as to create basis for monitoring and evaluation.

The procedure consists of three elements:

- a) Funding Proposal - a short standard form to present the Hub activity (including goals, target group, schedule, description of activities, participants and budget);
- b) Contract - after reviewing the proposal, MCIC and the leading agency for the particular activity sign a standard contract (in English), which represents legal base and a financial document for the fund disbursement;
- c) Report - the leading agency for particular activity, according to the clauses of the contract is required to submit a final report including an evaluation.

The procedure is applied and followed for each of the activity implemented.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusions

The main objective and purpose of the programme have been achieved. During the period 2001-2003, eleven projects were implemented. Based on positive experience in the networks activities, partner organizations plan to continue their cooperation by developing new programme of activities and designing an appropriate organizational structure for its implementation.

After a significant delay in 2001, due to the armed conflict in Macedonia, the Capacity Building Hub programme planned and implemented the bulk of its activities in 2002. However, as a result of delay in the implementation phase in some and planned new activities, the implementation of the Programme was finished at the end of 2003.

The second Partnership meeting, where representatives from all partner organizations were present, closed the first phase of the Programme and allowed for partner organizations to reflect back on achievements of the network. Based on their involvement in the Programme, partner organizations decided to continue their cooperation and develop a concrete plan of action for the next phase. The meeting agreed on the vision and mission of the network, its objectives, minimum/maximum scenario of activities and basic principles of the organizational structure. While the response has been slow, the Third Partnership meeting was held in Feketic, Serbia and Montenegro from 19-21 December, 2003. Participation of more than a half of partner organizations at the meeting confirmed the commitment to continue with network's activities. As the lead agency, MCIC remains committed to administer and manage the daily operation of the network. In October 2003, a new Coordinator (Tanja Hafner) has been appointed.

Based on recommendations set out in the external evaluation, which was implemented as part of recommendations set out in the Annual Report 2002, and general conclusions above the following are the main challenges ahead of the network's activities in the second phase:

a) Coordination and communication: All partner organizations experience problems in communication and coordination of activities in the network. Most common reasons for these are over-tight schedules and personal rather than organization involvement in the network. Additional problems were created by open post of the Coordinator of the network between May and October 2003;

b) Rules, procedures and structure: Hub functions as a loose network. So far, rules and procedures have been clarified only in the area of project activities. Different partner organizations have different experience and needs and in order for the network to function structure and roles of each partner organization need to be clearly defined;

c) Partnership ideology: Sense of ownership must be developed in practice among all partner organizations. So far, MCIC has acted as the lead agency in the network and other organizations acted on the perception that it is up to the lead agency to initiate activities in the network.

5. 2. Recommendations

The pilot phase of the Capacity Building Hub Programme ended in 2003. Planning of the second phase is underway. In order to work on past achievements and to address its weaknesses the following elements should be strongly taken into consideration in planning the next phase:

a) Communication and coordination problem can be addressed through appointing two persons (one senior and one deputy) from each partner. One of them is designated as the contact point and acts as a focal point for distribution of information with regards to activities in the Hub in the partner organization;

b) Rules, procedures and organisational structure can be clarified through enhancing the monitoring system (e.g. defining in advance monitoring indicators such as Code of Conduct for trainers, membership criteria);

c) Decentralizing the decision-making and management process would strengthen partnership ideology;

d) Coaching and backstopping activities should be strengthened as they provide for deeper capacity building intervention.

6. BUDGET

Description	Project number	Planned EUR	Realised	
			MKD	EUR*
1. Income				
ICCO (incl. 384,516 MKD core funds)		70,000	4,645,248	75,787
DCA		70,000	4,328,753	70,624
NCA		-	256,966	4,192
Total Income		140,000	9,230,967	150,603
2. Expenditures				
Country visits	101/01	5,000	1,109,988	18,110
Partners meetings		12,500		
Training (for NGO support centers and for church related organisations)	201/02	43,000	769,054	12,547
	201/03		472,344	7,706
	202/02	10,500	654,391	10,676
	202/03		45,000	734
	203/02		166,750	2,721
	204/02		843,750	13,766
Exchange visits	101/02	10,000	1,149,286	18,751
Backstopping/coaching		18,500		
External backstopping		12,500		
	101/03	5,123	291,291	4,752
Data-base / web for info exchange	301/02	4,000	240,000	3,916
	301/03**		0	0
Total Direct Costs		116,000	5,741,854	93,679
Operational costs		24,000	3,489,113	56,924
Total Expenditures		140,000	9,230,967	150,603

* Exchange rate used is 1 EUR = 61.2931 MKD (31.12.2003)

** No direct cost were incurred.

Remarks

Activities are presented as in the programme document.

Activities during implementation were divided in separate projects (see list of projects in the Annex). Adequate linking is made in the above table to match original description of activities and actual projects implemented.

Figures under column Realised are actual expenditures incurred in implementation of the approved projects (see Annex).

Stated figures for operational costs were taken from respective Annual Financial Reports, where these costs are distributed per programmes.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE MATERIALS

Minutes of the Second Partnership Meeting in Mavrovo, Macedonia (March 2003);

Minutes of the Third Partnership Meeting in Feketic, SCG (December 2003);

Annual Report 2002;

Evaluation of the Capacity Building Hub Programme (May 2003).

ANNEX 1: List of all projects

Project name	Project no.
Visits to the regional partners	01-12 MGK 101
Partners study visits	02-12 MGK 101
Regional training of trainers	02-12 MGK 201
ToT for regional partners	02-12 MGK 202
Training for pensioners Mac. and Albania	02-12 MGK 203
PCM training for regional partners	02-12 MGK 204
Web-page for training resources	02-12 MGK 301
Visit of NGO fair in Zagreb	03-12 MGK 101
ID/OS training for ecumenical partners	03-12 MGK 201
Tailor-made training for NCA	03-12 MGK 202
WCC addressbook for ecumenical partners	03-12 MGK 301