



CAPACITY BUILDING HUB DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2002

1. BACKGROUND

The World Council of Churches South-East Europe Ecumenical Partnership (WCC SEEPP), initiated in 2000 (after an assessment of the partners in the region was carried out), aims to promote co-ordination and co-operation among churches, related organisations and other partners in the South East Europe (SEE) region. The WCC SEEPP seeks to facilitate an effective response to need, and to promote a lasting contribution to peace, development and integration in the area. It consists of three hubs: Peace and Reconciliation; Refugee and IDP Return, Repatriation and Integration; and Capacity Building.

Capacity Building Hub is an alliance, which aims to foster the capacity building activities with the ecumenical partners in SEE. The alliance should foster the relevant, effective, accessible, affordable and sustainable package of capacity building services. The Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), supported by ICCO takes a lead in the network on capacity building of ecumenical partners in the region.

This Capacity Building Programme analyses the situation in the third sector in SEE, the challenges, the existing training offer and develops a package of services needed in the coming period. The package consists of: tailor made training, coaching or backstopping consultancies and networking, exchange visits. Areas of expertise are: networking, advocacy and lobbying, NGO management, strategic positioning, conflict awareness and management, 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 started in second half of the year 2001, with appointment of the Hub Coordinator (Besim Nebiu) and visits to some of the partners in the region. Activities continued according to the plan during the year 2002 and those activities are covered in this report.

2. PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

2. 1. Overall objective

Programme overall objective is to contribute to the strengthening of co-ordination, co-operation and 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 build capacity of the ecumenical partners in SEE. WCC SEEPP network (alliance) on capacity building will foster the relevant, effective, accessible, affordable and sustainable package of capacity building services.

2. 3. Tasks (components)

Tasks to be fulfilled are:

- Identification of local partners and involved organisations;
- Planning of capacity building activities
- Development of training curricula

- Implementation 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/Ecumenical partners:
 - Romania: Foundation of the Development of Civil Society (FDSC), Assistance Centre for Non-Governmental Organisations (CENTRAS), NGO Forum, Opportunities associates;
 - Bulgaria: Union of Bulgarian Foundations and Associations (UBFA), Civil Society Development Foundation (CSDF), Open Education Centre, Plovdiv Consultants, The Pokrov Foundation; Women Alliance for Development (WAD);
 - Albania: Albanian NGO Forum (ANGOF), Albanian Civil Society Foundation (ACSF), Albanian National Training and Technical Assistance Resource Center (ANT-TARC), DeMetRA, Women's Centre;
 - Macedonia: Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), Organisation for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women (ESE);
 - Bosnia and Herzegovina: TALDI;
 - Yugoslavia (including Kosovo): Center for development of non-for profit sector, Center for Civil Initiatives - Tim Tri (T3), We are With You (WAWY);
 - Croatia: CERANEO, NIT, EOS.
- Church related organisations:
 - Albania: Diakonia Agapes;
 - Romania: AIDROM;
 - Croatia: Christian Information Service, Ecumenical Women's Solidarity Fund;
 - Yugoslavia: Philanthropy, Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation (EHO);
 - Macedonia: Charity - Humanitarian Organisation of Macedonian Orthodox Church, Evangelist - Methodist Church.

All church related organisations stated above (except from Croatia) and selected NGO support centers/Ecumenical partners (marked with underline), participated in the Hub activities during 2002.

3. ACTIVITIES

3. 1. Planned activities

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

Planned period for realisation was one year, i.e., in the period January - December 2002. However, during the first partnership meeting (April 2002), scheduling of activities was changed up to April 2003.

3. 2. Realised activities

MCIC was implementing seven projects during 2002. One of them was started in 2001. List of project is given in the Annex 1.

Country visits, partners meetings

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

This process was finalised with First Partners Meeting, held in Ohrid (Macedonia), on 18-21 April 2002, with representatives of church related organisations and selected NGO support centers/ecumenical partners, 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.

Exchange visits and backstopping / coaching

These activities are part of MCIC project Partners study visits, no. 02-12 MGK 101. According to the plan made on the First Partners Meeting, six study visits were agreed:

- 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.

Also, only one of the rest (NIT<->WAD) is scheduled for early 2003.

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.

Trainings

Four trainings were implemented in 2002.

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

The first one, was a five days ToT organized by jointly by AIDROM and Opportunity Associates Romania. Eleven participants representing different partner agencies attended. The training team was composed by the 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 Planning (OOPP). Most of these organizations have project management as a basic feature in their training and consultancy 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).

Last planned training activity, on ID/OS for church related organisation is to follow in March 2003, in Bulgaria, organised by Pokrov Foundation.

Information sharing

MCIC has developed a concept for the web-page and is expected to be final by the end of January. The contents of the web page consists of three directories which are to be fed by each of the partners. Those are databases of:

- organisations (features of the organizations);
- resource persons (trainers and consultants);
- services (training curriculum's and consultancies).

Web page is under construction and expected to be on-line in February 2003.

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. Responsible for programme coordination was the Hub coordinator, hired by MCIC on a part-time basis. For operational (daily) coordination and administration, MCIC appointed two staff members (both with part-time engagement).

MCIC have well defined procedures, including financial procedures.

The Executive Director is responsible for overall management and the Accountant for financial management. 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 were 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) Reports - 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 now applied and followed for each of the activity implemented.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. 1. Conclusions

Capacity Building Hub / Programme, started with significant delay in 2001, due to the armed conflict in Macedonia. That delay, affected also 2002 activities (e.g. pilot-programme period, planned for whole 2002 year, was prolonged up to end of March 2003).

First partner's meeting (April 2002), having in mind participation (all invited agencies were represented, almost all with most senior managers) and enthusiasm during the meeting, showed rather big interest for regional cooperation and brought concrete outcomes to implement (and therefore strengthen) that cooperation.

Many of the activities (especially the training component) were implemented in 2002, but quite a number of the actions (like exchange visits), were either initiated late, or the organization(s) that proposed them at the meeting lacked a follow up. The reasons for this, could be looked on by a more complete evaluation, but some of the challenges that appeared at this stage, are:

a) Timing and Coordination. The original timing may have been optimistic. Being funded, project or program-wise most of the partners had already crowded schedules, therefore the Hub activities suffered time wise, especially as they needed coordination among many agencies;

b) Communication and Planning. Some of the partner's had difficulty following up with their mutual communication, which is necessary to complete the planning and starting with the organization. The original plan had pretty basic indications of the types of activities to be carried out, and required extensive further planning. This also became more emphasized as the partner's obviously have differentiating work approaches and expectation from the same activity.

c) Team Building. The Partner's Meeting itself may have been too short to create more stable cooperation and partnerships among the partners. In that respect some of the final concepts for the Hub activities, after the consultations carried by their organizers differ from the original idea.

5. 2. Recommendations

Capacity Building Hub - pilot programme period is ending in March 2003. Planned activities for this period should be completed in maximum possible extent.

By the end of this phase, external evaluation should be carried out and should look more in depth to:

a) the training and other capacity building needs of the partners and how they have been met by the events so far (relevance and effectiveness);

b) future directions of cooperation.

Evaluation should be combined with second partner's meeting.

Based on the evaluation results, MCIC will propose continuation of activities, which may be developed in three lines:

a) strengthening the regional network of capacity building organisations;

b) capacity building for church related organisations;

c) development of regional advocacy network.

6. BUDGET

Description	Planned EUR	Project number	Realised	
			MKD	EUR *
1. Income				
ICCO	70,000		4,260,732	69,280
DCA	70,000		4,328,753	70,386
Total Income	140,000		8,589,489	139,666
2. Expenditures				
Country visits	5,000	101/01	1,200,000	19,512
Partners meetings	12,500			
Training for NGO support structures	43,000	201	850,000	13,821
Training for church related organisations	10,500	202	900,000	14,634
		203	172,295	2,802
		204	1,000,000	16,260
Exchange visits	10,000	101	1,900,000	30,894
Backstopping/coaching	18,500			
External backstopping	12,500			
Data-base / web for info exchange	4,000	301	250,000	4,065
Operational costs	24,000		1,581,079	25,709
Total Expenditures	140,000		7,853,734	127,697
Balance on 31.12.2002	0		735,755	11,969

* exchange rate used is 1 EUR = 61.5 MKD

Remarks

Activities are presented as in the programme document.

Activities during implementation were divided in separate project (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 funds approved by MCIC Governing Board for the particular project and not actual expenditures. Those will be recorded in the final version of this report, after closing all projects and consolidation during preparation of the MCIC Annual Financial Report (February 2003).

The same counts for operational costs. Stated figure is estimation and is based on the actual figure for the first half of 2002.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE MATERIALS

- Summary Report of Hub Activities: Identification of Hub Partners (December 2001 - February 2002);
- Report from The Partner's Meeting (May 2002).

ANNEX 1: List of projects

Description	Proj. no.	Budget	Status
Visits to the regional partners	101/01	1,200,000	Completed
Partners study visits	101	1,900,000	Implementation
Regional training of trainers	201	850,000	Completed
ToT for regional partners	202	900,000	Completed
Training for pensioners Mac. and Albania	203	172,295	Completed
PCM training for regional partners	204	1,000,000	Completed
Web-page for training resources	301	250,000	Implementation