

HAS PEACEBUILDING MADE A DIFFERENCE IN KOSOVO?

**A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS
OF PEACEBUILDING IN
PREVENTING VIOLENCE:
LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE
MARCH 2004 RIOTS IN KOSOVO**

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects

July 2006

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

Reflecting on Peace Practice Project
CDA-Collaborative Learning Projects
17 Dunster Street, Suite 202
Cambridge, MA 02138 USA
+1-617-661-6310
+1-617-661-3805 fax
www.cdainc.com

CARE International
St. Isa Kastrati 113
10000 Prishtinë/Priština
Kosovo
+381-38-222 435
+381-38-243-545 fax
www.careks.org
www.careinternational.org.uk

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The lead author of this study was Diana Chigas of CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. She worked with a talented team of researchers, who with her designed the methodology, conduct the desk study, conduct the interviews for the case studies, and analyze the findings: Cheyanne Church, Jos De La Haye, Monica Llamazares, Olivera Markovic, Vasiliki Neophotistos and Artan Venhari.

The research team would like to acknowledge the valuable assistance and participation of many people.

We could not have conducted this research nor written this report without the assistance of several organizations and individuals.

We would like to thank the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, CARE International and CARE Austria and CDA Collaborative Learning Projects for their generous financial support for this project.

We would also like to thank the staff of CARE Kosovo for their support and assistance at all phases of this research. Without the logistical support from CARE Kosovo, from organizing transport and workshops to providing valuable input and guidance on the research, we would not have been able to complete the research. CARE Kosovo staff also provided valuable feedback throughout the study.

We are grateful to the OSCE in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Mercy Corps, UNMIK Pejë/Peć and the British Office in Prishtinë/Priština for their assistance with travel and interviews, and to Kosovan Nansen Dialogue for their invaluable assistance with interviews and their generosity in providing space for workshops.

Finally, special thanks goes to all the individuals, NGOs and international agencies who took time at the beginning of the project and after the case studies had been prepared to share their insights and analysis and offer their guidance for the design of the research and analysis of the evidence. The insights and guidance of all these individuals was invaluable to us. We are very grateful.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?



Kosovo Municipalities: Serbian & Albanian



The boundaries displayed on this map do not imply official recognition by the United Nations

UNHCR GIS Unit Skopje

30 April 1999

\\...\\Overview\\Municipalities in Serb & Alb

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?



Serb Communities in Kosovo, from Matveeva, Anna and Wolf-Christian Paes, *The Kosovo Serbs: an ethnic minority between collaboration and defiance* (Friedrich Naumann Foundation and Saferworld, 2003).

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCK	Coordination Centre for Kosovo (Serbian Government agency)
CDA	CDA Collaborative Learning Projects
CivPol	United Nations Civilian Police
EU	European Union
HDI	Human Development Index
ICG	International Crisis Group
IEV	Inter-ethnic violence
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGO	Inter-governmental Organisation
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
KFOR	Kosovo Force
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army (also known as UCK)
KPC	Kosovo Protection Corps (also known as TMK)
KPS	Kosovo Police Service
K-Albanian	Kosovo Albanian community
K-Serb	Kosovo Serb community
LDK	<i>Lidhja Demokratike e Kosoves</i> (Democratic League of Kosovo), formerly headed by Ibrahim Rugova, currently headed by Kosovo President Fatmir Sedjju
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSCE-KVM	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe – Kosovo Verification Mission (deployed prior to 1999)
PKD	<i>Partia Demokratikee Kosoves</i> (Democratic Party of Kosovo), headed by Hashim Thaqi
PISG	Provisional Institutions of Self Government
RAE	Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian
SNC	Serbian National Council
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General (United Nations)

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

TMK	Trupat Mbrojtëse të Kosovës, or Kosovo Protection Corps
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

I. INTRODUCTION

The violence of March 2004 prompted many agencies to reflect on their peacebuilding programming throughout Kosovo. While violence consumed Kosovo for two days, it was noted that the communities in which the international non-governmental organization, CARE, was implementing its peacebuilding programs experienced little or no violence.¹ Was CARE's and other agencies' peacebuilding programming responsible for this difference? The purpose of this study is to answer that question. Specifically, it seeks to understand whether and how peacebuilding programming in Kosovo contributed to communities' resistance to or lack of participation in violence, especially that which occurred in March 2004.

The study was not commissioned as an evaluation of CARE's program. Rather, CARE requested a broader scope, involving many NGOs and agencies that have been conducting peacebuilding programming. The study explores the *cumulative* contributions of peacebuilding programming to the absence or prevention of inter-ethnic violence in the worst outbreak of violence in Kosovo since the immediate post-war period. CARE International UK, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, CARE Austria, and CDA's *Reflecting on Peace Practice* project provided the funding for the study.

The approach was to collect the experiences of communities in Kosovo. Seven case study locations were chosen, including urban and rural sites, sites with higher numbers of minority returnees, and sites with significant remainee populations. The research team consulted broadly at each stage of the research, through feedback workshops and other meetings with international and local NGOs and policy makers, think tanks and donors to gather more experience and reflect on the evidence being gathered. Many individuals and agencies have collaborated on the ideas presented in this book.

The cases included communities with varied experience of the 1998-1999 conflict, communities that experienced high levels of inter-ethnic violence (IEV) prior to March 2004 but none on March 17-18, as well as communities considered to be relatively peaceful but that experienced violence in March 2004. The cases focused on Serb—Albanian relations in Kosovo and unfortunately were not able to take account of other minority communities, although non-Serb minorities do suffer discrimination and did suffer violence in the March 2004 events. Limited resources prevented us from doing a comprehensive study, and we chose to focus on Kosovo Albanian—Kosovo Serb relations and violence because an initial mapping of violence indicated that, in general, the presence of K-Serbs correlated more with higher levels of IEV than the presence of other minorities.² The relationship between K-Serbs and K-Albanians also coincides with the main lines of political conflict and thus is more directly related to the peace process, as opposed to the larger process of nation-building, democratic development and social stability.

¹ See International Crisis Group, *Collapse in Kosovo*, Europe Report No. 155 (April 2004), p. 16.

² See section IV.B below for a full explanation of this finding.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

Two researchers – one Kosovo Albanian and one Serb – conducted six of the case studies as a team, generally traveling together, sometimes with an international member of the research team, to the sites. They conducted interviews in parallel, comparing notes during the course of the case study to identify issues or perspectives to follow-up or pursue from the “other” side. In general, 20-40 people were interviewed in each community, including United Nations officials, NGOs implementing peacebuilding activities and their participants or beneficiaries, shopkeepers, medical workers, teachers, youth and other members of the community. Community residents were generally interviewed first concerning perceptions of violence and peacebuilding work in their communities so that we would not bias the study in favor of peacebuilding work, and so that we would not miss important factors not related to programming.

With the changing situation in Kosovo resulting from ongoing implementation of “standards” and the planned conclusion of negotiations that will determine the status of Kosovo, the March 2004 riots may seem far away. Nonetheless, with feelings of insecurity increasing in some communities, and greater polarization of Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb opinions on issues related to the status negotiations, especially in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, the possibility of escalation of violence still exists. The lessons from March 2004, especially from communities that succeeded in avoiding or resisting violence during that time, can still inform efforts to avert violence in the future and to improve the impact of peacebuilding programming in Kosovo. This study aims to contribute to the reflection on the impacts and gaps of programming that is taking place in many agencies and suggest some directions for future policy and practice in Kosovo.

PART 1: UNDERSTANDING VIOLENCE AND PEACEBUILDING IN KOSOVO

II. CONTEXTUALISING INTER-ETHNIC VIOLENCE AND THE MARCH 2004 RIOTS

Pre-war and war violence

During the decade preceding the 1998-1999 civil war in Kosovo, systematic human rights abuses perpetrated by Yugoslav police and security forces mainly against Kosovo Albanians were widely reported and condemned. The OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission, which deployed in 1998 to observe compliance by the Yugoslav State of its international human rights obligations, reported:

- Arbitrary arrest and detention, and the violation of the right to a fair trial, increasingly became the tools of the law enforcement agencies in the suppression of Kosovo Albanian civil and political rights, and, accompanied by torture and ill-treatment, were applied as a means to intimidate the entire Kosovo Albanian society.
- Rape and other forms of sexual violence were applied sometimes as a weapon of war.
- Forced expulsion carried out by Yugoslav and Serbian forces took place on a massive scale, with evident strategic planning and in clear violation of the laws and customs of war. It was often accompanied by deliberate destruction of property, and looting. Opportunities for extortion of money were a prime motivator for Yugoslav and Serbian perpetrators of human rights and humanitarian law violations.³

These events brutally exacerbated and institutionalized the already existing segregation of the Kosovo Albanians and Serbs, two communities that for most of the 90's inhabited "parallel worlds."⁴ After mass dismissals from state structures and enterprises in 1990-1991, the Kosovo Albanians turned to parallel structures and entrepreneurship, both legal and illegal, to survive. This nonviolent resistance movement kept the conflict latent but unresolved for over five years.⁵ While war raged in the collapsing Yugoslav Federation, Kosovo remained under a state of emergency that gave the police and forces deployed unprecedented powers to carry on with their abuses.

As the Dayton Accords for Bosnia Herzegovina were signed in 1995 without resolving the issue of Kosovo, the conflict escalated. K-Albanians had now re-armed through an influx of weapons

³ OSCE, *Kosovo/Kosova As Seen As Told*. OSCE - KVM, October 1998-June 1999; Amnesty International: *Annual Report*, (London: Amnesty International, 1997) and *Kosovo: The Evidence* (1998).

⁴ D. Kostovicova, *Parallel Worlds: Response of Kosovo Albanians to loss of Autonomy in Serbia 1989-1996* (Published M.Phil Thesis, University Cambridge, 1996).

⁵ C. Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo* (London: Pluto Press, 2000).

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

from the collapsing Albanian state. By 1997 the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA) was actively engaged in operations against both civilian and security targets. Kidnappings and assassinations of both Serbs and “collaborators” amongst Albanians were frequent.⁶ Both Kosovo Albanians and Serbs were displaced from areas where hostilities flared, and both communities suffered enormously.

By early 1998, Kosovo had erupted into full-scale civil war, carried out mostly in rural areas. Many urban centres retained some normality. Violence by armed groups, which included special units with experience of ethnic cleansing in Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina and irregular units of armed civilians, actively engaged in the campaign. Villages considered by the Yugoslav forces to be sympathetic to the KLA were systematically ‘cleansed.’⁷ The diplomatic drive by the international community in late 1998 proved insufficient to reverse the process, leading to a controversial military campaign in June 1999 that saw the most brutal three months of the civil war. An estimated 10,000 people were killed, 863,000 Kosovo Albanian and other non-Serb minorities became refugees, while 590,000 became IDPs.⁸

There was a pattern to the Yugoslav’s army’s process of displacement. It often began with the shelling of villages to drive people out, followed by entry of forces to loot and expel/kill those who remained, and to set property on fire preventing return of the displaced. The areas worst hit by the campaign were those considered KLA strongholds in western Kosovo. Areas of the Pëjë/Peć and Prizren Regions, such as Gllgovc/Glogovac, Skenderaj/Srbica, Gjakova/Đakovica, Rrahovec/Orahovac and Suharekë/Suva Reka municipalities, experienced mass executions, and Pejë/Peć, Lipjan/Lipljan, Decan/Decani and Klinë/Klina municipalities were also hard hit by fighting. No part of Kosovo was unaffected by the violence. Even the Prizren Region, where multi-ethnic relations traditionally had been good and its capital an emblem of cosmopolitanism, the war had a significant impact, regardless of ethnicity. An entire generation, who are now the disaffected and often unemployed youth who make up about half of Kosovo’s population was brutalised by a war that seemed to show that violence pays.

Post-war violence⁹

In the immediate aftermath of NATO’s military campaign, and against the advice of international agencies, hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians began to return home from Macedonia, Albania, and South Serbia. By the end of July 1999, 740,000 had spontaneously returned. Over

⁶ OSCE, *Kosovo/Kosova: As Seen, As Told, October 1998-June 1999*.

⁷ OSCE, *As Seen, As Told – Part II, June to October 1999*.

⁸ Independent International Commission on Kosovo, *Kosovo Report: Conflict, International Response, Lessons Learned* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 90.

⁹ The following section of this paper looks at the aftermath of the war by offering a regional overview that portrays the atmosphere of impunity and tolerance to violence that prevailed despite the international community’s efforts. The Section does not offer a comprehensive account of all violence, but highlights diverse aspects of the majority-minority relationship in Kosovo immediately post-1999 that remain relevant to understanding the nature of inter-ethnic violence today.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

the course of that summer over 150,000 Kosovo Serb and their alleged Roma collaborators fled to Northern Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro, or to mono-ethnic enclaves such as Gracanica and Gorazhdec/Gorazdevac.¹⁰

The successor to the OSCE's Kosovo Verification Mission described the climate of revenge that reigned for months after the deployment of international forces as follows:

“Violence has taken many forms: killings, rape, beatings, torture, house-burning and abductions. Not all violence has been physical, however, fear and terror tactics have been used as weapons of revenge. Sustained aggression, even without physical injury, exerts extreme pressure, leaving people not only unable to move outside their home, but unable to live peacefully within their home. In many instances, fear has generated silence, in turn allowing the climate of impunity to go unchecked.”¹¹

Between June and December 1999, 454 murders, 190 kidnappings, and 1,327 incidents of arson took place in Kosovo. Between January 2000 and June 2000 these figures had decreased to 146 murders, 94 kidnappings and 362 arson attacks.¹²

This trend continued into 2001. UNHCR's 10th Assessment on the Situation of Minorities noted “the positive trends of increased security and mobility of minorities in Kosovo,” but underlined “that minority communities continue to face varying degrees of harassment, intimidation and provocation, as well as limited freedom of movement.”¹³ The improvement was partly due to the increasing departures and segregation of Serbs in mainly rural areas,¹⁴ and, some believe, to the feeling of momentum in the K-Albanian community resulting from the holding of municipal and parliamentary elections and the focus on the establishment of the institutions of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) and municipal government. The “Standards Before Status” policy announced in April 2002 and the subsequent plan for its “operationalization” seemingly created a path to independence. Occasional high profile murders still shocked minorities and the international community, but overall many thought that reduction in overt violence represented significant change.

March 2004

The failure to define status, coupled with Serbian resistance to recognition of the PISG structures and increasing clashes between the PISG and UNMIK, which resisted PISG declarations on status and demands for more powers, heightened tensions. In addition, by 2003, unemployment

¹⁰ UNHCR, *Tenth Assessment of the Situation of Ethnic Minorities in Kosovo; Prishtina/Priština* (Kosovo: UNHCR, March 2003), <http://www.unmikonline.org/press/reports/MinorityAssessmentReport10ENG.pdf> (accessed 15th April 2005).

¹¹ OSCE, *Kosovo/Kosova: As Seen, As Told – Part II, June to October 1999*.

¹² UNMIK, *Civpol in Kosovo Report* (Prishtina: UNMIK, August 2000).

¹³ UNHCR, *Tenth Assessment of the Situation of Ethnic Minorities in Kosovo* (Prishtina/Priština; UNHCR, 2003).

¹⁴ Alexandros Yannis, *Kosovo Under International Administration: An Unfinished Conflict* (Athens: ELIAMEP/PSIS, 2001), p. 37.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

was at about 50%. Tensions exploded in March 2004. The ICG Report, *Collapse in Kosovo* (22 April 2004) – one of the authoritative analyses of the riots of 17-18 March 2004 in Kosovo¹⁵ – describes the start of the riots in the following way:

March 2004, the week ahead was set for demonstrations: on KLA grievances on 16 March and on trade union demands for resumption of privatisation and the dismissal of Fucci on 18 March. On the evening of 15 March, however, a Kosovo Serb teenager was shot and severely wounded in the Serb village of Caglavica, which straddles the highway south to Macedonia just outside Pristina. Allegedly, it was a drive-by shooting. For the Serbs it was yet another in a series of unsettling "terrorist" incidents, and they felt that KFOR and UNMIK were not paying sufficient attention. They reacted predictably, by blocking the highway. In a show of solidarity, on 16 March Serbs in the enclave of Gracanica, straddling the Pristina to Gjilan/Gnjilane highway, also blocked their road, thus severing Pristina from the south of Kosovo.

[. . .]

Around midday demonstrations of the "associations emerged from war" went ahead in Pristina, Prizren, Peja/Pec and many other municipalities (still reproducing anger over the 16 February arrest for war crimes of senior KPC figures from Prizren). Anger against the internationals was palpable. The pro-KLA *Epoka e Re* reproduced on its front page the next morning a slogan that attracted cheers from the crowd in Peja: "UNMIK watch your step, the KLA has gunpowder for you too!" During the evening of 16 March, RTK -- Kosovo's public television channel -- broadcast an interview with a twelve-year old boy from the Albanian village of Caber, on the north bank of the Ibar near Mitrovica. Journalists reported - although the boy did not explicitly say so in his interview - that Serb youths with a dog had chased him and three companions, aged nine, eleven and twelve, into the river. The companions were missing, presumed drowned (two bodies have since been recovered).¹⁶

¹⁵ There have been a number of good accounts and analyses of the events of March, 2004. In addition to the ICG report, the Belgrade-based Humanitarian Law Centre and Human Rights Watch published a detailed authoritative account of the events of March 17-18, based on interviews with victims and witnesses. Humanitarian Law Centre. *Ethnic Violence in Kosovo* (Belgrade, Humanitarian Law Centre, July 2004). United Nations Special Envoy Kai Eide also prepared a political assessment of the causes, consequences and implications of the March 2004 events for the international community. Kai Eide, Letter dated 17 November 2004 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council, S/2004/932. Other authoritative accounts include Human Rights Watch, *Failure to Protect: Anti-Minority Violence in Kosovo, March 2004* (Human Rights Watch Vol. 16, No. 6(D), 2004); Riinvest, *Early Warning Report Kosovo January – April 2004* (Prishtinë/Priština: UNDP, 2004); Amnesty International, *The March Violence: KFOR, and UNMIK's failure to protect the rights of the minority communities*, Report No. AI EUR 70/016/2004, 8 July 2004; Harald Schenker, *Violence in Kosovo and the Way Ahead*, ECMI Brief # 10 (Flenisburg, Germany: ECMI, 2004).

¹⁶ International Crisis Group, *Collapse in Kosovo*, Europe Report No. 155, 22 April 2004, 13-14.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

The fuse was lit; riots broke out all over Kosovo, targeting mainly Serbs and UNMIK, killing 19, wounding 900, and resulting in extensive destruction of property, from churches to homes and personal property.

The events of March 2004 have been analyzed extensively, and the purpose of this research is not to re-analyze these events, but rather to begin to develop an understanding of the reasons violence was avoided in areas that escaped the March 2004 destruction. Nonetheless, a number of factors identified in these analyses (as well as in this study's feedback workshops, community studies¹⁷ and case studies) are worth underlining from these analyses as significant factors for violence:

- *The role of children.* Secondary school children were one of the main perpetrators of March 2004 violence. While this was a shock to many, children were regularly engaged in acts of intimidation against minorities (stoning, verbal abuse) that reflected both permissiveness in society towards IEV, but also the result of years of brutalisation and a widespread nationalistic K-Albanian primary education system where the K-Serb & Serbs are defined as "the enemy."
- *The role of media.* Media played a key role in the riots, first by misinforming the population about the circumstances surrounding the drowning of the three Albanian children (trigger event), then by portraying the escalating unrest as legitimate protests.¹⁸
- *Resistance to returns.* Houses that had been returned to their rightful owners were illegally re-occupied after the displacement caused by the riots had left them vacant.¹⁹ This suggests that resistance to returns, especially in urban areas, may have been a factor in the March 2004 violence itself.
- *Quiet acceptance of IEV.* A culture of silence and quiet acceptance of violence may have played a role in fueling the March 2004 events. The lack of response by civil society actors during the riots revealed at best a lack of initiative or a fear to step out of line, and at worst a quiet acceptance of yet another display of behaviour that has become equated with "patriotism." Many influential NGOs created within the peaceful resistance movement of liberation in the 90's struggled to re-define their role during peacetime, and some, particularly the Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms, played a controversial role during the March riots.

¹⁷ During the first phase of the study, in addition to document-based research, the researchers conducted two very brief community studies in Gjilan/Gnjilane and Pejë/Peč. (Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec) to assist in interpreting some of the problematic documentary data they collected, and to begin to develop hypotheses about factors important for the presence or absence of violence. In addition, CDA conducted three feedback workshops with local and international organizations and NGOs in Pejë/Peč, in Prishtinë/Priština and in Mitrovica North to gather experience-based evidence concerning violence, absence of violence and peacebuilding activities.

¹⁸ See OSCE, *The Role of the Media in the March 2004 Events in Kosovo* (Vienna: OSCE, 2004).

¹⁹ OSCE, *Human Rights Challenges Following the March Riots* (Prishtinë/Priština: OSCE Mission in Kosovo, May 2004).

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

- *Role of international community.* KPS, KFOR, and UNMIK were criticised for their response. They certainly played a part in the escalation by not sending an unequivocal message from the very beginning about the zero-tolerance to IEV. Although in retrospect certain actions by UNMIK, KFOR and KPS (such as clearing the highway to Skopje) might have helped reduce the intensity of violence, their pre-riots performance did not have a determining role in whether violence occurred.
- *Role of “outsiders.”* In explaining March 2004, a common discourse has developed to explain the events in the following terms: “They came from outside, the rioters were not from this town/village.” This allows the community to explain what happened without having to accept responsibility, and both majority and minority communities are finding that explanation convenient. Yet at the early stages, the rioters had extremely widespread public support in the K-Albanian community, and there was practically no public criticism of the violence perpetrated against K Serbs.
- *The primacy of political vs. social or economic causes.* Some have commented that the message of March 2004 was primarily political, rather than social, and in this way different from the overall IEV, as areas worst affected by the March violence were also the relatively more economically developed.

III. WHAT IS PEACEBUILDING IN KOSOVO? UNDERSTANDING THE MAJOR APPROACHES

The term “peacebuilding” has been used alternatively to describe the entire endeavor of the international community in Kosovo and to describe specific programming designed to address the causes of ongoing and future conflict. For this study the latter conception is used. Within this conception, however, there are no *a priori* boundaries of peacebuilding activity; policies and approaches that have been labeled as peacebuilding in one context are not in another.

Consequently, rather than supply a definition of peacebuilding, this research sought to identify and reflect on what people themselves – from UNMIK to NGOs to local community members – characterized as peacebuilding in the Kosovo context, and to explore the assumptions driving these activities regarding how peace comes about. Peacebuilding is thus defined as any activity or programming, undertaken by any agency – local or international NGO, UNMIK, OSCE, government, KFOR, etc. – that is *intended*, in part or fully, to prevent renewal of inter-ethnic violence or to address the political, economic and social causes driving conflict.

The range of dominant types of activities and beneficiaries characterized by practitioners and/or community members in Kosovo are summarized below. Because the case studies themselves were chosen to include a range of locations, rural and urban sites, communities with returnees or potential returnees and remainee populations, different experiences of the war and different degrees of ethnic mixing, we believe the range of peacebuilding programming identified there presents a fair picture, even if not comprehensive, of the activities that are being pursued Kosovo-wide.

1. *Inter-ethnic and Inter-religious Dialogue*

The bulk of what agencies and community members characterized as peacebuilding was “dialogue.” “Dialogue” means many things to many people, and, as the word has been used in Kosovo, encompasses a wide range of different activities: from social contact to structured conversations about identity and promotion of mutual understanding, to problem-solving related to concrete issues, to negotiation and mediation of agreements land use or in the Municipal Working Groups on Return. The range of processes and methodologies – and consequent outcomes or results—of “dialogue” in this context makes it difficult to assess “dialogue” as a single type of peacebuilding activity, and to compare it with other approaches used in Kosovo.

“Dialogue” most frequently was focused in three areas: a) conditions for sustainable returns of refugees or IDPs; b) priority-setting and implementation of community development activities; and c) non-political issues of common interest and potential future cooperation for participants, such as HIV/AIDS, drug use, business and entrepreneurship, women’s rights, infrastructure, etc. Many, even most, of these were conducted amongst youth, women and returnees and their host communities, with several, though fewer, programmes working with civil society and municipal authorities. Dialogue amongst religious leaders, media and politicians was undertaken by a few organizations, but was not widespread. A few programmes of dialogue were being implemented in the communities visited in this research on cultural heritage of Kosovo, on religious tolerance

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

and inter-ethnic relations, and on politically-relevant issues such as the causes of conflict and distrust, freedom of movement, implementation of the Standards for Kosovo, and decentralization. However, these dialogues were few and fairly isolated.

2. *Training and Peace Education*

Training in conflict resolution, human rights, nonviolent communication and related topics was done in all the communities visited in this study, and, with dialogue, was one of the most popular approaches to peacebuilding programming. Youth camps, peace camps, archeological camps art camps and many others were widespread, as were programmes of technical training conducted multi-ethnically, e.g., in computers, project management, marketing, and other technical or professional topics.

To a lesser extent, school-based peace education programmes have developed human and children's rights education, democracy education, psycho-social training for teachers, life skills education and education to deal with anger about the past. Multi-ethnic schools have also been developed in Kosovo, though there are very few.

3. *Multi-Ethnic Projects and Institutions*

Along with dialogue and training, joint (inter-ethnic) projects and institutions comprise a significant proportion of the peacebuilding programming we found in the communities that were part of this study. Some of the projects were the outcome of or follow-up to dialogue, aiming to take the communication and relationship-building beyond mere talk.

The kinds of joint projects or activities varied widely. One category of programming sought economic interdependence, such as: a project providing greenhouses to both K-Serbs and K-Albanians, an agricultural cooperative designed to bring Serbs and Albanians in neighboring communities together to share equipment, or business grants to promote cross-ethnic business linkages, in which, for example, an Albanian-owned milk station would obtain its milk from Serbs. The idea of these programs was to provide economic benefits for both communities, and, as one agency's staff described it, make it "bad business to harm your neighbor."²⁰

A second, related, category of joint projects programming sought to create inter-ethnic cooperation. Some were more *ad hoc* projects, such as: a women's program bringing together women to develop income-generation possibilities in cross-ethnic bakery supply or handicrafts projects, youth internet cafes servicing multi-ethnic youth; a joint environmental clean-up project, multi-ethnic youth magazines, or a joint advocacy project for access to youth services. Others sought to institutionalize multi-ethnic cooperation by supporting the creation of multi-ethnic NGOs, multi-ethnic community centres, multi-ethnic youth organizations (e.g., the

²⁰ Douglas Schlemmer, "Building Peace in Kosovo: An evaluation of Mercy Corps' PRM refugee assistance programs" (Cambridge, MA: JF Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, July 2005), p. 8.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

Kosovo Youth Assembly), multi-ethnic media organizations, and more broadly integrate minorities into local government. In both cases, programming aimed to bridge mistrust and tension between ethnicities by providing opportunities for people to work together in areas of common interest.

Finally, multi-ethnic cultural and sports activities were also very popular approaches to programming, from a pop music school for youth, multi-ethnic festivals or a painting school to multi-ethnic documentary films and joint sports events. These sought to create opportunities for positive contact among ethnicities that would help break down negative stereotypes of and attitudes towards the “other.”

4. Democratic Governance and Capacity-Building

Many international donors, agencies and NGOs have implemented peacebuilding activities designed to strengthen municipal government institutions to support integration of minorities, better communication and dialogue, and sustainable returns. For example, the OSCE’s Local Governance Support Section has provided oversight, monitoring and training for local government officials on implementation of the Standards for Kosovo, and more generally on “how to improve and standardize their administrative practices and how to provide services to all communities without discrimination.”²¹ The Municipal Infrastructure Support Initiative (MISI), implemented by Mercy Corps, has assisted municipal officials in identifying and addressing barriers to return and reintegration of minorities. The OSCE-sponsored Kosovo Youth Assembly was designed to “facilitate communication, exchange of information and experience and promote dialogue among young people across ethnic lines” through simulation of the Municipal Assembly in Kosovo and associated training in democratic decision making and joint projects on issues of concern.²² Programs for civil society development, including advocacy training and advocacy on social issues, such as the Kosovo Centre for International Cooperation’s “Advo-net,” were also characterized by agencies as peacebuilding.

5. Media

Two approaches dominated the media programming. The first aimed to build independent, objective media that would contribute to peace by providing objective (non-inflammatory) information and providing open debate on important peace issues in the media. The media organizations that took this approach were often not multi-ethnic, but did establish links – formal or informal – with media outlets on the other side.

The second approach aimed to build multi-ethnic media – with multi-ethnic staff and multi-ethnic programming, such as Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje’s Radio K and a number of multi-ethnic magazines and bulletins implemented from Pejë/Peć to Gjilan/Gnjilane. The idea in this

²¹ OSCE Mission in Kosovo, <http://www.osce.org/kosovo/13420.html>.

²² <http://www.youthassemblies.com/youth/index.html>.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

approach is both to integrate the media institutions and to promote mutual respect and the values of a multi-cultural society, through providing multi-ethnic programming or articles.

6. Psychosocial programming

We did not encounter a tremendous amount of psychosocial assistance programming in the communities visited during this study, but it was mentioned as a significant area of earlier programming in Kosovo. Some peace education programmes also included elements of psychosocial assistance, either directly addressing issues of trauma or anger in children (mostly K-Albanian) caused by displacement, or building capacity in the schools to deal with trauma.

PART 2

UNDERSTANDING THE ABSENCE OF IEV

On March 17-18, 2004 all over Kosovo, many individuals disregarded personal danger and stepped forward to hide or evacuate their neighbours or protect their neighbours' property from the oncoming threat of angry and negatively motivated crowds. In some places, communities were able to mobilize *collective action* to stop or avoid violence. They prevented mobs from entering a village, prevented potential demonstrators from going to perpetrate violence, and prevented community members from acting in ways that might have provoked a violent response from the other ethnicity. The inquiry into factors for prevention of IEV seeks to understand why some places were able to mobilize collective action, while in others, the actions of many individuals who objected to violence and helped their neighbours did not evolve into or catalyze collective action.

V. THE ROLE OF “BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL”: WHY INTER-ETHNIC TIES WERE NOT A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR FOR AVOIDANCE OF INTER-ETHNIC VIOLENCE

Social capital refers to the “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.”²³ It includes the institutions, relationships, attitudes, norms, and values that govern interactions among people, and, it is argued, contribute to social and economic development.²⁴ The notion of “bridging” social capital has captured the imagination of policy makers and NGOs engaged in peacebuilding around the world. The expectation is that if cross-ethnic bonds of trust, cooperation and solidarity are formed, they will counterbalance the divisive force of “bonding” social capital, or the social networks, values, norms and connections that keep homogenous groups cohesive. The theory postulates that “because they build bridges and manage tensions, interethnic networks are agents of peace, but if communities are organized only along intraethnic lines and the interconnections with other communities are very weak or even nonexistent, then ethnic violence is quite likely.”²⁵ Routine, everyday types of inter-ethnic engagement (such as social visits, cultural festivals, business dealings, marketplace contact, etc.) promote communication across conflict lines, and allows people to come together, even temporarily, in formal or informal organizations in times of tension to police neighborhoods, dispel rumors, and talk with each other during times of crisis.²⁶ Associational forms (business associations, trade unions, professional associations, NGOs, sports clubs, etc.) that serve the cultural, economic or social

²³ Robert Putnam, “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital.” *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 6, No. 1 (1995), p. 66.

²⁴ Christiaan Grootaert.& Thierry van Bastelaer, *A Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations from the Social Capital Initiative* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2001), p. 4.

²⁵ Varshney, “Ethnic Conflict & Civil Society,” p. 363.

²⁶ *Id.*, p. 375.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

needs of both communities prevent and mitigate violence by constraining politicians who try to polarize the sides or engineer violence. As Varshney notes, “[o]rganizations that would lose from a communal split fight for their turf, alerting not only their members but also the public at large to the dangers of communal violence.”²⁷

Based on social capital theory and experience in other places, we expected to find greater “bridging social capital” in communities that had avoided or resisted violence in March 2004. The cases suggested, however, that “bridging social capital” in the form of cross-ethnic contact, cooperation and associations was not a significant factor in helping communities to avoid or resist IEV.

Communities with greater interethnic engagement before March 2004, such as Gjilan/Gnjilane or Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, erupted in violence in March 2004, and indeed had higher levels of IEV throughout the 2002-2005 time period. At the same time, the absence of significant cross-ethnic engagement in most of the communities studied that avoided violence in March 2004 – Shtupel/Stupelj and Bica/Binxhe and Grabac/Grabc, Zheger/Zegra and Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec – stood out.²⁸ In those communities, there was little or no inter-ethnic communication, little cooperation, hostile relations, accusations of war crimes and in some, a history of IEV.

To be sure, in the communities that experienced violence, many individuals took action, often at significant personal risk, to protect or help their K-Serb neighbours. Yet these individual ties and actions, even if numerous, did not add up or lead to collective inter-ethnic action to prevent or mitigate the severity of the riots; these communities were unable to withstand “exogenous communal shocks,” such as the drowning of the three children on March 17, that commonly provoke violence.²⁹ Nor was there even significant communication across ethnic lines to warn of impending events. In a few instances, again on an individual basis, K-Albanians called their K-Serb friends to warn that something bad might happen, but mostly K-Serbs reported being “surprised,” “unready” or having “no idea what was going on” except insofar as they observed the behaviour of their Albanian colleagues and neighbours on March 17. But there was no direct communication about impending trouble. Why?

²⁷ *Id.*, p. 378.

²⁸ The one exception is Gornja Bitinja/Biti e Epërmë and Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme, where inter-ethnic interaction on a daily basis, as well as local efforts to develop cross-ethnic associations, were greater than in other areas. These villages did, however, experience significant tension and confrontation before March 2004, even if they did not become violent.

²⁹ Varshney, “Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society,” p. 378.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

Communities with “good” inter-ethnic relations experienced violence in March 2004

Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje was considered by many international and local practitioners to be “an example of good co-habitation.” People from both communities worked together in the municipality which had a K-Serb in a leadership role serving as Deputy President. Several institutions were mixed: staff in the Kosovo Police Service, the community center (an OSCE-supported project), and a multi-ethnic radio station. There was also a multi-ethnic market used by people of all ethnicities in town. Yet, the town suffered greatly from violence on March 17-18, 2004. 106 houses were burned down, along with the Serbian hospital, administrative building/post office, school and church. Many people, including elderly Serbs, men and women, were beaten, with one man beaten to death by the mob while KPS allegedly watched.

In Gjilan/Gnjilane, there were a number of connectors that brought the communities together. There were, as one young person noted, many opportunities to do inter-ethnic activities. The majority of her friends were involved in multi-ethnic activities. Many K-Serbs and K-Albanians worked together in the municipality, in NGOs, and in the Kosovo Police Service, which gained a K-Serb regional commander in 2005. People traded and did business with each other. A multi-ethnic sports festival was held in 2003. A multi-ethnic market existed. Friendships survived the war. Like Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Gjilan/Gnjilane erupted in violence in March 2004.

. **1. Greater vulnerability of urban areas.** A wide range of people interviewed for this study believe that the March 2004 violence, and IEV against K-Serbs more generally, had a strong geo-strategic dimension to it. Analyses of the March 2004 violence identified “a more calculated side,”³⁰ even if not a fully organized dimension, of the violence. Urban areas and areas and populations along main roads were particularly hard hit because, many people suggested, the goal was to clear them of Serbs by targeting minority properties there. In this context, in March 2004, communities such as Gjilan/Gnjilane and Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, or Prizren experienced greater vulnerability to IEV than other areas far from strategic main roads or rurally located. These areas would have required greater density and depth of inter-ethnic engagement than rural areas to have withstood the violence.

³⁰ ICG, *Collapse in Kosovo*, p. 15.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

IEV designed to clear urban areas of Serbs

In Gjilan/Gnjilane, some people explained violence in town as part of an effort to keep urban areas “pure,” while multi-ethnicity is “more tolerated in rural areas.” In Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, nearly all the Serb properties along or near the main road from Prishtinë/Priština to Pejë/Peć were attacked in March 2004, while buildings located further back from the road and villages farther away were not. People noted a similar pattern to the violence there from 1999-2002. Thirty percent of the K-Serb population in town, they noted, lived along that main road in 1999, and most attacks were concentrated on them. By 2003, 160 Serbian houses were left in town, most far from the road.

2. “Rules of the inter-ethnic game” regarding interaction limited the development of bridging social capital.

The cases suggest that in both K-Serb and K-Albanian communities, there are clear unwritten “rules of the game” concerning when, how, why and to what extent people can/should interact across conflict lines. These “rules of the inter-ethnic game” created

boundaries on the depth and breadth of relationships that could permissibly be developed and ensured that any ethnic engagement that did occur not challenge the polarization of K-K-Albanian relations. As people the range of communities in this noted, contacts for personal, economic gain (e.g., trade, economic transactions and property sales) were socializing generally was (and is) not “ok.” Inter-ethnic contact – even “permissible” economic dealings – usually happened “at night,” or discreetly, in places and at times when it is not visible (even if everyone knew it was happening).

Boundaries of Permissible Contact

It is “ok” to conduct trade with Albanians, but “not ok” to socialize. It is “ok” to go to the municipality, but not to cafes or the cinema. Cafes once popular and used by everyone are no longer used by Serbs.

-- K-Serbs from Fushë Kosovë/
Kosovo Polje

of
be
inter-
would
Serb—
across
study

“ok,” but

Limited Contact Outside Agency-Sponsored Inter-Ethnic Activities

A participant in a multi-ethnic youth group in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica noted that it is enough for him to see the other participants once a month on NGO premises. “There is a guy from the [other] side with a worldview similar to [his] own; [they] listen to similar music, share many interests.” However, even with him there are no contacts. In the couple of years that they have been involved in the youth group they have exchanged only a few SMS messages. He is sure they would be good friends if they did not live in this environment.

The limiting effect of these “rules” on the possibilities for real, substantive engagement across ethnic lines that could transform relationships or give birth to conflict mitigation mechanisms is clear. While inter-ethnic sports activities were quite common, the Zheger/Zegra youth dialogue group was the only location in this study that mounted a mixed football team. Further, youth participants in multi-ethnic activities and interactions said they generally did not keep contact outside the organized activities. They phoned their friends of the other ethnicity, but did not meet unless an NGO or international agency organized an activity.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

These narrow boundaries of interaction have actively (albeit informally) been policed within each community, preventing the development of real bridging social capital. There is evidence that opposition to inter-ethnic contact was quite strong before 2004, and is still present. Both K-Albanians and K-Serbs, while claiming that intimidation had decreased or did not exist in their own community in relation to inter-ethnic contact, believe that intimidation by extremists prevents good-willed people from the other community from interacting and cooperating with them. Both sides cited examples of friends from the other community stating that they were not “able” to be seen with them due to fear of censure from their own community. And in fact, some local NGOs organizing inter-ethnic activities reported that they were “threatened” by their own community “almost constantly” before 2004 because of their activities. Facing “big problems from the Albanian community,” many were forced to meet outside their community for inter-ethnic activities. K-Albanians noted the same thing about their K-Serb friends and colleagues: “When you speak to one Serb and when you speak to two it is completely different. They are

Intra-ethnic intimidation remains a powerful force

In Pejë/Peć, Serbs believe fear of being seen in the company of Serbs drives Albanian behavior. Albanians speak with Serbs only when in an office (for example, while attending meetings initiated by UNMIK or KFOR about the return of Serbs in Kosovo), but never in the street, and would never go out with Serb friends to a café or restaurant.

afraid of one another.” K-Serbs, especially in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, were under pressure not to deal with Albanians; NGO staff to NGO staff contact seemed to be “okay,” said one international official, but “average people would never do it as the [political] leadership would say no.” Even in Donja Bitinja/Biti e

Poshtme, where we observed more public interaction and cooperation between K-Serbs and K-Albanians than in other parts of Kosovo, people preferred secret places or nighttime for visits, and when they walked the “corso” together, K-Serbs remained on one side of the road and K-Albanians on the other.

There are indications that the “rules of the inter-ethnic game” have become internalized and self-enforcing, reducing the need for more direct forms of intra-ethnic intimidation. Many people in both the K-Albanian and K-Serbian communities also still expressed feelings of discomfort at potential reactions by their own community, even if, as some youth participating in inter-ethnic activities in the Pejë/Peć region noted, they “had not heard of anything happening to anyone.” This suggests that many people may have internalized the prohibition against inter-ethnic engagement that goes beyond the accepted boundaries such that overt forms of intimidation are no longer needed.

3. Interdependence related to roads, not relationships. In the communities that did not experience violence, people consistently cited access to roads and fear of suffering harm as significant reasons for refraining from violence. In Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec and Zheger/Zegra, for example, vital roads connecting K-Albanian villages to the towns of Pejë/Peć and Gjilan/Gnjilane passed through K-Serb enclaves. K-Serbs and some K-Albanians in these

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

communities believed that the need to use the roads (and avoid blockages or closure) made it “in everyone’s interest to keep things calm.”³¹

4. Non-Violent Alternatives for “Fighting” the Other? It is interesting that in three of the four cases in which no violence occurred, the communities had been pursuing alternative means of “fighting” the other. In these communities, tensions were already high because of opposition to return of K-Serb IDPs (and in one case K-Albanian IDPs). In all three, the communities opposed to return had taken action to block it from happening. In two (Shtupel/Stupelj and Zheger/Zegra), the K-Albanians had initiated legal action (for war crimes) against the K-Serbs – mostly potential returnees.

Alternatives to Violence: Peaceful resistance and negotiation

In Gornja Bitinja/Biti e Epërmë, there was a stand-off at the entrance of the village when K-Serbs blocked the entrance to the village for the returnees. According to some K-Albanian interviewees, the returnees’ show of commitment moved the situation to resolution. That night, the K-Albanian returnees drew back a few kilometres and lit a bonfire with wood from a K-Serb house. K-Albanians believed that the bonfire indicated to the K-Serbs that they were committed to return, and would not turn back. K-Serbs came forward spontaneously with a proposal for an agreement of mutual protection: K-Serbs would not oppose K-Albanian return, and K-Albanians would protect K-Serbs from attacks from other K-Albanians (from nearby villages that had had strong KLA involvement during the war).

Was the absence of violence due in part to the communities’ use (or creation) of alternative, non-violent avenues for expressing their grievances? The evidence in the cases is far from adequate to draw any conclusions. Nonetheless, it is possible that the existence of meaningful nonviolent outlets and processes for fighting the other – such as petitions, negotiation, and resistance to returns – may have reduced the impetus for resort to violence. The relationship of the availability of non-violent strategies for confrontation and conflict to violence prevention merits further exploration.

³¹ Interview with K-Serbs, Donja Budriga, October 2005.

VI. LEADERSHIP SUPPORTED BY INTRA-ETHNIC NETWORKS: A KEY BUT FRAGILE FORCE FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION

It is not clear whether the failure to prevent or avoid violence in places like Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje or Gjilan/Gnjilane was due to the absence of real bridging social capital in those communities, or whether bridging social capital simply has no role to play in mitigating violence in this divided society. The communities that avoided violence had no more bridging social capital than those that suffered in the riots of March 2004. Consequently, no definitive conclusions can be drawn about the *potential* of inter-ethnic engagement to be a mitigating force in Kosovo, at least in the medium term. All we know is that there is in fact very little “bridging social capital” and that the little that does exist is highly circumscribed.

At the same time, many communities did avoid violence in March 2004 despite the lack of bridging social capital. In so doing, they drew mainly on *intra-ethnic* “bonding social capital” at the local level – the intra-ethnic social networks and norms of reciprocity, trust, shared values that arise from them³² – to resist violence or provocations to violence. This is counterintuitive, as the literature and experience predominantly stress the role of inter-ethnic engagement and trust in prevention of violence, while intra-ethnic engagement and bonding is said to heighten divisions and tension.³³ A comparison of communities that avoided violence with those that did not in March 2004 suggests several elements of *intra-communal* engagement that helped prevent escalation of a tense situation in March 2004 to violence.

A. Social networks permitting the taking and implementation of collective decisions

The role and influence of “newcomers” and “outsiders” was a consistent theme in all of the cases. The stability of the population in Zheger/Zegra, Shtupel/Stuplej and Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme and Gornja Bitinja/Biti e Epërmë left social networks and trust intact. To be sure, many people had left these communities, either for economic reasons or as a result of the events of 1998-99 or 2000, and the communities themselves had changed as a result. Yet there had been no equivalent influx of “newcomers..” In addition, most of these communities were either homogenous politically, or reported “mild intolerance for political affiliation.”³⁴ This allowed

³² Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 2000).

³³ Cf. Putnam, *Bowling Alone*; Varshney, “Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society;” Arne Strand, Hege Toje, Alf Morten Jerve, Ingrid Samset, “Community Driven Development in Contexts of Conflict,” Concept Paper commissioned by ESSD, World Bank (Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Inst., 2003); Jodi Halpern & Harvey Weinstein, “Rehumanizing the Other: Empathy and Reconciliation,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 26 (2004), pp. 561-583.

³⁴ Interview with resident of Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme, September, 2005. Some communities, including Zheger/Zegra and Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec, did have serious internal divisions, but they were not

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

these communities to develop effective processes for speedy dissemination of information in the community in times of crisis, and for taking and implementing decisions about refraining from violence.

By contrast, the three communities in this study that did suffer violence in March 2004 were plagued by serious intra-community divisions, both in the K-Albanian and K-Serb communities. The history of Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje is one of bitter political rivalry between the LDK and PDK that had made decision making difficult in the town; the K-Serb community was also divided between those working for or supporting the CCK and Serbian government-financed institutions and those working within UNMIK, whom the former called “traitors” and “so-called Serbs.” In Gjilan/Gnjilane, which may appear to be the exception because of the dominance of the LDK there, it was suggested by some interviewees that the municipal president’s public efforts to stop the violence failed in part because political rivals were trying to undermine him.

People in these communities underlined the importance of changes in population and the influence of “newcomers” on polarization and the incidence of violence. Outsiders from southern Serbia (in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje), rural areas (in Gjilan/Gnjilane), or IDPs from other parts of Kosovo (in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica) had moved into the cities, and long-time residents commented that they had disrupted intra-Albanian networks that had facilitated communication and organization of collective action in times of crisis.

“Newcomers” to the community disrupted communication networks

Within the Albanian community in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, there is a strong separation between older residents and newcomers who came from other parts of Kosovo or southern Serbia. Networks and relations between older settlers and newcomers are minimal. They do not visit each other’s homes, drink coffee or stop and talk together on the street. The older residents say they used to know everything and everyone in town; now they do not know who is living in town and who is visiting. As a result, when a roadblock took place in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, K-Albanian elders reported that they were not able to bring people together to decide and take action collectively in response to it.

Many people believed the “newcomers” were responsible for escalation of conflict by bringing in “different attitudes,” and in some cases radical opinions. The presence of “newcomers,” some people noted, also permitted anonymity, making participation in the violence more permissible by hindering any social sanction from the community for such acts.

along political party lines. In Zheger/Zegra, for example, lines of division were between young and old, while political parties agreed on the central issues for that village: return and inter-ethnic relations.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

“Newcomers” believed to bring in radical opinions that reinforced violence

In Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, with the movement of Albanians from the northern to the southern part of the city after the war, and the influx of people from surrounding villages that had been burnt down, a rural-urban divide emerged. The urban members of the community are more open-minded, some people noted, while the rural ones “do not care what happens to the town.” A similar influx of Serb IDPs from other parts of Kosovo to the north of the city changed the Serb population, and Albanians believe these people are the main obstacle to reconciliation and unification of the city. Similarly, in Gjilan/Gnjilane, the influx of people from rural areas doubled the population. Some K-Albanians there attributed the high level of violence in Gjilan/Gnjilane – especially in March 2004 – to the large numbers of current residents who were not native to the town before 1999.

B. Access to relatively reliable information about the other’s intentions and about the situation

The communities that were able to avoid or resist violence in March 2004 had effective mechanisms for gathering, interpreting and disseminating information about threats and possibilities of violence. The channels and mechanisms varied, but they shared several characteristics: they brought to communities information that challenged prevailing rumors of imminent threats, and they permitted quick dissemination of that information to the entire community. In one case, media coverage by a reputable (and widely viewed) local television station played a role. In another, the community organized a “guard” and early warning mechanism to monitor indicators of the level of threat they face (e.g., were K-Albanian co-villagers leaving the K-Serb majority village?). In yet another, a common gathering place for the entire community in times of trouble allowed for quick dissemination of firsthand (eyewitness) information that there was no threat to the village. Telephone networks were also used to keep leaders updated on the movements of the demonstrators, allowing villagers to prepare to prevent them from provoking violence in their community.

C. Leaders stepped forward to slow the process of action-reaction

In all the cases of successful avoidance of or resistance to violence in the case studies, one or more individual leaders took a clear stand and mobilized community action, or in the case of communities that did not react prematurely to reports of violence, sent a clear message to stay calm and not to provoke. Yet timeliness and clarity of message were not the only elements of leadership effective in avoiding violence. In some communities, such as Gjilan/Gnjilane, leaders also took clear, public stands against the violence, but failed. Several additional dimensions leadership facilitated success in resisting violence.

Effective leaders anticipated the arrival of violence in their communities during the course of the two days of riots and prepared for how to handle it. Specifically, they took steps to mobilize the entire community to refrain from provocative or preemptive action until direct threats to the

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

community were confirmed. In several cases, they established implicit early warning mechanisms, identifying specific indicators or triggers that would provoke a response, such as blocking of the road or departure of K-Albanians from the village, and were able to prevent premature reactions based on rumors.

Leaders' ability to secure community agreement or collective action to refrain from violence rested on their credibility with their own ethnic constituencies. Leadership that was listened to was credible and connected to the community, and therefore could command attention as well as disseminate information quickly within their communities. For K-Albanians, having participated or been a victim of the 1998-99 war made leaders' calls for non-participation in violence more persuasive. In Gjilan/Gnjilane, for example, the Kosovo Protection Corps (TMK) played a significant role in dispersing the crowds and restoring order, deploying troops to protect the Serbian Orthodox church, among other things. They were effective, a KFOR officer noted, "because they are war heroes [and] people listened to them."³⁵ The municipal president, however, had less success. He was respected in his party and the municipality, and had been known to take initiatives without international community prodding to reach out to minorities. But when he and the PDK leader in Gjilan/Gnjilane went out to stop people before the violence broke out, "people would not listen to them at all."³⁶ Gestures by leaders to reach out to K-Serbs appear not to have been comprehended or appreciated in the K-Serb community itself,³⁷ while at the same time undermining the leaders' credibility with their own ethnic community in calling for restraint.

D. Motivation matters: bonding social capital is both a resource for preventing violence and for maintaining polarization

It should be noted that while "bonding" social capital was a significant resource for preventing violence in Kosovo, it has also been used to prevent cooperation and preserve tension. Communities' willingness and ability to mobilize action against violence did not mean they were willing to cooperate with the other. Shtupel/Stupelj in Klinë/Klina municipality is the most dramatic example, as even the intervention of KLA leaders and the Prime Minister himself in

³⁵ It is not clear how the TMK came to play this role. Some people said that KFOR, which had been patrolling outside of town, came back in time to prevent the burning of the church, eventually deploying ten troops to guard the church. The ICG report (*Collapse in Kosovo*, p. 23) also notes that KPC was "detailed to guard the Serb Orthodox church." KFOR representatives say it was the TMK general's initiative; TMK was not invited by KFOR to protect the church. K-Serbs said they "heard of this [TMK protecting church with help of KFOR] but do not think it is true." In their opinion, K-Serbs who happened to be there and some K-Serbs from KPS (who had run away from their stations after "probably" being told that no one could guarantee their security) put together a barricade from the market stalls and blocked access to the church.

³⁶ Interview with K-Albanian resident of Gjilan/Gnjilane, September 2005.

³⁷ No K-Serbs interviewed in Gjilan/Gnjilane and Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, the two communities whose leaders reportedly reached out to K-Serbs, commented on the those gestures.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

2004 could not persuade the villagers to engage with the K-Serb returnees of neighbouring Bica/Binxhe and Grabac/Grabac.

The highly strategic motivations for avoiding violence – namely, the need to demonstrate fulfillment of the Standards for Kosovo to gain independence, fear of being hurt by Serb or international counter-attacks, and fear that needed roads would be blocked – suggest that a sustainable capacity for avoidance of violence does not exist. “Bonding social capital” was and continues to be an important resource to be drawn upon to mobilize collective action against violence, but cannot be relied upon as a violence prevention mechanism. While some motivations that fuel violence are likely to disappear once status is decided, incentives for resisting violence will also diminish.

Motivations for avoidance of violence were pragmatic

In Zheger/Zegra, local youth leaders prevented local demonstrators from going to a nearby K-Serb village by telling them that K-Serbs were most probably armed, and if anything happened they would start a conflict between the communities.

The Presidency of Klinë/Klina municipality, who stood with the war veterans in Shtupel/Stupelj to prevent rioters from reaching K-Serb enclaves, explained their actions by the need to fulfill Standards, which they saw as the only path to independence for Kosovo. Villagers agreed. They claimed they stood up to the crowds because they wanted to give a good impression of Kosovo to internationals.

VIII. SECURITY ACTORS: PRESENCE IMPORTANT, BUT NOT SUFFICIENT

Consistently, in the areas where violence occurred, KFOR had withdrawn (Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje), were outside the area (Gjilan/Gnjilane) or were slow to respond (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica).³⁸ More interesting is the role of the security actors in the areas in which violence did not occur, both before March 2004 and during the crisis. In these communities, there is no consistent pattern in communities that avoided violence regarding KFOR presence and response during the March 2004 events. Action or threat of action by security forces varied from airlifting minorities out of the village, to positioning of troops at the entrance to the Serb village, to no presence at all.

However, there are common patterns in the history and nature of KFOR involvement in those places. In several communities, previous KFOR decisiveness in responding to violence with action that had caused hardship with respect to key interests of communities, e.g., closing needed roads for extended periods of time. At least in one place, the memory of this action made the K-Albanian communities, whose main route to Pejë/Peć was through the K-Serb village of Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec, more cautious about participating in violence.³⁹

While KFOR's capacity to anticipate violence, deploy troops and respond adequately to it in March 2004 clearly was a critical factor in preventing violence, KFOR's previous history of engagement with communities also played a role. KFOR was mentioned by a wide variety of people as an important peacebuilding actor. Although their mission is not to promote inter-ethnic relations, in these places KFOR convened ongoing dialogue and discussion of security problems, or had been a "first mover" in catalyzing and supporting cross-ethnic activities. In Gjilan/Gnjilane and Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec, for example, KFOR brought K-Albanian and K-Serb community leaders together for security dialogue shortly after the end of the war. Although perceptions of KFOR in both K-Albanian and K-Serb communities around Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec are ambivalent now, some K-Albanians believe that "KFOR helped the softening of inter-ethnic relations and nobody else."

³⁸ The performance of KFOR, UNMIK and the Kosovo Police Service has been the subject of much analysis and commentary that will not be repeated here. See ICG, *Collapse in Kosovo*, 19-24; Human Rights Watch, *Failure to Protect: Anti-Minority Violence in Kosovo, March 2004*, Vol. 16, No. 6(D) (July 2004), <http://hrw.org/reports/2004/kosovo0704>. The case studies conducted in this research broadly support these analyses.

³⁹ Some people also noted that in Gjilan/Gnjilane KFOR had always reacted strongly to security violations, instituting a curfew in town after killings of minorities occurred. This did not act as a deterrent to violence in part, if locals' accounts of the demonstrations are accurate, because most demonstrators were not locals.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

KFOR seen as peacebuilding actor

KFOR's mission does not include promotion of positive inter-ethnic relations. Yet many people count KFOR among the significant peacebuilding actors in Gjilan/Gnjilane, Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec and Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme.

There were numerous other examples offered of KFOR's contribution to peacebuilding. KFOR was the first to organize football games between youth from Kosovo Serb-majority Štrpce/Shtërpçë and the neighboring nearly mono-ethnic K-Albanian municipality of Kacanik at the field in Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme. Now children and youth from Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme regularly organize sports games together without any assistance. KFOR also hosted joint sports events organized by local NGOs; as a KFOR representative noted, "Access to the base is an honor," and is granted as a kind of reward for multi-ethnic cooperation. Elsewhere, especially in eastern Kosovo, KFOR tried to encourage multi-ethnicity in the activities they undertook in carrying out their own mandate. In one instance, they hired local doctors from neighboring K-Serb and K-Albanian villages to work together to provide medical services to two mixed villages in the area.

PART 3

THE ROLE OF PEACEBUILDING IN PREVENTING INTER-ETHNIC VIOLENCE

Peacebuilding programming had some powerful effects on individuals who were participating in them and played an important role in providing opportunities for inter-ethnic contact that otherwise would not otherwise have occurred after 1999. Indeed, international agencies – both NGOs and inter-governmental agencies – essentially have to this day provided the only safe space for inter-ethnic interaction and communication. Without NGOs, even the level of communication that exists now would not have developed. Participants reported that they developed good communication in dialogue and training programmes, dispelled some fears, and that they were more relaxed with people from the other ethnicity. Stereotypes and “enemy images” were also broken down.

One participant in youth trainings “used to be very prejudicial” toward the but was not after the training. Another realized he could work

NGOs have opened space for inter-ethnic interaction

“If there were no NGOs,” one participant in multi-ethnic trainings explained, “things would be very different in Gjilan town. There would be no communication and people would not be as close as they are now.”

Serbs. Still another learned that it is necessary “to know different sides of stories to know the truth.” These are typical comments of participants in training programmes especially.

Powerful personal impacts of peacebuilding

“The training showed me I can work with Serbs. Before there wasn’t hatred, just no relationship. If there had been no projects, then we wouldn’t work with Serbs and there would be no meetings.”

-- Participant in youth trainings, Gjilan/Gnjilane

The joint projects in the economic and social realm also helped build some lasting ties across conflict lines. “The relationships are better. There was much more business, a higher frequency,” one beneficiary of a greenhouse project that created linkages with other ethnicities

commented.⁴⁰ In some cases, the programmes helped minorities feel safer traveling into town from rural areas.

Some important small steps in creating space for inter-ethnic relations as well as action against inter-ethnic polarization were also taken by some of these programs. A Women’s Center in the Miner’s Hill/Microsettlement area of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica north survived despite opposition and

⁴⁰ Douglas Schlemmer, *Building Peace in Kosovo: An Assessment of Mercy Corps’ PRM Refugee Assistance Programs* (Cambridge, MA: J.F. Kennedy School of Government, Policy Analysis Exercise, 2005), p. 12.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

threats, and has been creating space for interaction. NGO-facilitated dialogues led to agreements that allowed K-Serbs to begin working their fields again; in several of the case sites, K-Serb IDPs began increasingly to go to their fields unescorted by KFOR. In Gornja Bitinja/Biti e Epërmë, NGO mediation diffused a conflict between Serb and Albanian residents about water supply, while in Gjilan/Gnjilane NGO efforts contributed significantly to the establishment of the multi-ethnic market in town. Some programmes have been sustained in spite of very adverse circumstances; several programmes – such as a women’s business program in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica and the Municipal Infrastructure Support Initiative (MISI) in Gjilan/Gnjilane – were amongst the first to resume activities after the March 2004 violence. The scale of multi-ethnic participation in public events, such as festivals, especially in the Gjilan/Gnjilane area, suggests that there is interest in cross-community contact beyond the participants in inter-ethnic projects.

The significance of these achievements in the post-1999/2000 environment should not be underestimated. Even seemingly modest achievements – K-Serbs and K-Albanians agreeing to a joint agricultural cooperative board in Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec or the formation of a City-Wide Youth Council in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica – are significant steps in the polarized atmosphere that prevails in these communities.

However, the evidence shows that the programs achieved less than they could have. In particular, the majority of programs had little impact beyond this individual-personal realm, and consequently did not build the kind of bridging social capital that could act as a brake on violence. Participants in dialogue, training or joint activities generally have not taken initiatives apart from participating in activities organized by NGOs and international agencies. “There are no informal, not-NGO-organized multi-ethnic activities,” one participant in youth activities commented. While this may be an exaggeration, it reflects a reality painted by most interviewed for this study. As a result, the effects of these programs rarely expanded beyond the immediate target participants or beneficiaries. This is, of course, not surprising, as the political environment and the “rules of the inter-ethnic game” described above discourage, and even sanction, such initiatives. Nonetheless, it is an indication that, in the aggregate, peacebuilding programming has not had much success in creating space for inter-ethnic interaction unmediated by international agencies, and as did not and likely cannot, as currently designed and implemented, contribute to building of real “bridging social capital” that can mitigate inter-ethnic violence.

IX. THE DARK SIDE OF THE EMPHASIS ON MULTI-ETHNICITY AND RETURNS: NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONSHIPS

The clear vision put forth by the United Nations and its international partners is that of a “multi-ethnic society,”⁴¹ or, in the Contact Group’s words, “multi-ethnicity that is sustainable.”⁴² The implementation of this policy of “multi-ethnicity,” however, in several respects inadvertently undermined the potential of peacebuilding programming to build real “bridging social capital.”

A. Multi-Ethnicity Viewed as “Conditionality” and Increased Distrust

One method for promoting multi-ethnic cooperation has been to provide rewards and incentives for cross-ethnic contact and activities; this, in theory, would develop bridges that will reduce cross-ethnic distrust, build willingness and capacity to work together, and create interdependence between ethnic groups that would restrain them from violence. This practice has been successful in the sense that many people have come together and worked together on needed infrastructure and economic projects.

However, it has not built sustainable “bridging social capital.” There is significant evidence that “multi-ethnicity” is not a vision fully shared by people in both K-Albanian and K-Serbian communities, especially after March 2004, even if co-existence and “co-ethnicity” might be. As Larry Minear and his co-authors suggest in their study on perceptions of local communities, assistance agencies and peace operations, “[t]he reestablishment of a multi-ethnic society runs at odds with the desires of large sections of the population, and efforts to establish it can, and do, lead to a rise in tensions.”⁴³

Many Serbs in Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme and Gornja Bitinja/Biti e Epërmë feel that especially after the March 2004 riots, they can live “side by side” but not together.

As a result, the emphasis on multi-ethnicity was perceived in communities not as a “carrot” or reward for cooperation, but as “conditionality.” The way in which multi-ethnicity has been promoted in internationally-sponsored programmes did not inspire greater internalization of

⁴¹ Letter dated 7 October 2005 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council (incorporating K. Eide, *A Comprehensive Review of the Situation in Kosovo*), UN Doc. S/635/2005, p.14.

⁴² The Contact Group’s Guiding Principles for a Settlement of Kosovo’s Status. The Contact Group was formed in 1994, and includes key states interested in the Balkans: the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and Russia.

⁴³ Antonio Donini, Larry Minear, Ian Smillie, Ted van Baarda and Anthony C. Welch, *Mapping the Security Environment: Understanding the perceptions of local communities, peace support operations and assistance agencies* (Medford, MA: Feinstein International Famine Center, Tufts University, 2005), p. 26.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

multi-ethnicity as a goal and principle. Rather, it had the unintended negative impact of generating greater cynicism and reinforcing (even if not exacerbating) distrust.

Multi-ethnic “carrots” resented as conditionality

The Albanian community in Shtupel/Stupelj sees most of the efforts by international agencies to encourage the communities to cooperate and talk with each other as coercive and unwanted conditioning. They have praise for one NGO’s project implemented in 2003 that brought electricity to parts of the village and helped improve the existing distribution network. This was one of the few projects, they commented, in which inter-ethnic cooperation was not a condition.

The need to have “multi-ethnicity”

in order to obtain assistance or support was widely resented, and communities developed ways to circumvent the spirit of multi-ethnicity. The evidence that emerged in this study is that those organizations, associations and interactions that were intended to operate beyond the individual-personal realm – NGOs, community centers, agricultural cooperatives – were largely *pro forma*, either for the purpose of obtaining international assistance, or, more recently, to meet the Standards for Kosovo. As soon as benefits were gotten, “multi-ethnicity” often disappeared. In some cases, initiatives that were multi-ethnic on paper or in principle never became multi-ethnic, either because practical constraints (e.g., location) made multi-ethnicity difficult or because participants or beneficiaries agreed to divide the benefits. In others, participants found ways to minimize interaction, or the minority was marginalized in terms of responsibilities and communication. In still others, the initiative began as a multi-ethnic endeavor, but minorities (mainly K-Serbs) withdrew, not just because of political considerations (as many believe), but also because of unresolved disagreements over the content of the program or because the management of the program made it difficult for them to participate. In some communities visited in this study, community members tried to reverse the conditionality by demanding benefits as a condition for accepting minority returns.

Some examples give a flavor of the ways in which communities circumvented the substance while retaining the form of multi-ethnicity:

- A Youth Centre in Gjilan/Gnjilane town started by an international NGO “has not managed to become multi-ethnic.”
- An internet centre offered to K-Serbs for training and to use the facilities, but because of the location of the centre, K-Serbs were concerned about safety and still have not come.
- A school clean-up was organized in which youth cleaned one K-Albanian and one K-Serb school and planted the gardens of the school. Because, as one person commented, “the situation is quite tricky on the ground,” they split the funds for this to do two separate projects, K-Serbs cleaning K-Serb schools and K-Albanians cleaning K-Albanian schools.
- A multi-ethnic milk station had two jobs – one for a K-Serb and one for a K-Albanian. The Serb post is still vacant.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

- A documentary film on freedom of movement and multi-ethnic communities was done in the OSCE-sponsored Youth Assemblies. K-Serb and K-Albanian youth conducted interviews in multi-ethnic environments and in one location where K-Serbs and K-Albanians live together. They made the film together for two days, and later the K-Albanians continued on their own. A K-Serb member of the filming team said he had not yet seen the film.
- A municipality employed a number of minority (both Serb and non-Serb), and the municipality and international community claim that they had been “fully integrated” with K-Albanian staff. Yet K-Serb employees were all located together in a separate office and were doing nothing when researchers visited; they said they were not assigned any substantive tasks or given specific responsibilities, but allowed to carry on private affairs (usually project development or fundraising for their own NGOs).
- A multi-ethnic radio station broadcasting news, music and educational programs in Albanian, Serbian, Roma and Ashkali had a multi-ethnic staff. It was intended to “promote mutual respect and values of multi-cultural society” and “enable the efficient communication and cooperation between different ethnic groups.” Both K-Serbs and K-Albanians talked of a climate of ‘censorship’ within the station, because different news was read in Albanian and Serbian. Although one employee explained that this is because the station does not want to broadcast unconfirmed news, a K-Serb interviewee saw this as censorship of the Serb point of view. The K-Serb employee left, and programming in Serbian was cancelled for lack of money, while the station continued to be praised as a successful multi-ethnic institution.
- An agricultural cooperative created a board of K-Albanian and K-Serb members from the villages in the area. The Director is K-Albanian and the manager is K-Serb. Funding was raised to purchase equipment. K-Albanian and K-Serb members decided to split it. As one farmer stated, “being a member of the coop does not mean I have to work with Serbs, they are only on the board.”

International agencies – from the United Nations and the OSCE to NGOs – fueled this dynamic by tacitly accepting the kind of *pro forma* cooperation and multi-ethnicity described above and even at times rewarding it through continued financial support or praise. Agencies also did not follow up on what people were actually doing in the projects and institutions they supported. If a multi-ethnic community center is set up, what are people doing? Who attends meetings? What are the staff composition and decision making processes? What programs are being sponsored or held in the center, and for whom? If there are sports competitions, who participates? How are the teams structured? What kinds of interactions take place? These kinds of questions were rarely raised with programme participants or considered in assessing the success of multi-ethnic programming. On the contrary, in some cases, programmes, such as the multi-ethnic radio station in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje and even entire communities, including Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje before 2004 and Klinë/Klina recently, were held up as models or, in the words of one interviewee, “poster boys” of multi-ethnicity, despite the *pro forma* or opportunistic nature of the inter-ethnic cooperation.

There are, of course, good reasons in some instances for the failure of meaningful multi-ethnicity to develop in programmes, ranging from expectations around language use amongst multi-ethnic staff to disagreements about the content of programs. However, these difficult issues were rarely

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

addressed systematically in programme implementation or follow-up, leaving many participants disillusioned about the possibilities of meaningful cooperation across ethnic lines. The associational forms of inter-ethnic engagement – such as business associations, professional associations, NGOs, etc. – that agencies were trying to promote, and that could act as an effective civic constraint on politicians’ efforts to polarize communities along ethnic lines,⁴⁴ existed mostly in form only. This has created a great deal of opportunism and cynicism about multi-ethnicity, rather than increased trust, interdependence and information sharing.

B. Returns programming has increased divisions

Decisions to focus on returns and aid to returning IDPs or refugees inadvertently worsened divisions between K-Serbs and K-Albanians and amongst returnees and remainees. Agencies have been very aware of the potential divisive effects of focusing on returnees, and developed a practice of providing balancing grants to mitigate potential resentments and tensions. This practice has been only partly effective. The focus on returns especially reinforced perceptions of K-Albanians that the international community is attending to the needs of K-Serbs – their former oppressors – at the expense of the needs of the majority population.

Perceptions of international community favoritism feeds tension

Among three dividers mentioned repeatedly by K-Albanians in the six villages surrounding Gorazdevac/Gorazdec was the perceived favoritism of the international community towards K-Serbs. The attention that the Serb minority was receiving in terms of resources and projects made the K-Albanian community very angry. There was a perception that the K-Albanian community was receiving nothing while the K-Serbs got everything.

NGO representatives reflect that the imbalance in assistance between K-Serb returnees and others caused tension in an otherwise “successful” Implementation Committee in which representatives of the NGOs, UNMIK, the municipality, the communities and UNHCR cooperated to design and oversee implementation of all aspects of the returns project.

It has also meant that relations between K-Serb remainees and K-Albanians have been given less attention. For example, the programmes in Zheger/Zegra included IDPs from Zheger/Zegra residing in the neighboring village of Donja Budriga, but not Budriga natives. Donja Budriga was considered to be a “fully stabilized site” in which “return is now over” and thus in no need of peacebuilding or dialogue activities. This exacerbated divisions between IDPs and remainees, and reinforced K-Serb perceptions that the commitment to multi-ethnicity both by K-Albanians and internationals is not real, but merely to demonstrate that Standards were being met.

⁴⁴ Varshney, “Ethnic Conflict & Civil Society,” pp. 388, 393.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

In addition, some agency decisions about *how* to implement programs inadvertently reinforced negative impacts on inter-ethnic relations. Two aspects are worth underlining, as they were mentioned repeatedly by community members.

Decisions about who gets aid and jobs. Staffing and contracting decisions commonly worsen divisions as they often feed perceptions of bias.⁴⁵ Kosovo is no exception. Greater attention, however, to the polarized and politicized context in which these decisions were being made – including communities’ perceptions of the international community – might have helped mitigate some of these effects. For example, amongst returnees, we heard complaints of unfinished work or poor construction. While complaints were heard equally from K-Serbs and K-Albanians, the poor or unfinished work exacerbated K-Serbs’ feelings of distrust and ill-will towards K-Albanians and the international community because the contractors were almost exclusively K-Albanian. The allegations, of course, may or may not have been true, but the perceptions were strong and uniform, and heightened resentment among K-Serbs.

Inadvertent negative impacts of staffing and contracting decisions

KFOR hired 60 local staff from the K-Serb community, but no K-Albanians. Not widely known was the fact that KFOR had approached the representative of the K-Albanian community in the area about splitting the jobs equally between K-Serbs and K-Albanians but had been unable to find people willing to work side-by-side with Serbs at the time.

Failure to consider and plan for inevitable shortcomings and failures in implementation and after-effects of programmes that had a multi-ethnic component also inadvertently, but repeatedly escalated tensions. For example, when the water system of a village was repaired, the reservoir was located in the Albanian part of the village. However, as the municipality was supposed to assume responsibility for maintenance, the agency did not plan for or finance the ongoing maintenance. As a result, every time the pump broke down, tensions between K-Albanians and K-Serbs escalated. Similarly, when KFOR brought water to a K-Serb enclave but did not extend the pipeline to the surrounding K-Albanian villages (forcing residents to finance the extension themselves), infrastructure became a bone of contention for the Albanians and exacerbated perceptions that K-Serbs were getting all the benefits from the international community.

Location of programs and political sensitivities. Failure to take account of the political ramifications of participation in programmes also exacerbated perceptions of bias. A Community Center located in the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica south, for example, was inaccessible to K-Serbs living in the north, and although multi-ethnic in principle, it ended up majority K-Albanian. As one K-Serb in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica told an OSCE researcher:

⁴⁵ Mary B. Anderson, ed. *Options for Aid in Conflict: Lessons from Field Experience* (Cambridge, MA: CDA, 2000).

Inadvertent negative impacts of beneficiary decisions

A local financing agency spun off from an international NGO program had a bonus programme for loan officers to encourage them to sign up minorities. The staff of the agency, which had no K-Serb representation, has given no loans to K-Serbs because the enclaves are so small they are worried the loans would not be repaid.

Serbs in one village complained that before the war there had been only 30 K-Albanian houses, but 68 were (re)constructed after the war because of connections of predominantly K-Albanian NGO staff with K-Albanian returnees. While K-Albanians note that the houses being rebuilt were significantly smaller than what they had had before the war, this remained a source of resentment

“It’s a political act to cross the bridge so why should Serbs be asked to do it unilaterally? They won’t. Not in big enough numbers to have any impact. They don’t feel safe and they don’t want to be marked as traitors by hardliners on their way back. And then they get accused by the internationals of not cooperating.⁴⁶

K-Serbs in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje shared the same feeling in relation to the SRSG’s decision to allow K-Albanian children to attend the Sveti Sava school in a separate shift. Although the decision itself was not politically-based, but based on the fact that Albanian students needed more space and Sveti Sava had extra capacity, it also had a negative conflict impact. K-Serbs complained that they were being asked establish multi-ethnicity to their own detriment, i.e. to make the only K-Serb school in the municipality multi-ethnic while K-Albanians were not being asked to do the same. These negative impacts might have been avoided or mitigated had they been anticipated and taken into account in the initial design of the programming.

⁴⁶ OSCE, p.46.

IX. TURNING INDIVIDUAL TIES INTO BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL: THE FAILURE TO DEAL WITH THE “RULES OF THE INTER-ETHNIC GAME”

Most programming assumed that the transfer from individual-level change to more socio-political change would happen automatically. Agencies typically assumed that the results of their activities would automatically “spill over” into other domains of participants’ lives—that the profound personal and relationship changes catalyzed by NGO activities would lead to changes in political attitudes and actions, or trickle out to influence others in the community or trickle up to influence key decision makers. Many assumed that participants who had had a transformative experience in the program would spread their experience and changed attitudes to others – from family to colleagues to the community at large.

The evidence gathered in this research suggests that this did not happen, at least not automatically, and that such “spillover” cannot be assumed. Motivations reported by participants for their participation in inter-ethnic programming – whether dialogue and training or economic activity – were consistently unrelated to peace or conflict. Participants in dialogue, training, education and joint activities programming reported feeling powerless to change anything. “Feelings of hatred are too strong,” some noted, while others believed they “can hardly influence the positions of [their] community, since people are closed from within,” and “whatever we do or decide to do, much remains in the hands of the older generations.”

A Mitrovicë/Mitrovica-based NGO worker noted that attendance at events at which issues related to the Kosovo conflict are discussed is low. “These are serious issues, there are not many interesting activities such as games,” so that youth are not so interested, he noted.

Why did participants take part in dialogue and training?

“Friends got interested because it sounded fun and the topic was interesting.”

“Because I was interested in learning something and wanted to meet new people.”

“I would happily attend next year – it was fun.”

In these seminars, participants are “awarded diplomas,” and “believe some of them can help get new employment with international organizations.”

“Interesting to meet new people and to have mastered communication skills which I find useful in everyday activities.”

In this context, without significant follow-up to build on initial contacts or identify and support those who were (or became) truly interested and committed to working for peace, the impact of programming could not systematically go beyond the establishment of opportunistic or, where real, good, inter-personal, relationships

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

A. Activity remained at the entry point

Impact was limited in part because initial inter-ethnic engagements – from sports competitions and youth camps to dialogue about returns, economic linkages, and joint activities – were generally not built on or expanded. A significant underlying problem was the underinvestment in “soft” programming that does not have direct, concrete, or visible results. Those agencies engaged in returns-related programming especially noted that while donors emphasized the importance of dialogue in the returns process, the resources actually allocated to dialogue and other relationship-building activities were inadequate. The pressure to achieve concrete results in the shorter term – whether return, building of houses or infrastructure, business linkages, or concrete projects – undermined the ability of the programs to deepen the relationships of the participants.

Limited resources for “soft” aspects of programming

Most organizations involved with return and reintegration said resources available for dialogue are very limited. This is “indicative of the importance attached to the ‘soft’ components by UNMIK and the donor community,” one development NGO worker commented. Another put it more bluntly: “Donors do not give money for dialogue.”

Resources were also withdrawn or reduced when initial “success” was achieved; agencies either left to move on to other areas or programs, or were unable to obtain funding for follow-up. Thus, in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, a school-based youth program said it could not obtain funding to bring school principals from schools in the north and south who had asked the NGO to help them meet. Funding for programming in the Gjilan/Gnjilane region to build inter-ethnic linkages was directed to new areas for replication of the programme

after a year, then later stopped completely once returns began to happen. In Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec, K-Serbs and K-Albanians alike mentioned that international NGO activities were short-lived, and that NGOs tended to leave shortly after they begin work. As a result, initial cooperative relationships remained vulnerable and in some cases did not survive. Where they did survive, participants continued to interact or do business together, and sometimes took initiatives to involve some others in the activity, but they did not take an active stand against violence or influence their communities significantly in other ways toward peace.

Yet even with sufficient allocation of resources over a long-enough time period, fragmentation of peacebuilding programming would likely still have undermined its cumulative impact on inter-ethnic ties. The events-based nature of many (though not all) dialogues and trainings often led to repetition and duplication rather than deepening or expanding inter-ethnic interaction. Agencies that had identified participants for dialogues and trainings through referrals from other agencies engaged in similar programming or from school officials, did not build on what the other agencies have done. Often they presented the same content. A participant in a youth camp may have had an opportunity to engage with people from other ethnicities in a social event, a festival or another youth camp, but often not to deepen his or her experience with the same participants on more difficult issues. Indeed, one NGO in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica attributed the drop-off in interest in programs to the fact that the programs had nothing new to add. Another in

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec suggested dialogue participants get bored because they have been through trainings already. Even where programmes worked consistently with communities or participants over a longer period of time, as had many returns projects, many did not succeed in deepening the work they have done with existing participants or beneficiaries – whether through advanced workshops, or engagement on more difficult issues. Dialogues facilitated as part of returns or economic development programmes frequently ended once concrete objectives became realizable, and opportunities to deepen relationships were missed.

B. Economic cooperation did not lead to interdependence sufficient to motivate action against violence

Joint projects-type programming in the economic and infrastructure realm was no more successful in moving beyond individual-level interactions. Many business relationships did withstand the pressure of the violence of March 2004. Many participants in these enterprises helped their counterparts and continued to conduct their business throughout the periods of high tension and violence. An evaluation of the international NGO Mercy Corps' stabilization programme in eastern Kosovo, for example, observed that all of the multi-ethnic business linkages created from 2000-2004 survived the March riots. In several cases, K-Albanians and K-Serbs continued even through the riots to deliver goods to their customers from the other ethnicity. Others called each other during the riots to make sure they were alright.⁴⁷

Yet these forms of engagement did not create a sense of interdependence strong enough to motivate action against violence. The kind of interaction supported by the programs themselves often mirrored the “rules of the inter-ethnic game” and was limited by them. While the programming may have expanded the numbers of inter-ethnic contacts, the nature of the interactions they facilitated was squarely within the boundaries of “permissible” interaction, and may have even contributed to reinforcing those boundaries. Attempts to “scale up” the cooperation and interdependence – such as a factory project that attempted to hire a joint work force and an effort to institutionalize cooperation among Serb and Albanian beekeepers in a beekeepers' association—generally failed. In these (and other) cases, the attempts to institutionalize cooperation in this form met with resistance or disinterest from participants themselves and were subsequently abandoned.

The expectation of spillover from working together into increased interdependence, better relationships and increased trust therefore did not materialize. As a result, the economic cooperation that took place in Kosovo appears not to have involved enough key businesspeople, been big enough in scale and importance for the interests of both ethnicities, or been sufficiently institutionalized to create the kind of interdependence that could constrain politicians. Particularly in urban areas, where the violence was most pronounced in March 2004, more robust associational forms of inter-ethnic engagement would be essential, because with everyday, social

⁴⁷ D. Schlemmer, *Building Peace in Kosovo*.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

engagement, it is harder to connect everyone individually in larger communities than it is in villages.⁴⁸

C. Intra-community resistance to inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation was not adequately addressed

Particularly problematic for building real bridging social capital was the social pressure and “rules of the inter-ethnic game” that inhibited people from developing relationships outside the bounds of the permissible. Issues of intra-community resistance to inter-ethnic contact and cooperation were been recognized as a problem by most agencies, which often had done a significant amount of what has been termed “single identity” work *within* ethnic communities to prepare people for inter-ethnic contact and dialogue.⁴⁹ This could sometimes take a lot of time, up to two years in some of the programs in the communities in this study. Many agencies also made great efforts to be responsive to practical constraints and concerns of participants once they engaged in inter-ethnic interaction, and to assist them in overcoming obstacles to cooperation, not the least of which were concerns about security. Agencies provided logistics and an umbrella for inter-ethnic action to ensure safety, and kept programming low-key and quiet to protect participants from censure by their own communities.

Agencies’ work within communities made inter-ethnic contact possible in many cases, but was insufficient to deal with the intra-community pressures they acknowledged to be the more important kind of “violence” affecting progress toward peace. Frequently people were drawn from many different communities across Kosovo and received little support or follow-up to support “re-entry” when they returned to their own communities. Within the range of programming included in this study, there was little “single identity” work *following* inter-ethnic interactions. Most of the follow-up focused on supporting or making possible inter-ethnic interaction – generally by providing logistics and an umbrella for interaction. The same systematicity with which agencies managed to make travel and inter-ethnic contact possible was not applied to dealing with structural and intra-community *social* obstacles to post-programme cooperation.

⁴⁸ *Id.* This is not to suggest that economic cooperation and interdependence could not become a source of bridging social capital and a mitigating force on violence. The evidence suggests that the level of cooperation and independence currently is insufficient to constitute a brake on violence, primarily because it has remained primarily at the individual level and has not risen to the level of an associational or socio-political form of engagement.

⁴⁹ Single identity work “involves engaging individuals singularly from within one community to discuss, address and potentially challenge the causes of conflict, with particular emphasis on skills and confidence building measures.” Cheyanne Church, Anna Visser & Laurie Johnson, “Single identity work: An approach to conflict resolution in Northern Ireland,” INCORE Working Paper (August 2002), p. 2.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

One consequence was that locally-driven initiatives often failed. Many promising locally-initiated proposals – an effort to create a multi-ethnic youth center, or an educator-initiated proposal for principals to come together – failed because of difficulties associated with location, funding, and international support. Another consequence was that participants often did not have a sufficient support network to withstand or deal with intra-community pressures and “rules” once they returned “home.”

X. IS PEACEBUILDING RELEVANT? PROGRAMMES NOT ADDRESSING KEY DRIVING FACTORS OF CONFLICT

The focus on returns, democracy-building and the economy has resulted in gaps in dealing with critical issues affecting inter-ethnic relations, and issues related to hostility and security in particular.

A. Driving Factors of Conflict from the Community Perspective

The outbreak of violence in 2004 was widely attributed to the poor economic situation in Kosovo – high levels of unemployment, lack of investment (in part stemming from the difficulties of privatization), youth desperation and lack of economic prospects, etc. Indeed, Kosovo has the poorest economy in the Balkans and the worst unemployment in the region, with the burden falling particularly on youth and women.⁵⁰ The dire economy, as the ICG reports, was by 2005 rivaling status as the most important question for both communities.⁵¹

Yet the evidence showed that while socio-economic deprivation increased general frustration and anger, it was not, and is not, a direct cause of IEV. No neat patterns relating poverty and unemployment to levels of inter-ethnic violence emerged from an initial cross-referencing of levels of inter-ethnic violence with the 2003 Kosovo Human Development Index (HDI) and the World Bank’s Kosovo Poverty Assessment (2005). Several extremely poor municipalities with minority populations, such as Novobërdë/Novo Brdo, Dragash/Dragaš, Klinë/Klina and Rahovec/Orahovac, have maintained low (or lower) levels of IEV, while HDI municipalities with minorities (such as Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Lipjan/Lipljan, Viti/Vitina) were amongst those with the highest IEV in Kosovo over the 2002-2005 period. The relationship between poverty and IEV seems equally indirect. While poor municipalities would have been expected to have higher rates of IEV if economic deprivation were a cause of violence, the

⁵⁰ European Commission, *Kosovo (Under UNSCR 1244) Progress Report 2005* (Brussels: European Commission, 9 November 2005), p. 19; World Bank, *Kosovo Monthly Economic Briefing* (Prishtinë/Priština: World Bank, September 2005), p. 16.

⁵¹ International Crisis Group, *Bridging Mitrovica’s Divide*, Europe Report No. 165 (Prishtina and Brussels: ICG, 13 September 2005), pp. 11-12.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

evidence showed no neat patterns; municipalities with the highest or medium Human Poverty Index (HPI) are amongst both those with high and low levels of IEV.⁵²

This does not mean that economic issues, and socio-economic deprivation in particular, are not connected to inter-ethnic violence or tension in Kosovo. Significant horizontal inequalities exist between K-Albanians and K-Serbs and may play a role in perpetuating resentment. Municipalities with the highest human development rating on UNDP's human development index were nearly all Serb-majority municipalities (with the exception of Prishtinë/Priština). The three northern Serb-majority municipalities also had amongst the lowest human poverty indices. By contrast, the municipalities with the lowest HDI were (and are) predominantly nearly mono-ethnic K-Albanian and were heavily affected by the war (Novo Brdo/Novoberde with nearly 38% Serbs and Shtime/Stimlje with nearly 3% other minorities are exceptions). K-Albanians also have tended to experience the factors associated with extreme poverty more than K-Serbs, such as joblessness, income sources from borrowed money, remittances, help from relatives, sold property, greater numbers of children, households with disabled members or female heads.⁵³

K-Albanians resented this differentiation along ethnic lines. In many communities, they commented on the injustice of K-Serbs' taking "double salaries" and generally receiving support from Belgrade as well as the international community. Local officials – principals and teachers especially – were also resentful of the pressure on public services. Space was (and is) a big problem for K-Albanians in schools, where, as some teachers commented, many students do not continue to secondary education because of lack of space. K-Albanian schools regularly housed five times as many students in the same space as their K-Serb counterparts.⁵⁴

Resentment of allocation of resources in Kosovo fuels conflict

In Gjilan/Gnjilane, the director of one school noted that "instead of working with 600 pupils we are working with 3000." In Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, 20,000 K-Albanian children are crammed into the same number of schools as 4000 K-Serbs.

K-Albanians in all the communities in this study believed that the poor economic situation was caused by delays in addressing the political situation,⁵⁵ and that the resolution of issues that affect investment, economic development and livelihoods (e.g., privatization and pensions) had been stymied by the lack of resolution of the status question. In this sense, the economy and frustration with the lack of development went hand in hand with political frustration, and attribution of inter-ethnic violence to economic factors is difficult.

⁵² See UNDP, *Human Development Report*, pp. 38-39.

⁵³ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2004*; World Bank, *Kosovo Poverty Assessment 2005*.

⁵⁴ International Crisis Group, *Bridging Mitrovica's Divide*, p. 11.

⁵⁵ In a 2005 poll, 46% of Kosovo Albanians surveyed believed that the economy would not develop until final status is agreed. Colin Irwin, *Coming to Terms with the Problem of Kosovo: The People's Views from Kosovo and Serbia* (Thessaloniki: CDRSEE, 2005), p. 18.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

For K-Serbs, property issues were important; pressure to sell, illegal occupation of K-Serb property, theft and other pressures on livelihoods were seen as part of a strategy to push them out of Kosovo. Most people, especially in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica north, depended on the social institutions (health, education, university, etc.) financed mainly by Belgrade for employment. This resulted in a drift in loyalties to the hardline Serbian National Council, as ICG reports, because of their growing control of limited budget resources and jobs.⁵⁶ Vested economic interests also developed; it was an “open secret,” several interviewees remarked, that some people controlled economic cooperation with Albanians over the bridge (in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica), and the prohibition of cooperation with Albanians helped them preserve this monopoly on economic ties.

Economic factors thus became forces for conflict because of the inextricable connection of this important problem for quality of life to politics and the status question. Community members agreed. Many people in communities believed that improvements in the economy – in livelihoods, employment and quality of life in particular – would bring about peace, either because they “cannot think about cooperation with others if they are hungry,”⁵⁷ or because people will “stay busy and have no time to make war.”⁵⁸ However, although K-Albanians and K-Serbs widely considered the economy one of the biggest problems they faced, they consistently mentioned missing persons, war crimes and Serbian refusal to accept “new realities” (K-Albanians), and security and justice related in particular to prosecution of perpetrators of IEV (K-Serbs) when asked about key obstacles to peace.

K-Serbs: key issues related to their security not being addressed

Serbs believe that “attacks are not taken seriously in the police. They are just registered and no one tries to solve these cases; not one such case has been resolved.” What creates a sense of insecurity is “the fact that no one is held responsible for ethnically motivated crimes.”

K-Albanians: cooperation difficult unless war experience addressed.

K-Albanians cited the missing and killed as major obstacle to cooperation. The topic of the missing and killed was always the first topic to start the meeting, said a K-Serb leader in Klinë/Klina municipality, and “that is when the dirt surfaces and there is no way to move forward.” Because of this, “not a single issue was solved using joined forces.”

The uncertainty of the resolution of the status of Kosovo weighed on and in many ways drove all interactions, even when not mentioned explicitly, from K-Albanian resentment of Serbian “parallel institutions” to K-Serb reluctance to participate in the provisional institutions of self-government in Kosovo.

⁵⁶ International Crisis Group, *Bridging Mitrovica's Divide*, p. 12.

⁵⁷ Interview with K-Albanian from Pejë/Peč municipality, July 2005.

⁵⁸ Interview with K-Serb from Pejë/Peč municipality, July 2005.

B. Programmes avoided addressing key driving factors directly

Few programs addressed these key driving forces of conflict adequately and many not at all. The majority of programs pursued peacebuilding through promotion of practical cooperation on common interests, positive social interaction, general attitudes of tolerance, explicitly avoiding dealing with the issues mentioned by people in communities as obstacles to co-existence. In some cases, participants signed formal memoranda that they would not discuss the past or politics. In others, the agreement was less formal. Programs such as the OSCE's Youth Assembly were described as working "brilliantly" when youth were brought together across ethnic lines, "but there are no efforts to make them talk about the conflict or the issues behind it."⁵⁹ Agency staff and participants feared that discussion of what were acknowledged to be central, yet politically sensitive, issues would threaten nascent inter-ethnic relationships. "We never discuss politics because it always leads to quarrels," many people commented. The avoidance of politically and emotionally charged issues reflects participants' own motivations for participating in these programs (and their resulting lack of interest in talking about the conflict) and their feelings of powerlessness to address the conflict. It also reflects the capacities and skills of staff that are facilitating these programs, who often (especially among development-oriented NGOs) did not have sufficient training and experience to manage such difficult conversations, or who themselves have not been given an opportunity to deal with these issues themselves before being asked to facilitate inter-ethnic dialogue in the communities.

However, failure to address key issues also meant that much programming was unlikely to have an impact on the conflict. In other words, the path to the future must pass through the past and directly address drivers of conflict.

A K-Albanian youth participant in a seminar was reported to have emphasized: "I want a better future, and the Serbs need to know that it was their fathers who killed my father, but I don't blame the kids, as it wasn't them, but their fathers. But they must accept what their fathers have done to us."

C. Limitations of Programmes Dealing with Causes of Conflict

Some programs did address potential triggers of violence or flash points, such as claims of illegal occupation or use of land. An NGO dialogue to resolve an escalating conflict over water supply in one community to negotiate K-Serb access to lands claimed to be usurped by K-Albanians from neighboring villages in another are two examples.

⁵⁹ Jessica Johnson, *International Assistance to Democratisation and Reconciliation in Kosovo*, Report No. 5, *Democratisation and Reconciliation in Post-Intrastate Conflict Situations: An Evaluation of the International Contributions to Democratisation and Reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia 1995-2004* (conducted for the Swedish Emergency Management Agency) (Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University, 2004), p. 28.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

In addition, there was recognition at the highest levels of the United Nations of the “grim picture” with regard to the “foundation for a multi-society” and the role of impunity, low-level, unreported IEV and the continuing illegal occupation of property to this picture.⁶⁰ Central-level programmes for capacity building and institutional development, especially in the justice and police sectors, and in local governance, were designed to lay the institutional foundations for addressing those conditions. Because of its community-based evidence gathering, this study did not explore these central-level programmes extensively, except insofar as to understand how they were perceived and experienced by community members and whether they were addressing issues *communities* considered to be important for violence, peace and security. At this level, the cases suggest that policies and programmes to build democratic institutions and rule of law as the main mechanisms for mitigating the causes of K-Serb—K-Albanian conflict missed several key driving forces of the conflict.

1. *Lack of attention to relationships.* The approach to achieving “multi-ethnicity” has involved, as Ambassador Kai Eide enumerates, “a number of components – providing security, ensuring property rights, promoting return, and protecting the identity of minority communities.”⁶¹ This enumeration of types of activities does not incorporate a strategy for improving relationships between K-Albanians and K-Serbs. Here the mandates of the international organizations responsible for managing the transition are vague. UNMIK’s mandate does not directly address the issue of coexistence or reconciliation; in the words of a Swedish evaluation of international assistance for reconciliation in Kosovo, “return of refugees and the establishment of human rights and the rule of law are the closest explicit components.”⁶² The OSCE’s mandate does mention inter-ethnic respect and reconciliation explicitly⁶³ but then gives no guidance on how to bring it about. Compared with the issue of democratisation, which is outlined in detail, reconciliation is apparently seen as a part of establishing human rights and a viable multi-ethnic society, not a distinct area of work. “On the whole,” the same Swedish evaluation notes, “there is an apparent lack of interest and understanding of reconciliation tools and mechanisms.”⁶⁴

The implications of the vagueness of mandate and thinking about reconciliation (or coexistence) can be seen on the ground. Concretely, the strategies articulated by many agencies, including the United Nations, the OSCE and many NGOs, for transforming the inter-ethnic relations included “anything that brings people together,” “anything that gets them talking,” promoting “collaboration,” “good neighbor” behavior, or “Serbs and Albanians talking and laughing together.” While these may be potential approaches or results of activities, they constitute

⁶⁰ K. Eide, *A Comprehensive Review of the Situation in Kosovo*, p. 9.

⁶¹ *Id.*

⁶² Johnson, *International Assistance to Democratisation and Reconciliation in Kosovo*.

⁶³ “The OSCE Mission in Kosovo will in its work be guided by the importance of bringing about mutual respect and reconciliation among all ethnic groups in Kosovo and of establishing a viable multi-ethnic society where the rights of each citizen are fully and equally respected.” OSCE, PC.DEC 305 (1 July 1999), PC Journal No. 237, Agenda Item 2 (1999), available at http://www1.osce.org/documents/pc/1999/07/2577_en.pdf.

⁶⁴ *Id.* at 28.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

neither a vision nor a strategy.⁶⁵ The result was fragmentation of programming and lack of sustainable follow-up to promising initial contacts that reinforces *pro forma* relationships across ethnic lines and cynicism about multi-ethnicity.

2. *Programmes have not dealt with emotionally-powerful needs and dynamics that feed conflict.* In the absence of a strategy for rebuilding relationships between K-Serbs and K-Albanians, programmes failed to address underlying, more intangible drivers of fear, insecurity and hostility. While the need to develop transitional justice mechanisms that would address the past was acknowledged, intense feelings amongst K-Albanians at the community level about their experiences in the 1990s (and the remnants of that experience) were still strong. Yet these were downplayed by K-Serbs, who generally refused to talk about the past or claimed that perpetrators had already left, and explicitly avoided by international agencies. Similarly, K-Albanians dismissed as “minor” or “not inter-ethnic” (and therefore not worthy of specific concern) the low-level IEV, impunity for IEV and K-Albanian unwillingness to condemn IEV that K-Serbs emphasized as major sources of their insecurity. In both situations, one side’s reluctance to acknowledge the legitimacy and importance of the concerns of the other reinforced feelings of resentment, injustice and hostility.

International agencies fueled this dynamic by engaging, inadvertently, in similar minimization of the concerns of the sides. For example, international agency staff, including KFOR, avoided issues of the past, and pressure from the international community to cooperate with K-Serbs while these issues have not been resolved was seen by some K-Albanians as minimizing their concerns. K-Albanians in two communities in this study who had submitted lists of alleged war criminals to KFOR said they had gotten no response and did not know what had happened to their claims. As a result, these issues continued to fester and increase hostility toward potential K-Serb returnees. At the same time, many international agency staff expressed agreement with the K-Albanian characterization of K-Serb fears and complaints about IEV as “minor.”

None of these issues are easy. Broader institutional and political weaknesses limit how much progress can be made on these issues in the short term, including: the continuing uncertainty surrounding resolution of the status question, general institutional weaknesses in the justice system that affect both K-Albanians and K-Serbs, difficulties collecting evidence and persuading witnesses to step forward, among others. The more perceptual, emotional aspects of these issues could, however, be addressed more directly in the shorter term and enhance the capacity of the longer term institution-strengthening reforms to mitigate inter-ethnic tension. The lack of a

⁶⁵ This study’s findings on this issue are consistent with those of Donini, Minear, Smillie, van Baarda and Welch (2005). In their study of the perceptions of security of local communities, assistance agencies and peace support operations, they found in Kosovo that assistance agencies “had no articulated concept of either security or peace. Instead, they referred loosely to freedom of movement, the absence of intimidation and an environment that allowed them to work according to plan.” *Mapping the Security Environment*, p. 28. They went on to note that “none of the interviewees in the three sets of institutional actors presented us with an articulated concept of either ‘peace’ or of ‘security.’ In each instance, perceptions of both realities were driven by subjective factors.” *Id.* at 35.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

common understanding of the problems needing attention and a demonstrated willingness to take the other's concerns seriously has ensured that these issues linger as obstacles to improved co-existence. Support for dialogue aimed at developing a shared definition amongst K-Albanians and K-Serbs of the problem that addresses directly the concerns of both sides could facilitate resolution of issues of freedom of movement and transitional justice.

In addition, improvements in transparency of police and justice processes, and communication with KPS, KFOR and UNMIK Police especially, could help reduce the resentments and feelings of injustice that have resulted from failures to deal adequately with war crimes, war victims and impunity for perpetrators of IEV. The evidence gathered in this study is consistent with the findings of the UNDP report on public perceptions of security and police performance that there is "limited citizen-initiated contact with the police or other security providers" and "little police-initiated contact with the public."⁶⁶ Communities did not understand the procedures for dealing with claims – both complaints about criminal actions and complaints about war crimes – and, consequently, could not tell whether the police or justice system was being responsive. In two of the communities visited for this research, K-Albanians opposed to return of Serb IDPs submitted lists of alleged war criminals to KFOR. KFOR and KPS reported that they had investigated and found no or insufficient evidence to proceed any further. Communication mechanisms, however, did not appear to work effectively, as community members said they had gotten no response and did not know what had happened with their claims. This contributed to increasing fear, resentment and hostility toward potential returnees.

3. Inadequate mechanisms to deal with problems not addressed by institutions. Even if the institutions were able to respond more effectively to causes of conflict, they could not address all key drivers of conflict at the community level. There are many issues that have affected inter-ethnic relations at the community level but that have not (and cannot) be addressed fully by government or justice institutions. Residents' perceptions of security and justice, hostility and willingness to cooperate have been no less affected when evidence of war crimes has not been found, or harassment has continued at a level that is not prosecutable. Here, municipal or community-level conflict management mechanisms could play a role. However, the municipal-level committees and conflict management mechanisms at the community level have been weak or very returns-focused, while other mechanisms for dialogues implemented by NGOs deliberately avoid sensitive political or emotional issues.

Institutional solutions may not deal with all issues that provoke inter-ethnic anger and resentment

Some issues related to the 1998-1999 war are not appropriate for justice or transitional justice institutions, yet continue to provoke enormous anger and resentment. In Zheger/Zegra, for example, people had specific complaints about some of the names on the list of potential returnees. "Some of the youth from the village, like Dragan and Milan, and some other youth, were taking part in the fighting in the area of Drenica, and every time they returned from the fighting they used to shoot their machine-guns in the air to scare the people of the village." Another person on the indictment list "did not kill but who had taken all the cattle which belonged to the Albanians from the village and had taken it somewhere else."

XI. MISSING THE MARK? PROGRAMMES NOT ENGAGING KEY PEOPLE AND AREAS

Programs were biased toward working with people who are, comparatively speaking, easier to reach, either because they were more moderate, apolitical or willing to cooperate. Programs overwhelmingly focused on women, youth and returnees and the receiving communities. This is partly because women and youth are considered natural bridge-builders and more willing to engage with the other side. Youth are perceived to be more “open-minded,” “influenceable” and willing to look toward the future. Like youth, women are perceived as being more open and tolerant, and have been willing and able to cross the lines of conflict when no one else could or would. The comments of one NGO staff person in relation to programming for women in the Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec area are typical. Women there, he said, had stronger pre-war relationships and so could draw on a stronger set of friendships to hold them together across ethnic lines than either men or youth. They also were “easier to work with” because they did not participate directly in the war.

Participant selection processes reinforced the tendency to engage the easy to reach. For example, participants in training programmes were often selected by referral from other agencies doing similar work, and as a result were frequently involved in the same kinds of training and other programs several times. As one Mitrovicë/Mitrovica participant put it, “there are not always the same participants in seminars, but they [international agencies] always call me.”

Indicative criteria for participant selection mentioned by agencies and participants

- People who say they want to live together in the future.
- People who previously received training
- People who have a “sense of compromise and tolerance.”
- “First criteria” are knowledge of English, open-mindedness and school success.
- Recruitment through high schools, where old participants interview new ones.
- Identify existing ethnic linkages and support them.
- Desire to participate, interests, and readiness to change.
- People with experience in NGO sector work.

These are, of course, important people to mobilize for peace and against violence (even if, in this case, the mobilization process has not yet been effective, as described above). Yet the “harder to reach,” especially key people and groups who might undermine any potential agreement such as KLA and war veterans, the Serbian Orthodox Church, less moderate Serbian parties in Kosovo, etc., only recently began to receive some attention. Outreach to the Serb community had been weak, as the frameworks for engaging with Serbs through returns and integration of Serbs into

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

Kosovo structures reinforced alienation of more “key” constituencies connected to Belgrade. The international community, one international official “did not speak to the SNC until three months before [October 2005] yet it *de facto* leadership.” Of the twenty programs explored in

“The international community did not speak to the SNC [Serbian National Council] until three to four months before [October 2005] yet it is the de facto leadership,” an international official noted.

noted,
to four
is the

Mitrovicë/Mitrovica in this study, we identified only one non-governmental program that worked with the SNC. Only a few more were working with the Serbian Orthodox Church. Although there appeared to be greater contact with the KLA and war veterans, either through cooperation with the TMK or through informal contacts with them on the sidelines of programs, they too were generally not part of programming. Failure to reach the “harder to reach” who could undermine progress toward co-existence threatens both the sustainability of projects that are being implemented and their ability to affect the wider environment.

With respect to women and youth, we found no evidence that women were either key for continuing the conflict or played key roles in transforming conflict, or preventing violence, at least in rural areas. This does not mean that they did or do not have the potential to play key roles as peacemakers or peacebuilders; the evidence only suggests that the programming for women and youth did not support that potential. Most of peacebuilding programming for women was directed to empowerment of women or bringing women together for joint activity, but like similar programmes for other groups, did not lead to any action for peace or against violence. Some people we spoke to found women’s programmes such as hairdressing and sewing classes “insulting” and “patronizing,” and felt they reinforced the powerlessness of women.

Likewise, while youth clearly did play a key role as fighters, the youth that were likely to or did participate in violence were not being reached, due to the participant selection process and lack of rigorous analysis of who “youth” are in the context of conflict and which youth are most important to perpetuating conflict. At the same time, their teachers and principals, who played a role in the March 2004, and are often “key” influential people in their communities, were often not included in programmes or programme follow-up. Indeed, in several instances, funding for ongoing or follow-up work with these constituencies was turned down.

Finally, there is a question about the geographical targets of programming. The areas that are more extreme in terms of the political situation and positions on status, such as the Drenica region, are those that were affected by the war and are largely mono-ethnic now. These areas, formerly also a center for KLA activity, have had higher levels of activity of the associations that emerged from the war (of veterans, of invalids, and of families of martyrs) also are believed to have played an important role as organizers and as travelers (“outsiders”) in the March 2004 unrest.⁶⁷ Yet these areas received relatively little aid compared to other areas, and nearly no

⁶⁷ See, e.g., International Crisis Group, *Collapse in Kosovo*.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

peacebuilding assistance. Similarly, “Belgrade” was mentioned consistently in all communities as key to the evolution of the situation and of inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo. Yet aside from high level talks and working groups, there had been little cross-border or coordinated programming with Serbia. If a main driving force of conflict is in Serbia, however, failure to address it will keep relations in Kosovo vulnerable to escalation and violence.

The focus on youth overlooked the critical role of teachers as key people

“March was done by kids and [kids were] told by teachers to go out and do it,” one international official noted. Witnesses in Gjilan/Gnjilane, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica and Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje identified “kids,” “teenagers” or “primary and secondary school students” from their communities amongst the violent demonstrators in the front lines. They also noted the significant role of teachers in organizing, promoting or encouraging the violence, with some recognizing teachers amongst the demonstrators. This suggests a more instrumental, rather than driving, role by the school youth. The exceptional cases in which teachers intervened to prevent their students from participating in the demonstrations and violence – such as in the oldest primary school in Gjilan/Gnjilane, where teachers told students preparing to demonstrate to go home– reinforces impressions of the authoritative role of teachers with respect to IEV.

XII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The violence that occurred March 17-18, 2004 was unique in many ways, a response to a particular set of circumstances at a particular time. Peacebuilding in Kosovo should not be assessed in relation to the March violence alone. As status negotiations proceed, many of the politico-strategic reasons for violence are likely to disappear, or evolve. Yet there are still many lessons to be learned from communities' experience in the March 2004 violence concerning the robustness of the peacebuilding that is being pursued in Kosovo.

The indicators that many people relied on to measure progress were revealed in the March events to have been misleading, while efforts to build bridging social capital remained shallow at best. Good leadership and the intra-community bonds and social networks were among the most significant resources communities drew upon to avoid or resist violence. These same social networks, however, have also been used to keep communities apart and to maintain tension and hostility. When and if the practical motive of avoiding harm is taken away, will they still be effective?

Questions were raised by communities in this study about the desirability or feasibility of "multi-ethnicity" as it has been promoted in Kosovo, even while the pursuit of democracy and European standards remains a strong goal. As the status negotiations proceed, the temptation is strong to assume that provisions in the agreement on decentralization, cultural heritage, minority rights, and property, along with democratization and economic development, will build the peace. To be sure, these will provide a more stable political framework within which Serb-Albanian – and more generally minority-majority – relations can develop. Yet this study suggests these will not be sufficient to build communities' ability to withstand the pressure of future shocks or crises that will inevitably arise in the implementation of any agreement. The lack of strategic focus on what is needed to build inter-ethnic *relationships* and bridging social capital strong enough to prevent the inevitable pull to the extremes will also need to be addressed. So will the quality and motivation of leadership to exercise and mobilize restraint within their own ethnic communities –not just of the political leaders but of people with moral and social authority in communities as well.

In order to strengthen the contribution of peacebuilding to the development of these factors we recommend taking action in several areas.

1. ***Shift the focus of peacebuilding.*** Questions raised by communities in this study about the desirability or feasibility of "multi-ethnicity" as it has been pursued in Kosovo, as well as about the effectiveness of inter-ethnic cooperation, should prompt us to rethink the heavy focus on returns and "multi-ethnicity" of minorities as the core of peacebuilding strategy, even while democracy and European standards remain a strong goal. Specifically, it is recommended to:

- a. ***Build on security of concentrations of K-Serbs.*** When formulating approaches to delineating municipal structures or permitting returns to places other than the original place of residence, policy makers should consider the reality that concentrated K-Serb populations reduced vulnerability to inter-ethnic violence.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

b. *Develop a strategy for building bridging social capital.* In addition to strengthening democracy and economic development in Kosovo, a strategy for transforming the *relationship* between K-Albanians and K-Serbs is needed, both within Kosovo and in the broader region. Elements of a strategy should include development of a vision of what the relationship between K-Serbs and K-Albanians will be in the future, one that is shared locally. “Multi-ethnicity” currently is not a vision that is shared, and while “side-by-side” living is mentioned almost universally as the current reality and realistic goal, there is fear that accepting this could feed calls for cantonization, division and further conflict. Possible pieces of a more compelling and realistic vision might include “coexistence”⁶⁸ and “European development.” A vision should be discussed and developed openly.

c. *Deal with political issues directly.* Avoidance of political issues in programming has made contact and cooperation easier, but shallower. We recommend that agencies working at all levels and sectors identify ways to address political issues more openly, whether issues of the past to issues regarding status. It is action on these issues related to the conflict that will also change the dynamic. This will require investment in the development of capacity to manage these much more sensitive processes, specifically: investment of time and resources in dialogue and discussion among staff on these issues, training of staff in skills to deal with difficult issues, and in some cases, collaboration with or hiring of staff with skills in psychology and trauma healing.

d. *Invest in follow-up and linkages.* Strategies are needed for moving beyond individual-personal impacts to affect the socio-political environment. Funding for “soft” elements of programmes should be expanded and sustained over longer periods of time. In addition, much more can be done to encourage greater synergy between different efforts so that they can build on rather than duplicate each other. At the programme level, event-based programming should be discouraged, while follow-up to programming and linkages among programmes to move beyond individual-personal impacts to generate socio-political impacts. Single identity work – work within one community on issues and dynamics in conflict – should also be considered and supported not just as a preparatory step to cross-ethnic interaction, but also as a follow-up process to address the “rules of the inter-ethnic game” and deal with intra-community resistance to inter-ethnic cooperation.

e. *Expand programming emphasizing communication of accurate information about the “other.”* The availability of accurate information about events and about the other’s

⁶⁸ “Coexistence” has been defined by Eileen Babbitt as “a relationship between two or more communities living in close proximity to one another, that is more than merely living side by side, and includes some degree of communication, interaction, and cooperation.” Eileen Babbitt et al., *Imagine Coexistence: Assessing Refugee Integration Efforts in Divided Communities* (Medford, MA: Fletcher School, 2001), p. 8. See also Antonia Handler Chayes, and Martha Minow, *Imagine coexistence: Restoring humanity after violent ethnic conflict* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2003)..

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

intentions, as well as ways of checking rumors at times of crisis, was critical to communities' capacity to avoid violence. Cross-ethnic information, crisis or "hotline" and other networks are one mechanism for promoting information exchange that did not play a role, but could be supported. As a key player in maintaining the conflict, the media should be a central focus for programming. Programming, however, needs to engage bigger players both in Kosovo and in Serbia proper.

f. Improve monitoring and evaluation. Donors and policymakers need to institute more thorough monitoring of multi-ethnic programming to discourage *pro forma* multi-ethnicity and reward those in which meaningful inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation is occurring. Evidence that people consider mere participation in internationally-sponsored multi-ethnic programs fulfillment of their obligations for inter-ethnic engagement is strong, and should not be reinforced by donor and agency practice. Criteria for assessing the quality of inter-ethnic interaction need to be included, looking beyond participation in programs and program output to assess the process by which the programs were implemented, such as: how decisions were taken, the quality of cooperation, degree of self-initiated actions reflecting concern for the other's interests.

2. Rethink targeting of areas and beneficiaries/participants. The findings suggest that several of the cornerstones of peacebuilding programming – returns, rewards for "multi-ethnicity," youth and women's programming – need rethinking and refinement.

- a. *Deemphasize refugee and IDP return.* Already there has been some de-emphasis of returns in peacebuilding programming as issues related to status have taken front stage. However, further consideration of the relationship of returns to peacebuilding may be warranted at this time. Refugee and IDP returns are important, but to mitigate the negative conflict impacts of returns programming and to support local capacities for peace, *peacebuilding* programming should focus on inter-ethnic relations holistically, including working with remainees.
- b. *Shift from emphasis on the "easy to reach" to promotion of leadership, local capacities for peace and connectors.* Reaching and mobilizing the moderate voices on both sides to have a voice in policy and public debate is important for building a peace constituency. Peacebuilding programming should focus not only on including and targeting more open people, but facilitating their evolution or organization into a peace constituency. The process of selection of partners, participants, and beneficiaries could include additional criteria for targeting of participants could improve program effectiveness in building "bridging social capital:"
 - Identify and support "innovators" and "early adopters" who are will take or have taken public action for peace or in support of inter-ethnic cooperation.
 - Identify and support *existing* "connectors" – people, institutions or systems, actions and attitudes, and interests that already bring people together across conflict lines rather than attempting to create new connectors. Areas such as economic development, employment, environment, health, or public services are common concerns of people in Kosovo, but do not necessarily already act as a connector

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

- across ethnic lines. By contrast, in some places, youth concerns with lack of recreation facilities has led them to reach out across ethnic lines and share space or play sports together on their own initiative. This could be supported. K-Albanian and K-Serb concern about the quality of education, especially in science and math, for example, could also be built on to bring people together to develop a common curriculum in those areas.
- Identify and support local capacities for peace. Leadership by example might open some space for interaction. People and processes that currently mitigate conflict should be identified and supported. Greater rigor could be exercised in identifying people who exercise informal leadership and authority in communities, in addition to community leaders. Teachers and educational officials emerged from the study as one such group.
 - Conduct more rigorous analysis of youth and women is warranted to identify and support those that are “key” for violence or non-violence.
 - Identify and link together participants in geographic and/or sectoral areas to avoid isolation.
- c. *Address the “hard to reach.”* The general, if not always purposeful, exclusion of “key” people leaves programs vulnerable and undermines the overall impact of peacebuilding work. Steps could be taken to find ways to include, engage or address key actors more systematically: KLA veterans and war victims, Kosovo Serb political and community leaders across the spectrum of opinion, less moderate Albanian organizations such as Albin Kurti’s “Vetevendosje,” and the Serbian Orthodox Church.
- d. *De-“localize” programming.* Support programming that cross geographical boundaries – either between municipalities or communities, or between Kosovo and Serbia. Programs that focus on individual communities (either for returns, or because they have mixed populations) or Kosovo-wide policy miss important factors of conflict. Areas for programming that have been largely overlooked but should receive greater attention include:
- Mono-ethnic areas that were most affected by the war and/or that are the cradle of the KLA, such as Gjakova/Đakovica or Decan/Decani. People comment that hard-line opinion prevails there and that “outsider” perpetrators of violence throughout Kosovo came from those areas.
 - Interaction between people from these mono-ethnic areas with people (K-Serbs and K-Albanians) from more mixed areas. This occurs in Kosovo-wide programs such as youth camps but could be increased and focused more systematically with the necessary follow-up to support re-entry back into the mono-ethnic areas.
 - Cross-border and/or coordinated work with Serbia outside the IDP realm, especially with areas that are critical to the Serb-Albanian relationship in Kosovo. After status talks conclude, this will likely become more important, as the line of confrontation will likely shift to the Kosovo-Serbia border in relation to the northern municipalities.

3. Work with intra-ethnic networks on conflict. In the short- to medium-term, “bonding social capital” – the intra-ethnic networks of trust and reciprocity – are likely to be more important than

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

inter-ethnic relations in preventing and mitigating violence, especially in rural areas. Intra-community political dialogue in communities where political divisions are bitter should be considered as a part of a strategy to strengthen capacity of communities to manage inter-ethnic conflict. In urban areas in particular, in addition to promoting dialogue across ethnic lines, dialogue and engagement across the “oldtime resident”-“newcomer” divide needs support so that networks across *internal* lines of division that can be drawn upon to mobilize communities to avoid violence. At the same time, strengthening of mechanisms— whether across or within ethnic lines – that provide accurate information about the “other” would enhance chances of decisions against violence. Finally, with the Standards for Kosovo and status operating as a weaker source of motivation, another set of incentives will need to replace them. These could be associated with European integration but will need clear consequences for failure to meet standards of behavior in order to be effective.

5.. Address driving factors of conflict more directly. In the immediate term, this would include helping prepare the population for the eventual outcome and implementation of the status talks. Nonetheless, even after status is decided, many of the driving factors will remain. Some directions that might be pursued include:

- a. Transitional justice: Develop more transparent and fair procedures for dealing with claims of war crimes, and encourage NGO parallel processes. Issues related to lustration will also need to be considered carefully in this context, as concerns (of Albanians and Serbs) related to individuals’ involvement with the war continue to exacerbate tensions from the community level in places like Zheger/Zegra to the Kosovo-wide level.
- b. Security and impunity: Action might be taken in several arenas. First, in light of starkly different perceptions about the problem of freedom of movement, greater dialogue at all levels between K-Serbs and K-Albanians about the nature of the problem and what to do about it would be useful. In this context, a broadening or reframing of the issue from “freedom of movement” to address minorities’ “sense of security” might be helpful, as the terminology of “freedom of movement” – associated closely with the Standards for Kosovo – may have the unintended consequence of polarizing discussion on what the current reality is and future actions ought to be. Second, issues of impunity and *perceptions* of impunity need to be addressed. This issue is, of course, is a long-term problem related to the weakness of the justice system that affects K-Albanians as well. The need to strengthen the justice system has been underlined by many,⁶⁹ and efforts to strengthen the justice system are already underway. However, they could be supplemented in the short- to medium-term by efforts – both official (government and international agency) and civil society – to deal with the factors that motivate witnesses not to come forward and to deal with the link between impunity and K-Serb feelings of

⁶⁹ Kai Eide noted that “minority communities – and especially the Kosovo Serbs – suffer from more than a perceived insecurity. It is indeed a mixture of perception and reality. To combat this situation, it will be important to combat crime more vigorously.” K. Eide, *Comprehensive Report on the Situation in Kosovo*, p. 9.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

insecurity specifically. Promotion of greater contact between police and communities and greater transparency about the status of investigations might be considered, as well as strengthening and expansion of community policing.

- c. Develop more community-based mechanisms for addressing key issues, from the missing, war, crimes, feelings of victimization or current insecurity to claims of property usurpation, especially those that do not rise to a level warranting institutional attention and the psychological, relational and emotional aspects of these issues. This should not necessarily entail new mechanisms, but could be incorporated into existing dialogue and other processes as a way of deepening and building on those efforts.

1. ***Incorporate conflict sensitivity into all programming and policy making.*** Decisions about staffing and contracting, about location of programs and centers, and post-program sustainability planning especially should analyse and take into account potential impacts on K-Serb—K-Albanian tensions. In addition, programming needs to be sensitive to the complex role of economic factors in exacerbating conflict in Kosovo. Economic development is both highly important to all communities in Kosovo, but has contributed to violent conflict primarily through its connection to disappointed political aspirations and horizontal inequalities amongst ethnic groups. Future economic policy and development aid – from privatization to job creation policies to practical implementation of income-generation projects on the ground – should identify concretely potential “winners” and “losers” and the impact on K-Albanian—K-Serb (and other minorities) divisions.

APPENDIX : METHODOLOGY

In designing the methodology it was important to ensure that the study was not biased toward finding an impact of peacebuilding programs, consequently missing important factors that might be unrelated to peacebuilding programming. Our research questions reflect this priority. The questions we have focused on are:

- What factors enabled communities to avoid, resist or not participate in violence?
- To what extent has peacebuilding work contributed to these factors?

By identifying the factors that have enabled communities not to participate in inter-ethnic violence such as the March 2004 riots, and only then examining if, how and why peacebuilding programming played a role, we could avoid this bias. This sequence of questions allowed us to trace the specific impacts of peacebuilding programming, in contrast to other factors in the communities, on why communities that avoided violence in March 2004 did so (or not), and to identify areas where future programming should focus.

The study was conducted using collaborative learning methodology which CDA has used in previous projects such as *Do No Harm* and *Reflecting on Peace Practice*: a highly collaborative process with opportunities in each stage for stakeholders in Kosovo to be consulted to provide feedback, reflect collaboratively on the evidence being gathered, analyze it and think together about options for addressing the issues raised.

The study was conducted in three phases.

Phase I: Mapping of Violence and Collaborative Analysis

The first phase mapped inter-ethnic violence over the period of March 2002-March 2005, in order to identify variables, patterns and trends that may be relevant to understanding the presence or absence of violence in March 2004, to assist in selection of case studies that will have the greatest generalizability, and to provide an overall context in which to understand the case studies. This time frame was chosen as offering an opportunity to observe the patterns and trends of inter-ethnic violence over three “spring and summer” seasons (2002, 2003, 2004), traditionally believed to be the worst in terms of interethnic violence. This time frame further contained significant landmarks in Kosovo’s recent history – the convening of the first Government of Kosovo in March 2002, the October 2002 Municipal Elections, political changes in Serbia, the beginning of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic’s trial in The Hague, the 2004 general elections, the indictment of former Kosovo PM Ramush Haradinaj, amongst others – and thus permitted a perspective on violence in a dynamic context of profound changes in Kosovo’s landscape. Finally, the data available for the year after the 2004 riots was examined in order to explore the ways in which communities recovered from the 2004 violence as well as to assess the degree to which the March events were an anomaly or, alternatively, reflective of deeper tensions in the communities.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

The mapping was developed through desk research using information compiled from UNMIK CivPol data, UNHCR Security Unit Situation Reports (incomplete), UNMIK Office for Returns and Communities (ORC, now Office of Communities, Returns and Minorities -- OCMA), KFOR Situation Reports, and OMIK Situation Reports. Both physical and psychological violence (such as intimidation) were quantified and categorised geographically by municipality and by time over the selected period March 2002 – March 2005.

The mapping of inter-ethnic violence presented a number of methodological challenges. Ordinary crime and inter-ethnic crime can be difficult to distinguish, as incidents perpetrated for economic or other criminal, and not specifically inter-ethnic, motives, can also have impact on inter-ethnic relations.⁷⁰ Even if there is clarity as to how to classify incidents, determining the level of IEV is difficult, because IEV is frequently not reported by victims and when it is, may be under- or over- identified as inter-ethnic due to the potential dangers of creating self-fulfilling prophecies as the information becomes public. Consequently, this research relied on inter-ethnic crime statistics only as a secondary (although initial) source of data to identify communities for further study, and to identify trends and factors to be investigated in greater depth. Further inquiry into the nature and levels of violence (both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic) was conducted through extensive interviews with members of communities in Phase II of the study. This way the indicative value of inter-ethnic violence data available was utilised, while allowing the communities involved -- whether as victims, perpetrators, observers -- to speak for themselves about the extent, nature and impacts of inter-ethnic violence to ensure a truer picture emerges from our inquiry.

Finally, the research team also convened three consultative workshops in Pejë/Peć, Prishtinë/Priština and Mitrovicë/Mitrovica for a total of approximately eighty people drawn from local and international NGOs, UNMIK and OSCE. The workshops were part of the collaborative learning approach of the project: to engage stakeholders in Kosovo to include the vast experience, understanding, and insights of people working and living in the field to the research, as well as to ensure that the research remains relevant and useful to them. The workshops explored the ways in which practitioners themselves see:

- the contributions of NGO, IGO and other agencies' activities to peace;
- what forms of "violence" exist in different areas and their prevalence;
- instances of resistance to or non-participation in violence and what made those possible;
- advice on potential case studies that would have valuable learnings, and
- what criteria should be used to select, and later compare, case studies.

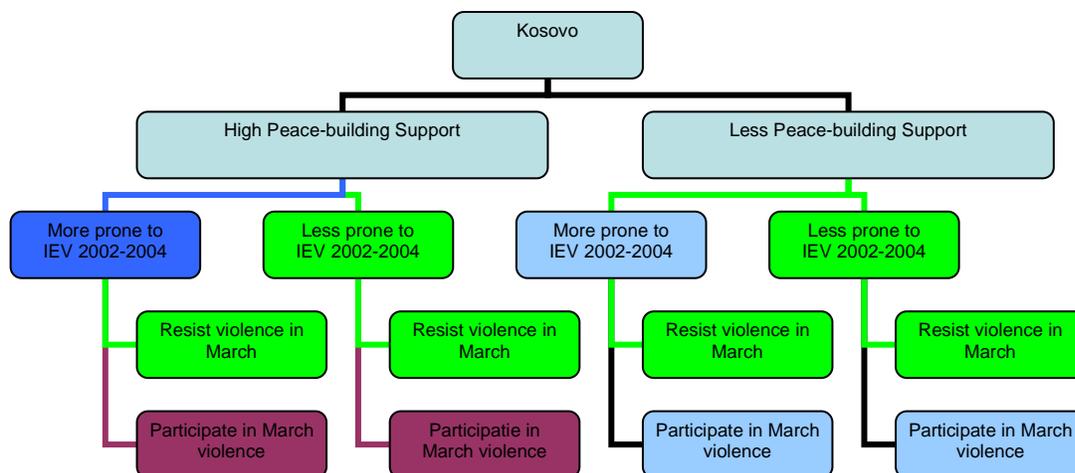
⁷⁰ In addition, there were significant discrepancies among the figures reported by CivPol and the UNMIK's Office of Communities. An intra-UNMIK effort to harmonise the processing and reporting to create a single body of information came to a conclusion just as the final workshops of this research were being convened, and thus have not been integrated into this report.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

Phase II: In-Depth Case Studies

Based on the Phase I mapping and input from participants in the consultative workshops, we conducted seven field-based, rich narrative case studies in the second stage of the research. Why case studies? CDA is committed to learning from experience. In this context, case studies provided an excellent means of gathering the experience and perspectives of people and communities connected in some way to peacebuilding assistance, even if they are necessarily brief, reflective snapshots of complex and dynamic situations. In addition, the case study methodology was consistent with the emphasis of this research on reflection rather than evaluation, on understanding the communities' point of view, and on generating practical findings, grounded in the field, for agencies involved in peacebuilding work in Kosovo. The emphasis of each case study is on recording what people in the context say and think.

Case Selection. The case studies were selected using purposive sampling using three sets of criteria: a) the presence or absence of violence in March 2004; b) levels of IEV prior from March 2002-2004; c) degree of peacebuilding activity in the communities.



With the limited number of cases possible (seven), the selection focused on those cases that would provide insight into:

- Why communities had higher or lower levels of violence prior to 2004
- Why communities avoided or resisted violence in March 2004
- Why communities had high levels of violence despite high levels of peacebuilding support
- Why communities participated in the violence of March 2004 despite high levels of peacebuilding support.

The cases were chosen also to include urban and rural sites, sites with higher levels of minority returnees and those with higher numbers of remainees, and to reflect differences in experience of the 1998-1999 conflict. These factors had been considered significant in the consultations conducted in Phase I, and we had not been able to develop any evidence-based hypotheses related to them because the inter-ethnic crime statistics were reported at the municipal level.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

Specific sites within municipalities were identified by participants in the consultative workshops, as well as through documentary research, based on the criteria and the participant's assessment that they could learn from the experiences in these communities in ways that could improve peacebuilding practice.

The cases chosen included:

- Shtupel/Stupelj (Klinë/Klina municipality): a K-Albanian populated village (Shtupel/Stupelj) in an area that suffered greatly during the 1998-1999 war, that strongly resisted K-Serb returns to the two nearby villages, Bica/Binxhe and Grabac/Grabc, and that continues to refuse to deal with Serb returnees, but which mobilized action to prevent crowds from attacking the Serb villages. Some, but not much, peacebuilding programming has been implemented here.
- Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec and surrounding villages (Pejë/Peć municipality): a K-Serb enclave in a difficult region surrounded by six K-Albanian populated villages (many of which were mixed before the war) in a difficult area that had itself experienced a high level of violence in the past, but which experienced no violence in March 2004. This area has received significant attention from two NGOs, KFOR, and some international organizations in terms of peacebuilding work.
- Gornja Bitinja/Biti e Epërmë and Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme (Štrpce/Shtërpçë municipality): two villages with K-Serb majority populations (in a K-Serb majority municipality) to which K-Albanians returned; an agreement for mutual protection against violence had been concluded after Serbs had resisted Albanian returns, and there was no violence in March 2004. Peacebuilding activities focused on mediation of the terms and conditions of return of Albanians to these villages. In Gornja Bitinja/Biti e Epërmë two NGOs began peacebuilding (dialogue) work in late 2004, while Gornja Bitinja/Biti e Epërmë, there has been relatively little peacebuilding assistance apart from United Nations and KFOR assistance for return and organization of a few sports events.
- Zheger/Zegra (Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality): a formerly mixed village that was one of the few in the municipality to have had a very harsh war experience during 1998-1999; tensions remain high with significant opposition to return of K-Serb residents, who are accused of war crimes, yet violence was avoided in the village. Zheger/Zegra had received much attention over the years, but only one agency has succeeded in implementing a longer-term peacebuilding program.
- Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje town (Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje Municipality): an urban area that was considered to be "stable" by many international actors but which had higher levels of violence in the 2002-2004 timeframe and suffered much violence on March 17-18, 2004.
- Gjilan/Gnjilane town (Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality): an urban area in what is commonly thought to be one of the "best" areas in Kosovo in terms of inter-ethnic relations, and in which violence was severe in March 2004. Many international agencies working in the

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

region are based there, and have conducted a significant amount of peacebuilding work in the town.

- Mitrovicë/Mitrovica town (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica municipality): a divided city that has been and continues to be the “frontline” of conflict. It is an urban area that historically has had amongst the highest levels of IEV in Kosovo, along with a great deal of peacebuilding activity, and experienced clashes on March 17-18, 2004.

Development of case studies. After an original pilot study, the ‘on-the-ground’ research team (Olivera Markovic and Artan Venhari) researched and wrote each case in collaboration with one international team member working virtually. The role of the virtual member was to ensure continuity between cases, application of methodology guidelines, provision of an external perspective and answering questions as necessary.

The interviews for the case studies were conducted between July and October 2005. In each site – community or cluster of villages – the research team interviewed between 20 and 40 people from both the K-Albanian and K-Serb communities, individually and sometimes in small groups. To the extent possible, a wide range of sectors was covered to get a fuller picture of the story: business (including people selling in the market), media, politics, social services, religious leaders, civil service (municipal and local government), local and international civil society, security actors, international community staff (UNMIK, OSCE, etc.), implementers and participants in peacebuilding projects, and community members not involved in peacebuilding programmes.

The fact that the interviews were conducted fully a year after the March 2004 events raised challenges to collecting accurate information about conditions and events prior to March 2004, both because of the difficulty of accurate recall of the past, and the pressure at the time of the study felt by many to demonstrate fulfillment of the Standards for Kosovo in order that status talks could begin. Indeed, in many instances, peacebuilding programs in the communities explored either began or began to make progress only after March 2004. We addressed these challenges in several ways. First, by emphasizing in the deep narrative focus of the interviews the need to obtain detailed stories and to understand the evidence on which interviewees based their conclusions and perceptions, we could begin to understand how the stories were affected by the passage of time. Second, by triangulating information through many interviews with different people, we could identify with some confidence which information was likely accurate. Third, by examining reactions to and participation in the March 2004 violence in historical perspective, we could identify factors that helped communities avoid or resist violence and assess whether those factors were still present a year later, and whether the peacebuilding programs addressed them at any point before or after the March 2004 timeframe.

Case Study Methodology. CDA case writers do not work with questionnaires or survey instruments. This is because we do not want to pre-determine which factors or issues will turn out to be primary in the interpretations of local actors. The case study guidelines below were developed in advance to identify the broad categories of questions and information for the case studies. Within

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

these guidelines, the interviews themselves were open-ended, exploring direction raised by the local informant.

I. Community Overview (who, where, what is the community?)

Community is defined as the total site that is being explored in the case study. It may include multiple villages, one village, or a neighbourhood of a larger urban centre. Be sure to define this in your case study report and as early in the case process as possible.

- Who is the community?
 - Size of the community in numbers
 - Ethnic & religious make-up
 - Approximate gender distribution
 - Age distribution
 - Returnees/remainees? How long the person has been living in the community?
- How do people live in the community?
 - What is the economic situation: look for information that will be comparable between cases ex. Unemployment rates, new businesses being started, businesses being closed, means of sustaining existence such as vegetable patch etc. We are also interested in the impact of all of these on inter-ethnic relations – so it would be good to collect this information by ethnicity, and get a sense of who is doing what, who is impacted by various parts of the economic situation how, etc.
 - Crime rates – what crime? How often/prevalent? Etc. Here we are looking to see if IEV might be related to crime.
 - Physical make-up of the community – e.g. high density population or low-density, divided by a river etc.
 - Communication networks
 - Messages – how are messages disseminated within each community?
 - Media Outlets available – language of programming, perceived bias of information, objectivity, do they fuel the conflict?
- What are dividers and connectors within/between the communities and how have they changed over time? Be as specific as possible – how the various things (like economy as a connector, war experience as a divider, etc.) are actually used or experienced by people
 - Also note dividers/connectors within each community. What are intragroup dynamics – close, tight-knit group, do they trust each other, are there smaller groups within one group?

II. Background to Conflict in the community

Here we want to understand what the nature of conflict has been in the community over the last 2.5 years (2002-present), how things have changed. We also want to understand the historical background – what historically has fed conflict. This latter may be covered already in dividers and connectors.

- Briefly, history with respect to conflict/tensions and IEV: pre-1989, history during the 1990s, war experience and immediately post-war.

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

- What is the frequency and nature/typology of violence?
 - Are the reported figures accurate? More/less than actual. What are the motivations? What is the effect of IEV – fear, solidarity within your community, defiance? What is the current status of violence and intimidation?
 - Is IEV linked to organised crime? If so how?
 - Intragroup violence – quantity, frequency and causes. Is there a connection between intragroup and interethnic violence? In other words, are you likely to be intimidated by your community if you participate in cross-community activities?
- What factors influence violence in the community? Why does it happen here?
 - Missing persons: number, profile/importance of this issue in the community
 - Status of the War Veterans, War Invalids/Martyrs and Families Associations – do they exist, what do they do, public sentiment around them?
 - Is there a relationship between ‘proper behaviour’ (I’ve done nothing wrong, I’ve behaved properly) and IEV?
 - Who are the ‘outsiders’ who are violent? What could the community do to protect themselves from them?
 - Proximity, size and make-up of KFOR, CivPol, KPS and Kosovo Protection Corps – role and communities opinion of each?
 - What happens here when violent or high profile events that are negative to your community occur elsewhere in Kosovo? What about when those events happen within the municipality?
 - How did inter-community relations change immediately after the March 2004 riots? Why did this happen? Was this positive or negative? Has it continued?

III. Experience of Resisting or Not participating in violence

- Examples when people in the community peacefully resisted those who were threatening violence. A sense of frequency of these examples
 - What was the situation (riot, demonstration, children throwing stones)
 - Who were they? (gender, age, education, job, position in community etc.)
 - What did they do? What happened/what was the result?
 - Was this in-character for them or were you surprised by their behaviour? Why?
 - Why do you think this person(s) did this – what made them behave this way?
 - What was the reaction from the community of this action?
- Examples of times when you thought things could explode in violence or that someone would be intimidated, but nothing happened.
 - What happened that made you think things would explode/person would be intimidated?
 - What happened instead of violence?
 - What was the community reaction to no violence occurring?
 - Why did nothing happen?
- Relations between Serbs/Albanians in the community
 - how have they changed over the last 2 years?

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

- What did you first see that told you things were changing? What do you see now that you wouldn't have seen 2 years ago?
- What do you think caused the change?
- Has your community tried anything to help improve relations?

IV. Peacebuilding Activities in the community & their connection to violence

Here we have not defined peacebuilding and will be developing the boundaries of “peacebuilding” based on the case studies. We want to know a) what people in communities think peace means and what has contributed to it and how; and b) what the agencies think they are doing and what their “theory of peacebuilding” is – i.e. how they think their activities contribute to peace. So we'd like to be able to understand from peacebuilding: what agencies do (kinds of activities), whom they work with, how they think their activities contribute to peace, and whether they actually do contribute to peace and reduction of violence specifically (here the community's voice obviously is important).

- Number of international ngos and indigenous ngos operating in the community
- What is their primary work (agriculture, roads, schools) and which are considered peacebuilding activities (by the community and by the agencies)
- History of the peacebuilding efforts in the last 2.5 years. (Note they do not need to still be running now. Note also that community members may know the answers to some of these questions, but may not to others here. Still it would be interesting to know what they do think.):
 - Who started it – person and/or agency?
 - What do they do (activities)?
 - How long has it run?
 - Why did they choose to do this activity and not something else?
 - How will this activity bring peace?
 - If integration is the answer then explore why is integration important? What will it mean if it is achieved?
 - Who is involved in it [participants]? Why did they get involved? (identify not only gender, education, social status but also the war experience)
 - Who has chosen not to be involved in these activities? Why? Who has actively resisted these activities from happening? Why?
 - What difference has this project made – positive and negative? What initiatives have helped build bridges between the communities?
 - What evidence is there of these changes? Be sure to connect with those involved in the initiative and those who were not as a means to cross check the connection between the initiative and the change.
- Has the work of the international community done any harm or damage to this community?
- Are the different ngo projects linked in any way? If so how are they linked and why is that link important or not important? (linkages exploration)

What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made?

- If there are lots of peacebuilding activities and you could only pick one which has been the most significant for your community? (significance)
- How have the peacebuilding activities affected the amount of violence in the community?

Phase III: Comparative Analysis of Case Studies

In the final phase, we analysed the cases, again using CDA's collaborative methodology. Three consultations were convened. The first, in Cambridge, MA (USA) brought together the local case writers, the international research team, and staff and advisors of CDA and CARE to read and analyse the cases individually and comparatively. This consultation identified common themes, issues and questions. These were then explored in consultations in Kosovo and Washington, D.C., where practitioners, policy makers, donors and researchers also read and analyzed the cases and added their own experience and insights to the themes and issues. Preliminary conclusions were prepared after these consultations in executive summary form, and presented to three groups of policy makers, donors and NGOs in three consultations in Kosovo in April, 2006 for discussion and feedback. The conclusions and recommendations thus reflect extensive discussion and collective reflection on the evidence.