THE WESTERN BALKANS:
COMMUNITY BASED PEACEBUILDING
A Review of the Balkan Dialogue Project
2003

Report
by
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This report is issued as part of the series NORDEM Report, although tasked specifically by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA). The Balkan Dialogue Project has received funding from NMFA since 1998. As the project has entered into a new phase, the NMFA decided to conduct a review of the status of and future challenges for the Balkan Dialogue Project. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the publishers, or of the NMFA.

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Executive Summary

Since the opening of the first Nansen Dialogue Centre (NDC), the Balkan Dialogue Project (BDP) has received substantial funding from the NMFA. After several years the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) has decided to conduct a review of the status and future challenges of the project. The study focuses mainly on the NDCs and their programs. Additionally, the study assesses the role of PRIO/Nansen Academy with regard to their follow-up, supervision and quality assurance on the part of the NDC centres and their activities.

The study demonstrates the BDP’s potential for further development. Nonetheless, we argue that all NDCs contain strengths and weaknesses, and that some centres are still in the process of defining their role and mandate. Hence, there is still some way to go before all of the NDCs are developed into professional organisations with a distinct mission to contribute to reconciliation and conflict prevention in the Balkans. The development of the network is a parallel and interrelated process. We argue that a viable professional network is based on a common understanding where all partners have internalised shared values, professional/methodological approaches and overall objectives. This process is still in development.

With the support of the Project Management (PM) centres have developed into relatively accountable administrative organisations with a strong local identity. During this process, the PM has conducted its role with caution to preserve local ownership among the NDCs. The balance between being too dominant or too passive is difficult – and the PM has experienced this dilemma in several isolated cases as well as during its daily follow-up efforts. The report recommends however that the PM needs to undertake a more active role to meet future challenges. Further project developments rely on the PM's ability to be more substantially focused and to exploit existing internal and external resources in order to secure knowledge-based actions.

The report argues that a discontinuation of the NMFA’s financial support implies that already invested financial and human resources would be lost. It is our assessment that a lot has been achieved in the BDP so far, and that the current network represent a clear potential for further development. Secondly, conflict prevention and reconciliation have proved to be long-term processes. Long-lasting commitment also apply to the set up and development of a sizeable network such as the BDP. The report thus recommends a continuation of the NMFA’s support of the BDP, provided adjustments and shifts in line with the recommendations presented in this report are acted upon. This should involve a process to refine and focus the BDP-mission, thus securing the centres’ comparative advantage on the local NGO scene and the basic legitimacy for further financial funding.
Chapter 1  Introduction and background

Point of departure for a qualitative study
The Balkan Dialogue project has received funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) since 1998. Financially, it is among the largest single projects in the NMFA’s Western Balkans portfolio, with allocations of approximately NOK 15 million per year. The project has been viewed as a “flagship” project in the Norwegian contribution to preventive diplomacy and reconciliation efforts in the region. After three years of establishing and consolidating the NDCs (1999-2003), the project has entered into a new phase. Consequently, the NMFA decided to conduct a review of the status of, and future challenges for the Balkan Dialogue Project. The overall purpose of the study is to assess the strengths and the weaknesses of the Balkan Dialogue project, and to develop recommendations on how to further improve the project. The ultimate objective is to review and assess the project’s actual, as well as potential, contribution to inter-ethnic reconciliation and conflict resolution in the Western Balkans. A fundamental point of departure is that there remains a need for systematic efforts in support of conflict resolution and inter-ethnic reconciliation in the societies of the Western Balkan countries.

Historical background
The history of the Balkan Dialogue project starts in 1995. During the organisation of the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer in 1994, the war was still raging in Bosnia-Herzegovina, whose capital Sarajevo had hosted the Winter Olympics a decade earlier. This triggered an idea to design and develop a 12-week course in Lillehammer for participants from the former Yugoslavia. The training programme was a joint project between the Nansen Academy, Norwegian Red Cross, Norwegian Church Aid and the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), with financial support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA), the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration and the Lillehammer Olympic Committee. The project sought to target potential leaders in the former Yugoslavia, and it was anticipated that peoples’ attitudes would change through the transfer of knowledge combined with practical work with dialogue. The idea was to motivate the participants to seek education and training in peaceful conflict resolution, human rights and democracy theory which would prepare them for the building of a democratic civil society in their homeland.1

From the training sessions/programmes in Lillehammer, new ideas and further developments emerged. Organisers, as well as several participants, acknowledged the need to integrate what had been learned in Lillehammer into activities in the participants’ local communities. This led to the opening, based on initiatives from Lillehammer alumni from Kosovo, and with the support of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of the first Nansen Dialogue Centre in Pristina in 1997. The war in Kosovo in 1999, however, led to the collapse of the first Nansen Dialogue Centre, but it became the model for the formation of new NDC offices in other parts of the region. Between 1999 and 2001 additional centres were established in Skopje, Belgrade, Podgorica, Sarajevo, Mostar, Banja Luka and Osijek. In 2000 a new NDC

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centre was also founded in Pristina under the name of “Kosova Initiative for Democratic Society” (KIDS). Moreover, in 2001 the project included fieldworkers in Mitrovica (Kosovo) and, since 2002, an affiliated group of young people from Preshevo (Southern Serbia) working on Serb/Albanian dialogue. A regional Balkan dialogue network scattered throughout the territory of the Former Yugoslavia, comprising nine centres and a group in Preshevo, have now been established. The Norwegian component consists of the Project Management group (PM) comprising the project staff at PRIO in addition to two part-time staff from the Nansen Academy in Lillehammer.

**Project aim**

PRIO/Nansen Academy has defined the overall philosophy, purposes and goals in the following way:

> "The Mission of the Nansen Dialogue Network is to empower people who live in conflict situations – through application of ideas and techniques of dialogue – to contribute to peaceful conflict transformation, democratic development and promotion of human rights (…) and providing neutral and open space where different actors in a serious conflict can meet face to face in truthful and honest communication..." and also to "... break down enemy images, as well as to increase understanding of each other’s positions, interests, and needs".  

More concretely, the mission’s overall objective has been identified in the annual funding proposals to the NMFA. Over the years it has been redefined from a clear-cut reconciliation and conflict resolution effort, towards a broader civil society engagement, as clearly demonstrated by the grant proposals in 2000 and 2001. In 1999/2000 the overall aim of the project was defined as follows: “to develop the expertise, techniques and networks of the Nansen Academy’s Democracy Project into a regional resource for peace building and reconciliation in the Balkans. In 2001 the overall aim includes “ peacebuilding and conflict management capability and capacity in the Balkans” and “ to make contributions to organisational development of a dynamic and innovative civil society that is relevant, effective and transparent”. Despite formulations in various project funding documents that could suggest otherwise, it is nevertheless our understanding that the BDP is primarily viewed as a project working on reconciliation and conflict resolution and transformation efforts, with inter-ethnic relations as the main focus for actions.

**Approach and Methodology**

An underlying premise during the review of the Balkan Dialogue Project is our recognition of the need for (I)NGO engagement in peace processes in the Western Balkans. Such efforts are viewed as being both a supplement to, and ideally also complementary to preventive diplomacy and conflict management processes on state and governmental levels. Accordingly, the authors’ recognition of the potential for..."
positive impact of the Balkan Dialogue project on inter-ethnic relations and conflict prevention has been the basis for our approach to the present review and its recommendations.

Although the review encompasses all segments and aspects of the Balkan Dialogue Project, the focus of the study has nevertheless been on the dialogue centres in the field. The rationale for this is that it is through the activities of the centres that the project objectives can ultimately be addressed. The Terms of Reference highlights this:

“How do the NDC centres fulfil their objectives? How do they function? Do they, through their activities, contribute to strengthening inter-ethnic relations in their respective societies? Is it possible to assess the impact of their work? This also includes an examination of the role of the PRIO/Nansen Academy with regard to their supervision, follow-up, and quality assurance (...) of the NDC centres and their activities. Given the structure of the project, as well as its objectives, the main focus will thus be on three key questions: What are the NDC centres/PRIO/Nansen Academy doing? Why are they doing it? How are they doing it?”

One should note that the project can usefully be viewed as a “partnership”, with the Norwegian Project Management (including both PRIO and The Nansen Academy) working together with the individual centres and the NDC network as a whole. A case can also be made that this “partnership” also includes the NMFA, who as the principle donor since the project’s inception, has made it possible. We have therefore sought to study how this “partnership” functions in practical terms.

We have interpreted our task as follows: How successful is the program in general and each component (NDCs) in particular, and what is the comparative advantage of the BDP in relation to the stated aims? This relates to a discussion of how we define a successful project, i.e. what are the criteria for being a “successful” reconciliation project in the Western Balkans.

The report is based on interviews with the NDC staff, the Project Management (PM) and representatives from the Norwegian MFA (NMFA), in addition to a number of informed independent observers throughout the region and in Norway. The team visited each centre for approximately three days. We visited Skopje, Pristina/Mitrovica, Belgrade, Podgorica, Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Mostar, Osijek, and finally, Montenegro (to conclude the interviews with the staff and relevant partners) from 31.03 – 13.04 and 6.05-22.05.2003.

& Rohtman 1999, Anderson 1999 and Lederach 1997). Such reflections are indeed relevant to discuss in relation to peace accords that have been agreed on Balkan conflicts; e.g. the Dayton Accord (1995) and the Ohrid Agreement (2001). See also “The DAC Guidelines” Helping Prevent Violent Conflict (2001).

8 ToR:3.

9 For further elaboration, see chapter 3 “Presentation of the NDCs ”.

10 We visited Skopje, Pristina/Mitrovica, Belgrade, Podgorica, Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Mostar, Osijek, and finally, Montenegro (to conclude the interviews with the staff and relevant partners) from 31.03 – 13.04 and 6.05-22.05.2003.

11Except from our visit in Banja Luka where only two out of four core staff members were present.
project-related issues with relevant actors in the region and in Norway.\textsuperscript{12} Interviews with the PM at PRIO in Oslo and the Nansen Academy in Lillehammer, as well as with the NMFA in Oslo were conducted partly before, and partly after field trips to the region.\textsuperscript{13} Hence, we were able to discuss our main findings from the field trips with the PM and receive useful feedback from their side before completion of the report. Furthermore, this gave us the opportunity to bring the centres’ inputs and assessment of the role of the Norwegian partners into the discussions with the PM. The report has also benefited from comments, both orally and in writing, as discussed at the presentation workshop with the donor and the PM in Oslo October 17 2003, as well as at the workshop in Sarajevo on October 24/25 2003 with NDC representatives, the PM and the donor.

In addition to key documents and other written material,\textsuperscript{14} the major source of information and data thus emerged from semi-structured in-depth interviews with NDC-staff and the PM. We found the interviews with the co-ordinators and assistants an adequate tool with which to survey attitudes and perceptions with regard to the overall project philosophy and basic values, as well as in relation to the NDC staff’s perception of their particular social and inter-ethnic context.\textsuperscript{15} Due to time limitations, we were however, not able to observe activities in the field. For this reason the report will not focus on the activities as such or their quality, but rather assess the centres’ overall strategy with regard to objectives, focus and target groups as well as attitudes and inter-ethnic perceptions among the staff.

\textbf{Background issues}

Ideally, observation of seminars and other activities could have been included in the study. Yet, it is our opinion that the field trips provided us with adequate data for an assessment of the profile of each centre, their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their potential for further development. Viewed in relation to evaluations of similar projects, the amount of time given for field trips and data collection has in fact been very generous. Secondly, it is important to underline that the research team is made up of former employees of the NMFA, who during their period of employment at the NMFA dealt with the project from the donor’s perspective.\textsuperscript{16} Thus, one should note

\textsuperscript{12}These include local and international resource persons on political or inter-ethnic issues in the areas of the NDCs and Norwegian NGOs representatives in the field. In all some 90 interviews were conducted and recorded on tape.

\textsuperscript{13} Interviews with Norwegian partners and the NMFA were conducted in March and August 2003.

\textsuperscript{14} For example, annual funding applications to the NMFA; the centres’ Annual Plans of Action; a number of activity reports from 2002/2003, and additional activity descriptions.

\textsuperscript{15} In accordance with general qualitative methodology, we argue that qualitative interviews represent a significant and relevant tool in fieldwork aiming at comprehension of attitudes and inter-ethnic perceptions. The qualitative approach derives from an interpretative research tradition with the purpose of seeking insight and knowledge on the subject(s) in question. The purpose is clearly not to give a representative picture of a situation, but rather present assessments based upon analyses of the data-material that emerged from the interviews. We have conducted approximately 90 interviews for this review. Due to the large amount of data, we have chosen to structure our analyses around three main issues: focus of the activities, inter-ethnic attitudes and comprehension of the overall project goals. The choice of focus was based upon our main findings from the fieldwork, as well as from lessons learned in relevant studies/reports. (On methodology, see for instance Kvale 1997, Weinberg 2002).

\textsuperscript{16} The team fully acknowledge the fact that the change of roles from NMFA-employees to independent consultants can be viewed as problematic with regard to our assessment of the BDP. One should note,
that the team has decided to exclude discussions on issues where its role as independent consultants could be compromised.  

The report

It is important to underline that we have mainly viewed the projects from the field’s perspective, i.e. with particular focus on the NDCs need for support and follow-up. As a result the PM has commented that the report has focused more on the PMs shortcomings in relation to the NDCs rather than the PM’s positive inputs and efforts during the last years. We understand this view, and will emphasise that the recommendations made in this report should not be seen as solely criticism related to former performances, but rather as suggestions made for future developments. One should note that the BDP indeed represents a complex and large project, thus we fully recognise that the task of establishing a dynamic and professional network with the aim of promoting reconciliation and conflict prevention is a demanding one that requires long term commitment from all partners. It is furthermore our assessment that a lot has been achieved, and that the current network represent a potential for further development.

It is important to underline that this report, its assessments, and its recommendations are based on inputs and statements from NDC staff, the PM and NMFA representatives, as well as lessons learned from relevant studies. Secondly, with regard to the presentation of the NDCs’ program and activities, we have based our main program assessments on the NDCs’ respective Annual Plans of Action, in addition to a number of activity reports. We are aware of the fact that all NDCs conduct additional activities under the label "Free Activities". Many of these are also included in the NDCs’ Plans of Action. One should note that our recommendations are equally valid for the ‘free activities’.

Finally, since the start of our fieldwork in April 2003, we have received feedback from representatives from both within the PM and the NDCs that our interviews sparked positive processes in many centres. Furthermore, during 2003 the BDP carried out a peer review as a part of an internal M&E-process, which conclusions and recommendations to a large extend, harmonise with the conclusion of this report. During the time of writing, many of our recommendations have therefore already been (or are in the process of being) implemented. Hence, the following chapters on the NDCs, and some statements in the reports in general, can already seem as 'outdated' due to the changes that have already taken place in many of the

however, that we have conducted the task without interference from the MFA. The team have also prior experience from the Western Balkans in the areas of inter-ethnic relations, political monitoring and democratisation work. This includes also knowledge of the Balkan Dialogue Project, including the courses in Lillehammer (for instance by participating/observing dialogue seminars in Macedonia during 2000/2001, as well as giving lectures on inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia in two Lillehammer courses based upon research conducted during 2000/2001). Thus, one of the team members was well acquainted with the project’s dialogue approach through participation/observation in seminars as well as through close contact with one of the NDCs during a time of pre-conflict/conflict- and post-conflict.

17 This include primarily discussions of the "On the Road Film-festival" (OFF) that involved five NDCs, the PM, the Norwegian Film Institute and the NMFA, as well as the process that led to the inclusion of the local NGO (Centre of New Vision) from Preshevo in the network (2002/3).

18 Information from the M&E team leader.
centres and the network since the time of our data collection. Consequently, it is important to stress that our study of the NDCs and the network is reflecting the status of the centres during a certain period of time, primarily in April and May 2003.

Chapter 2 Main findings and recommendations

Main findings

Firstly, visits to the NDCs convinced us that a basic qualification for being a fully functioning centre presumes that the co-ordinators have a well-nuanced inter-ethnic understanding and an ability to survey and overcome the general inter-ethnic perceptions that may be widely held in their local and regional context. When this basic precondition is not fulfilled, the centre’s role in promoting inter-ethnic dialogue becomes severely limited. We are convinced, however, that an inter-ethnically mixed staff represents an efficient corrective in this regard, and that such situations can be avoided if the staff are attuned on a daily basis through inter-ethnic co-operation on staff level. Consequently, we argue that in the case of centres operating in a community prone to inter-ethnic tensions, it is essential that the office staff consist of persons from different ethnic groups. This also has to do with the office’s reputation as being ethnically neutral, and thus being trustworthy and credible in all ethnic communities. Staff comprising representatives solely from the majority population would have difficulty in achieving the trust and confidence of the minority community(ies). Absence of such trust would consequently reduce the effectiveness of the centre in question in inter-ethnic relations. In line with several NDC staff, however, we fully recognise that the co-ordinators need to be professionally qualified in order to accomplish their tasks. Otherwise, the hiring of, for instance, a minority representative in an NDC office could easily backfire. However, we believe that potentially qualified persons are relatively equally distributed among all ethnic communities. The difficulty lies in their identification and motivation.

Interviews with several NDC staff revealed that a strong comprehension of inter-ethnic relations is not always internalised, and that some of the centres need to be challenged on the very basics of the project values. For instance, some NDC staff were apparently not able to rise above the current inter-ethnic discourse in their own community. They thus tended to reflect his/her group’s stereotypic rhetoric when describing the inter-ethnic situation in their particular area. It is, however, important to underscore that a high level of reflection and sensitivity was shown by

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19 This is particularly the case in relation to recent developments in Kosovo. See also chapter 3 on some of the recent developments.
21 I.e. convincing inter-ethnic neutrality and impartiality.
22 An opposite approach was demonstrated in the response of an NDC staff member to the question of minority discrimination in his own community: “Of course it exists. Name me a place in the world where minorities are not discriminated”. After such a clear and principal statement, it is always possible, and indeed meaningful, to elaborate on the complexity of the issue of minority discrimination in relation to stability and peace processes (e.g. on the development of an exclusive minority policy). In fact, on this issue we would argue that the factors are not interchangeable – the line of arguments can often reveal whether or not the interlocutor represents the minority or the majority population. For instance, it is easier to support your own group’s struggle for increased rights in a neighbouring country than to acknowledge the same rights for minorities in your own community.
the large majority of the co-ordinators, who openly and willingly discussed discrimination patterns and ethnic stereotyping within their local context. We also realise that some inter-ethnic contexts are less hostile to inter-ethnic reconciliation than others, and that centres working in tense inter-ethnic communities consequently need more support from the PM in order to function consistently in keeping with overall project values and objectives.

Secondly, we experienced that several centres need further support in order to view their work in a broader political and social context. This has, we believe, hinted at connections to the centres’ varying abilities to develop well-designed strategies for their programs and activities. Despite the fact that the majority of centres are able to portray the political and inter-ethnic situation in their local and/or regional context in an adequate and generally convincing manner, more detailed expositions on the rationale for the selection of activities, do not always seem coherent or focused. This is also our assessment when reading several centres’ planning documents where the analyses of political, societal, and inter-ethnic conditions do not always lead to a stringent selection of programs. Although we recognise the general needs for most activities conducted by the NDCs, we question: 1) if all activities outlined should be conducted by an NDC, and 2) whether the centres are prioritising and focusing their capacities in accordance with the overall aims of the project.

Thirdly, and in relation to the above, interviews revealed a lack of common understanding among the NDC staff of the project concept and aims. This was not only apparent among more recently hired staff, but also amongst some of the NDC veterans. It is our understanding that this situation could in fact be related to diverging interpretations of the project concept within the PM, which we believe is mirrored in varying approaches among the NDCs. Consequently, activities where the reconciliation and conflict prevention aspects are absent, or where it is difficult to see the link between an activity and the overall project objective, can be found in all centres.

**General recommendations**

- It is essential that each and every NDC is represented by co-ordinators who fully recognise the project’s core values, and who have internalised the overall philosophy of the project.
- The network and the NDC’s must strive towards being more focused with regard to their mandates and professional orientations. This is a decisive factor in securing the centres’ comparative advantage on the local NGO scene. Orientations that are either too broad or diffuse can jeopardise the NDC’s reputation for professionalism and seriousness.
- The NDCs should conduct their mission professionally, precisely and with determination. NDCs should focus on, and target activities on the most vital and

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23 See chapter thirteen for further elaboration on the Norwegian Partners.
24 It is important to underline that some recommendations are seen as more urgent than others. It is important to stress that several of the suggestions made in this report cannot be implemented within a short period, but should rather be viewed within the frames of a long-term project development.
burning issues related to inter-ethnic relations.\textsuperscript{25} In order to do so, the staff must be totally committed, be willing to take public stands with clarity and conviction, and they should never compromise on their basic values or professionalism.

- It is crucial that the NDC's activities are knowledge-based and well planned. The effectiveness and relevance of an NDC is also related to how the advance planning process has been conducted. It is important that strategies not be developed in an NDC vacuum, but in dialogue with vital partners, e.g. the network, the PM, local authorities, target group representatives and relevant institutions, thus evolving from a larger and more integrated process.

- The NDCs, the Network, and the project as such, are responsible for achieving results. It is important to conduct activities where outcome can be traced and a potential for impact are present. This requires that activities to a greater degree be structured in relation to organised settings (i.e. elections, refugee return, etc.), or be in co-operation with organisations of various kinds (i.e. private sector, public sector, professional bodies, relevant institutions etc). Results of, for example, street performances are more difficult to trace, and should rather be conducted in connection with major events. Accordingly, the centres’ awareness of result-based management and result orientation should be improved. All activities should be structured with a view to tracing impacts in order to enhance monitoring and evaluation efforts. It is important to underline that these are only tools for a knowledge-based improvement of ongoing programs and activities. We fully acknowledge the challenges with regard to impact assessment of conflict transformation in the field, but maintain that this is vital in order to strengthen the professional capacity of the NDC work, and to develop substantial arguments for the legitimacy and efficiency of efforts. Current work in this regard should be further strengthened and developed.\textsuperscript{26}

\textit{Specific recommendations}

- Develop a stricter focus with regard to the overall aim of promoting inter-ethnic dialogue, and ensure that all NDCs and the PM share a common project philosophy and understanding of objectives.

- Ensure that the NDC's activities focus on “burning issues” and tension-ridden settings, and that the NDCs become more visible in the field (not only in capital cities and in the NGO community).

\textsuperscript{25} By this we do not mean 'inter-ethnic' in a narrow sense, as inter-ethnic relations should be promoted both directly or indirectly, depending on the context and situation. Ahead of undertaking an activity, we suggest that the NDCs discuss the following questions: Will this activity contribute to improve inter-ethnic relations/dialogue/cooperation/reconciliation among the divided communities in its area of responsibility? And secondly, is this the best way for the centre to spend its (limited) resources in order to contribute to improve inter-ethnic relations in its community? And thirdly, are the activities on the cutting edge with regard to inter-ethnic/conflict/reconciliation developments in the various local contexts? In relation to this one should note that during the annual network meeting in Mostar in November 2002, it was agreed by the network to adopt a tighter inter-ethnic focus in the strategic planning for 2003.

\textsuperscript{26} Professional specialisation on the part of the recipients is widely.

In this respect we welcome the Monitoring & Evaluation project (see chapter Twelve on The Network).
• The PM should, in close co-operation with the network, initiate an ongoing process to further develop the Nansen Dialogue concept to ensure that the methodology and actions are relevant and effective and adjusted to changing political and inter-ethnic situations.

• The NDCs and the Network should relate and respond to the current political and inter-ethnic discourse in the various local communities and in the overall region. The NDCs should respond to serious incidents in their local communities that affect the inter-ethnic situation in their area. They should also address reports and studies made by other organisations about issues of importance to the work of the project. The extent to which the NDC’s should be more forthright in taking public stands on controversial issues in their local contexts should be contemplated.

• Develop strategies and activity planning in dialogue with partners, i.e. the network, local and central authorities (if possible), relevant local institutions and organisations, etc – in order to further strengthen the relevance of the programs. Strategies and action plans should be approved by the PM, after a quality assurance process that involves the network.

• Give stronger focus to minority return issues. In order to do so, PM should strengthen the competencies of the NDCs so as to enable them to involve themselves in this capacity.

• The PM should redefine its supervision policy and take greater responsibility for the follow-up of development of NDCs and staff.

• Strengthen the PM’s substantive follow-up of the NDCs (closer follow-up of the activities in connection with the specific political context and inter-ethnic situation).

• PM should take measures to continue working on competence building and strengthening of those NDC staff members who wish to work as facilitators and local trainers.

• Contemplate whether the reporting from the NDCs to the PM could be done less frequently but more substantially; e.g. reports on activities explained in relation to reconciliation and/or conflict resolution processes and the NDCs’ analysis of the local political and inter-ethnic situation.

• Strengthen capacity building in strategic development and result-based management in each NDC, and ensure that the Annual Plans of Action are better targeted and more focused.

• Ensure quality rather than quantity in program development and implementation.

• Introduce a set of criteria for the extension of contracts for NDC staff and avoid automatically renewable contracts. Develop M&E systems on recruitment processes and staff development in order to ensure better follow-up and support of the staff.

• The PM should take responsibility for developing systems for staff recruitment, development and capacity building. This will help avoid the danger of “staffing vacuums” whenever key staff leave the project due to professional or personal reasons.

• Ensure that all NDC’s are involved in M&E processes.

• It is vital to maintain focus on project core objectives, irrespective of the professional qualification and employment experience of individual staff members.
• Establish all the NDC’s as multi-ethnic offices.27
• Set the ten-week course in Lillehammer as a precondition for employment in the NDCs.
• Contribute to establishing research as an integral part of an overall M&E system. Secure better use of existing research and relevant reports, in order to enhance knowledge-based actions.
• The PM should facilitate discussion in the Network on actual and relevant reports (e.g. on human rights and minority issues, etc) of relevance to the NDC’s and the Network.
• The PM should contemplate seeking closer consultation with the NMFA on strategic planning and project developments.
• Reorganise the PM in order to achieve better use of resources with regard to the needs of the NDCs. Open discussion on setting up a regional co-ordinating body with, a regional co-ordinator for substantive follow-up and an administrative co-ordinator (with a similar mandate to the current Project Finance Manager) recruited from the region.

Network Development Recommendations

• Develop a substantive network identity. All NDC’s and co-ordinators must view their actions in relation to local and regional political developments, and take full responsibility for their action in relation to the network. In order to function within a regional network it is vital that all staff members are able and willing to emancipate themselves from their respective communities’ national or ethnic discourse. They must actively seek to understand the rationale behind the views and positions of other communities than their own, both as regards issues concerning the past, as well as those of the present and future.
• Prioritise network projects that can have an impact on inter-ethnic relations and reconciliation in the region (content-wise and target group-wise). Develop projects that are relevant for the overall project aim, and avoid network projects where one can question not only the relevance, but also the NDCs’ comparative advantage in the field (e.g. the planned research project on small arms).
• The NDCs should perform as mutual correctives to each other in terms of adherence to commonly defined focus, target groups and activities. Facilitate inter-office exchanges for a certain period of time so as to strengthen the network and substantive inter-collegial co-operation, and to ensure that each centre can benefit from experiences from the other NDCs. Establish a forum for discussion of current reports on political, inter-ethnic, human rights issues, and other matters that have an impact on the conditions for, and implementation of, reconciliation and conflict resolution in the region.
• Streamline and institutionalise the exchange of information within the network, for example through the circulation of a Network newsletter. Responsibility for

27 We do acknowledge that the need for multi-ethnic staff is more urgent in some NDCs in the network than others, as for instance in KIDS and Banja Luka NDC, which during the rime of our data collection had only mono-ethnic staff (see also in chapter 3 for a shortlist of some recent developments in the project).
producing the newsletter could circulate among the NDCs, with the PM having overall editorial and managerial responsibility.

- Ensure that the PM takes responsibility for network activities managed via NetCom. This is vital in order to see to it that the process is firmly integrated into the operations of each NDC. Additionally, all staff (not only the respective NetCom representatives) must relate to the network, its activities and developments in order to secure a fully integrated regional process. It is vital that Netcom is not interpreted as an external or discretionary process that only involves Netcom-coordinators. Each and every NDC must see itself as being part of a larger, integrated structure, namely the Network. Each NDC should therefore set aside time and effort on network related activities and issues.

Financial issues

- Finalise the process of establishing more transparent budget plans. We recommend that the PM provide the donor with a full financial plan for all NDC activities, including externally funded programs.
- Initiate a review of project costs in order to assess possible cost cutting that can be implemented without harming the quality of the NDCs’ activities or the PM’s follow-up of the centres.
- Introduce a differentiated system for salaries (but over time decrease rather than increase salary levels), and develop routines for training inexperienced staff over a certain period of time before hiring them on full-time salary.
- Make an assessment of the general level of the NGO-salaries in the region. Ensure that NDC-staff salaries do not contribute to further enlarging the difference between “average salaries” and NGO salaries.
- Abandon the practice of spending non-allocated funds in the late phase of the year to avoid possible budget cuts to the following year’s funding.

Co-operation in Norway and in the field

- Ensure better co-operation and coordination of activities with relevant Norwegian actors in the field.
- Ensure that the NDCs view their actions in relation to other local NGOs and relevant local/international organisations, in order to stay focused and increase their professional specialisation.

Recommendations to the donor

- Formalise contacts between the project partners and the donor through regular meetings and fixed reporting routines.
- The donor should initiate a discussion with the PM on possible further development of project, including substantive issues as well as organisational matters.
- The donor should prolong the financial support to the BDP provided that the PM implement changes in keeping of the recommendations in this report.
Chapter 3 The NDCs

Varying local political and inter-ethnic contexts shape different challenges that confront each and every centre in the network. Among the co-ordinators and staff, individual personalities, combined with differing professional backgrounds and experiences also contribute to variations with regard to strengths and weaknesses among the centres. Yet, there are also important common denominators and shared challenges that affect all centres and the network as a whole. While it is our overall understanding that the individual centres are dedicated, serious and hardworking, we nonetheless find that there to a greater or lesser extent is a shared need for professional administrative and substantive support and follow-up. Based on the interviews of the NDC co-ordinators, it is our conclusion that all centres (to varying degrees) need additional support and supervision, and we believe that the PM should strengthen its follow-up on a number of vital issues.

According to several academic studies and overall OECD/DAC guidelines, civil society organisations should maintain the objective of helping reconcile group interests over the long term. A number of studies focus particularly on the need for civic organisation to promote dialogue and co-operation in divided societies. As such, the BDP was originally established on a relevant and fruitful mandate. The question remains however how the NDCs individually and as a network should be working in order to best promote inter-ethnic reconciliation processes and conflict prevention. We argue that professional specialisation on the part of the project represents a decisive precondition for success. This implies substantive and professionally oriented actions within the framework of a clearly stated, shared and realistic objective. We underline four main criteria in order for the BDP to be considered successful. Firstly, the NDCs must be able to draw relevant political and inter-ethnic analyses of their local contexts, and to overcome the limitations inherent in the general state of the political discourse in their respective communities, both in relation to local and regional developments. This implies deep inter-ethnic sensitivity, non-nationalistic attitudes (approaches) and an analytic distance to political developments. Secondly, the NDCs must be able to define fruitful and sensible objectives, and ensure that these are safely within the overall project mandate. The third point is related to strategic planning skills and the centres’ ability to design relevant and targeted activities. Fourthly, the NDCs must focus on the implementation of planned activities, and ensure that the qualities of these are optimal. Furthermore, the NDCs should see their role in relation to other civil society projects. This implies that activities and programs where one can question the possible impacts in relation to the overall project aims should be left for other organisations with different mandates and comparative advantages in the field.

Our assessments correspond with a number of studies that discuss effectiveness and impact of reconciliation projects. Particularly interesting in this context is the study

28 Based upon interviews with the NDC-staff.
of Anderson & Olson (2003).\textsuperscript{30} The report clearly underlines the need for strategy planning based on systematic context analysis. This should constitute an ongoing process, having in mind changing political and inter-ethnic situations: “The element of a strategy cannot be static; effective strategies adapt and adjust to changing conditions”.\textsuperscript{31} The report further suggest five corresponding elements that should be considered for effectiveness:

\begin{itemize}
\item [a)] The Goal (Where are we going?)
\item [b)] Analyses of Context (Where are we now?)
\item [c)] Program Planning/Design (How shall we do it?)
\item [d)] Implementation (What can we do to go from here to there?)
\item [e)] Outcomes (With what results?)\textsuperscript{32}
\end{itemize}

It is our assessment that all the NDCs need to strengthen their performances in relation to either all, or parts of these elements. In short, we believe, firstly, that there is a general lack of focus on and understanding of the overall project objectives. Secondly, we find that there is a general lack of analysis and understanding of the contextual parameters for the project. For instance, to what extent have the centres and network as such dedicated time and effort to discuss the implications for their work on local developments, be they related to political developments or the evolving state of human and minority rights in the region? We believe that such contextual understanding would improve the realisation of project objectives. This would, thirdly, be most readily apparent in the improved design and planning of activities and programs. And finally, we believe that outcomes of activities can and should be monitored in relation to contextual and overall project objectives.

In the presentation of the NDCs we emphasise the need for better planning processes based upon systematic context analyses, more relevant and targeted activities with regard to the overall project objectives, and stronger professional focus. We argue for increased awareness of the overall project objectives among the NDC staff, and we question whether a number of the NDC’s program and activities harmonise with the BDP’s mandate. This is also important in relation to the final point of elements listed above, namely the “outcome” of the centres’ activities. It is our assessment that the project partners will benefit from developing a better awareness of their responsibility to identify activities that create results in accordance with the project’s mandate. This is, we believe, an essential factor in order to legitimise current and future financial support. Hence, we argue that the project at large need to open the discussion on the comparative advantage of the BDP (and each NDC, as well as the overall network), and to increase the professional focus and consciousness on “what are the NDC’s doing, how are they doing it, and why are they doing it”.\textsuperscript{33}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{30} Which constitutes one of the basis (together with S.E Kruse 1999) for the current M&E process initiated by the PM. The study is based upon a systematic review of a number of conflict resolution projects, including the BDP.
\textsuperscript{31} Anderson & Olson 2003: 59.
\textsuperscript{32} Anderson & Olson 2003: 71.
\textsuperscript{33} Terms of Reference:3.
\end{flushright}
Moreover, we see a need for the NDC’s to pay more attention to the quality of their work. Today we see that too many NDCs are conducting too many activities with questionable relevance in terms of the overall project objectives. The PM should therefore help raise awareness among the NDCs on the need for prioritisation, and to ensure that the number of activities does not jeopardise the quality of the work, both in terms of individual activities and for the project as a whole. This, we believe, could also stimulate the NDCs to produce more thoroughly prepared and focused plans of action.

Another recommendation is related to target groups. Although most NDCs at the present time include representatives from public structures and young politicians in their target groups, interviews with NDC-staff and the activity reports shows that the majority of NDCs continue to primarily recruit young NGO-workers to their activities. We argue that the NDCs need to recruit not only more influential segments of the different communities, but should also focus on participants that, through their occupations or in other ways, can influence or in some way affect their local or national societal contexts. These “multipliers of public opinion” can through their positions and professional endeavours have a positive impact in terms of inter-ethnic reconciliation and conflict prevention. For instance, it is usually more effective to target teachers than pupils. Moreover, in order to make changes, it is important to work with people who contribute to the preservation of conflict patterns and perspectives, as for instance “hard-line” government and political representatives. Anderson & Olson note:

> From experience, peace practitioners affirm that there are always ways to work with those who are ‘hard to reach’, because in any context these groups are not monolithic. Even in repressive governments, there are civil servants who want to do a good job, function as legitimate representatives of their offices, and work for progress in the country they serve. Even among fighters, there are those who want the fighting to end if other alternatives to make a living can be found. 34

The issue of recruitment is also linked to the degree of individual commitment and dedication of NDC-staff to be “on the cutting edge” of reconciliation processes and conflict prevention. A shared understanding of, and commitment to the objectives of the project, combined with a deep personal dedication to working for changes within local communities and societies should be decisive factors for employment as project staff. This should also include an ongoing debate within the project on issues pertaining to activism, voluntarism and the role of individuals in larger peace processes.

We realise that it can be difficult, and in some instances even dangerous, to take a clear, consistent and public stand in opposition to hard-line attitudes in ethnically divided communities. However, we believe that that is exactly what is required if the project is to achieve its stated objectives. The existence in the societies of the Western Balkans of extremist attitudes and conflicting perspectives on the rights and responsibilities of various ethnic communities nevertheless constitute the very rationale for the establishment of the Nansen Dialogue Network project in the first

place. And it is precisely in order to support local activists committed to inter-ethnic reconciliation and conflict prevention that the project has its rationale and objective.

**Recent developments**

Since the time of our fieldwork, the BDP has undergone changes that are relevant to mention with regard to this review. A number of these developments can be related to internal discussions (centre-wise), the internal M&E-process, as well as the external review. One should note that this is by no means a complete list of the recent changes in the BDP. Some developments have also been mentioned in relation to the presentation of the recommendations under the respective centres.

- Banja Luka NDC is now in the process of identifying new staff with minority background.
- Kosovar Nansen Dialogue has changed its name to ‘Kosovan Nansen Dialogue’, and has become a multi-ethnic office with regard to the core staff members.
- The KND staff in Mitrovica are now located in a common office space in the confidence zone in the town.
- NDC Montenegro is in the process of hiring staff with minority background.
- The Network Dimension of the project is strengthened through four major network projects: 1) Divided Communities, 2) School of Young Politicians, 3) Regional Conference of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding, and 4) Monitoring and Evaluation Project continues in 2004.
- The project has changed its name to ‘Nansen Dialogue Project’ to secure a more unified profile.
- A number of offices are (or have already been), in the process of restructuring their program towards a stronger and clearer inter-ethnic focus.
Chapter 4  Banja Luka NDC

Introduction
Only two of four co-ordinators from the Banja Luka office were present during the team’s visit on April 6 - 8, 2003. The two co-ordinators represent the key personnel, as the two additional staff members have only been involved since January 2003. Thus the office’s common values and program profile were thoroughly presented by the two NDC veterans in Banja Luka.

The Banja Luka NDC office was opened in 2000. The centre in Banja Luka was set up to promote the re-establishment of a multi-cultural community in Republika Srpska (RS) after the war, as well as, through the co-operation with the other BiH NDCs, to contribute to increased inter-entity co-operation in the newly formed country. In former Yugoslavia Banja Luka was acknowledged as a multi-ethnic city. Today the RS capital is predominantly Serbian. The number of minorities has been dramatically reduced, and the process of return is still very slow. A number of incidents and political developments have brought to light a community marked by strong nationalistic attitudes, and lack of substantial inter-ethnic co-operation and a vision for a common future. The environment for inter-ethnic dialogue is still difficult, and signifies a major challenge for the NDC Banja Luka office.

Profile and activities
According to the Plan of Action (PoA) 2003, inter-ethnic dialogue, reconciliation and co-operation on BiH level are given priority in 2003, but dialogue activities also include intra-ethnic seminars with the aim of breaking down prejudices among members of the majority population. NDC Banja Luka identifies this year’s tasks as being promoting general tolerance, encouraging activism in a society marked by passivity and lack of individual and collective responsibility, and working on information transparency and voluntarism. Additionally the centre is focusing its work on promoting co-operation between NGOs and governmental institutions (on RS level). The plan states that the “orientation” will be to:

- focus more on partnership projects aimed at establishing co-operation with individuals and organizations that can influence (...) the changes in the society
- create a “critical mass” (...) that will support society changes
- respond to burning issues by organising activities in accordance with NDC Mission
- organise short seminars in local language and engage more people in the NDC activities and development of civil society
- promote voluntarism” 35

The activities for 2003 are identified within four program lines:

- Peace Building advocacy
- Education for democratic participation
- Inter-cultural exchange forum
- Public awareness / a tool for change 36

Integrated in NDC Banja Luka’s activities and goals is also co-operation with the other NDCs in BiH. This includes a number of activities with a clear inter-ethnic/inter-entity component. E.g. during spring 2002, the Banja Luka office initiated a seminar on war crimes, as well as a seminar under the headline “Does B&H exist and is it possible to live together.”

Each program line contains a wide range of activities. Under the label ‘peace building advocacy’ the centre conducts dialogue seminars dealing with issues of conflict management, cultural identity, conflict theory etc. Additionally, a T4T-seminar, a dialogue seminar and joint BiH-seminars sort under this label. The second program, ‘Education for democratic participation’, is an attempt to establish a forum of intellectuals in RS – described in the PoA as a “critical mass” who “will act as agents of change in every day life.” According to the annual plan, activities under this program line are also to be conducted in outside Banja Luka (“rural areas”). The activities provide education in a number of social/political issues (e.g. theory on democratic practice, civil society development, Nansen dialogue approach, etc). Moreover, the office carries out a ‘Dialogue school for social changes’. The lectures are held on the NDC premises in Banja Luka and focus on parallel topics such as the above-mentioned ‘education for democratic participation’ project. Furthermore, NDC BL organises workshops on capacity building that target NGO workers in rural areas. The third program line, ‘Inter-Cultural exchange forum’, contains a number of cultural events, with the aim of opposing ”xenophobia, trash culture expansion, bad values etc”. Finally, the last program line, ‘Public Awareness – a tool for change’, covers media projects, round tables, discussion forums, debates, lectures, etc. This includes a TV-show which aims at creating critical public debates on a number of vital and sensitive issues which can potentially reach out to the broader public, not only in RS, but also in larger part of the region. Generally, the NDC Banja Luka defines their target groups as ‘mid-range leaders’ (e.g. young politicians, media representatives and religious leaders), grass-roots leaders, youth, and NGO workers.

The program and activities as described in the various documents indicates that the centre has interpreted the project philosophy in terms of a broader civil society engagement (which includes the promotion of inter-ethnic co-operation). Accordingly, the centre’s identity or profile seems primarily to be as a pedagogical resource centre promoting dialogue skills and general tolerance in the civil society community in Banja Luka. According to the external partners and Lillehammer and office alumni in Banja Luka, the centre is recognised as being a serious actor on the NGO scene in the RS capital. The bi-monthly reports, as well as their annual Plan of

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37 April and February 2002.
39 Plan of Action 2003 p. 12. The NDC Banja Luka states that by this program it is actively searching for different approaches to its mission. The activities include information campaigns on relevant education possibilities as well as other public events such as last year’s “On the road Film Festival”. In addition, they include work on the development of new methodology in dialogue work, for instance through cultural expressions such as theatre/drama.
40 For instance the Buka TV show, a joint project of NDC, Youth Centre for Informative Decontamination and Alternativa TV station from Banja Luka.
41 E.g. NDC-staff from Osijek told that they were able to watch Buka Show from their hometown in Croatia.
Action (2003), demonstrate a variety of activities, of which some seem to have a fairly high public profile. It is our understanding that the centre is recognised as an NGO dealing with issues related to the development of general tolerance and dialogue. Furthermore, interviews with the centre's alumni underlined the youth profile (i.e. target groups). The establishment of an Internet club in the office premises supports this view. We do not have sufficient information to draw firm conclusions regarding the NDC Banja Luka’s reputation or visibility in RS in general.

**Strengths and weaknesses**

*The program*

The list of activities contains some interesting projects. Among these are the workshop program in rural areas and the “Public Awareness Program (e.g. the abovementioned TV show). We view this as relevant for the work and mission of the NDC, and believe that the show has increased the centre’s visibility in and outside the Banja Luka area. Furthermore, we believe that the initiative to work with IDP/refugees (children) in Banja Luka is positive, and has the potential to be developed into a fully-fledged program on IDP/return issues. The current activities are so far limited with regard to target groups (children), number of participants (two groups of ten children) as well as in the amount of activities. The seminar on war crimes organised during 2002 does also represent an important and targeted issue intimately linked to reconciliation processes in the country/region. We suggest that this topic could be further discussed in activities also in the future program of the BL-office and the BDP.

Our main assessment regarding the program is in line with our general recommendation of a strengthening of the inter-ethnic dimension and a decrease in the focus on general civil society development with NGO-staff/students/youth remaining the de facto target groups. We acknowledge the need for promoting all of the values and issues stated in the Banja Luka office’s Plan of Action, but we assess that the office should further focus its efforts on issues related to reconciliation and

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42 Based upon interviews with external partners, office’s alumni and from a number of activity reports and bi-monthly reports written during the first part of 2003.
43 It is also our opinion that public debates (e.g. TV shows or round table discussions) can be used as a background for recruitment to follow-up activities where the issues are addressed in a more thorough manner (e.g. in dialogue seminars).
44 The Banja Luka staff commented however that this was a pilot project, which can be further developed with regard to activities, target groups and number of participants. It is our assessment that a fully developed program on the issue of return is an example of a direct and targeted action towards the building of a multi-ethnic society in RS. Furthermore, the return issue has been underlined as a main objective for the Banja Luka office in the project’s annual grant proposals to the NMFA, e.g. in the proposal for 2001.
45 The seminar report states: “The purpose is to understand the concept of war crime and explore whether and how the investigation of war crimes fits into the task of rebuilding a war-torn society. Can there be peace without justice? Can there be justice without bringing criminals to justice? Does reconciliation require that the truth be told or are some truths best left untold.”
46 Impression from reading the office’s activity reports (e.g. reports on Free Activities, bi-monthly reports) on implemented seminars/activities, participant lists etc. This was also the impression gained when discussing the profile with a group of NDC BL’s alumni, who focused on the office’s efforts towards NGOs and youth in the BL community.
IDP-return in RS. When looking more thoroughly through the 2003 Plan of Actions/bi-monthly report/activity reports on the website etc, the inter-ethnic dimension also seems less focused than stated in the introductory paragraphs, and leaves the impression that the most targeted inter-ethnic component of the Banja Luka NDC’s program is present in their joint activities with the other BiH-centres. The Buka TV-show represent however a clear exception in this respect. Reports from the office show in fact that during 2002/2003 the TV-Buka has distinctively promoted inter-ethnic relations and reconciliation in the RS public. Furthermore, based upon interviews/discussions with minority representatives in Banja Luka/RS it is our assessment that the office could increase the number of participants from the Bosniac and Croat communities to NDC activities, by being established as a multi-ethnic office. This raises also the question of the office’s credibility in non-Serbian communities in Banja Luka (RS (see below on “The office”) as being a mono-ethnic office. We support the office approach to work outside the city of Banja Luka. In line with our general recommendations we believe it is vital that the centre focuses its activities on the burning issues and in areas where the need for reconciliation efforts are most urgent. Thus, we recommend that the office increase the number of activities outside Banja Luka to areas where inter-ethnic relations and return processes are particularly pertinent and/or problematic. Finally, we are questioning the need for an NDC to spend limited financial resources on an inter-net club, and question its value in relation to reconciliation efforts and inter-ethnic dialogue.

The staff
During our interviews the office came across as ambitious with regard to its seriousness and willingness to work, which are vital criteria for being a strong and well functioning team. Clearly the co-ordinators are investing long hours in the office and on activities. They take great pride in being an orderly office, with professional administration and capacity to meet deadlines etc. The co-ordinators were also among the very few who explicitly referred to external research and international reports when presenting the local political situation in the field. It is not so clear however, how the office makes use of the research in relation to strategic planning and implementation of activities, or if such reports are being used to raise debates on relevant issues either internally in the office, locally in RS, or at the network level. It is our view that the office could benefit from bringing the information and analyses from reports and research into strategy planning, also in relation to network activities, such as BiH-cooperation.

The office identified the need for increased team-building – being a relatively newly-formed working team, and the need to work on strengthening the office structures as well as to reinforce routines for follow-up activities for the alumni as the main weaknesses of the centre. Our assessment is that the office seems to suffer from a lack of substantial inter-ethnic correctives in their daily work. In line with our main findings, we see this in relation to the mono-ethnic office environment. This does not imply that the co-ordinators presented negative attitudes towards minority population in RS. During the interviews however the co-ordinators were not as sensitive toward and conscious of inter-ethnic issues and majority/minority-relations, as one should
expect from NDC workers. For instance, neither of the co-ordinators was able to survey in what way the office could benefit from being a multi-ethnic office. The co-ordinators were not able to discuss the issue as a matter of principle, but only in relation to former experiences and/or predicted difficulties of identifying potential staff with both minority background and an adequate professional/personal background. In line with a number of NDC-staff, however, we maintain that a neutral image is a prerequisite and a basic condition for being a successful promoter of inter-ethnic relations, and that this neutrality cannot be achieved in a mono-ethnic office working in an inter-ethnically disturbed community. Hence, the Banja Luka-office needs to be established as a multi-ethnic office. It is nevertheless important to emphasise that our main criticism towards the establishment of a mono-ethnic office in Banja Luka is not mainly directed toward the NDC, but primarily toward the PM who gave permission to hire new staff resulting in a mono-ethnic office in 2003.

Finally, we believe the office needs support in order to develop better strategic capacities. This is also the assessment gained from reading their documents, which contain a number of vital challenges for peaceful democratic development in RS, but where the relevant social/political/inter-ethnic analyses do not lead to a stringent selection of programs in line with the overarching project philosophy. Again, our criticism is not mainly directed towards the NDC, but towards the PM’s lack of substantive follow-up. This lack of follow-up is especially regrettable not least due to the office’s recent history of internal difficulties and the highly charged political/inter-ethnic context in which the staff is working.

**Recommendations**

- Restructure the program and develop a strong focus on inter-ethnic relations in all activities.

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47 Interviews conducted in April 2003. Our assessments have also been based upon discussions with minority representatives from RS, as well as through thorough comparison with other NDC staff. One should note however that during a meeting with the NDCs, the PM, the NMFA and the reviewers in October 2003, the Banja Luka NDC’s representative stated that the office was aware of the need to be re-established as a multi-ethnic office. She also emphasised the office’s dedicated mission for inter-ethnic relations and reconciliation in RS.

48 The BL NDC was originally established as a multi-ethnic office. In 2002 the former NDC-team in Banja Luka faced substantial internal disagreements on how to work and perform as responsible co-ordinators. As a result, and based on the intervention of the PM, two co-ordinators (a Bosniac and a co-ordinator with mixed Croat-Serb background) left the office during fall 2002. For some months the office continued with only two staff. In January however, two additional Serbian staff were hired from the Banja Luka NGO- and media scene.

49 For instance, we believe that by including high quality Bosniac/Croat staff, the office could increase participation in their activities from the Bosniac/Croat communities. On the issue of ethnic neutrality, see also chapter One on main findings.

50 The Banja Luka staff approached the PM to seek advice on staff recruitment late 2002 and asked if a multi-ethnic composition of the team was needed. The PM emphasised professional background and personal abilities rather than ethnic background and thus allowed the office to employ additional staff resulting in a mono-ethnic office environment. One should note however, that during interviews with the PM-staff (August 2003), it became apparent that not all the PM-representatives were equally content with the current mono-ethnic staff in the BL-office.
• The IDP component of the office’s activity should be developed into a fully-fledged program targeting all ethnic communities.
• Work on substantive capacity building.
• With support from the PM and the network, the centre should be established as a multi-ethnic office. We stress that prospective new staff members need to be professionally and personally qualified for the NDC mission in RS.\textsuperscript{51}
• Develop better routines for participant recruitment in order to secure a better ethnic representation and a higher number of participants.

\textsuperscript{51} One should note that the Banja Luka staff is currently in the process of identifying new staff with minority background.
Chapter 5  Belgrade Nansen Centre

Introduction
The research team visited the Belgrade NDC office from April 8-10, 2003 and conducted interviews with all four co-ordinators as well as with two assistants.

The Belgrade Nansen Centre was established in 1999 with the preliminary mandate to promote dialogue between the Serbian and international communities. According to the NMFA, the rationale behind the MFA’s backing for the establishment of the Belgrade office was also to support the democratic forces in Milosovic's Serbia. Additionally, the NMFA had become increasingly aware of the negative developments in Vojvodina (mainly as a consequence of the large numbers of refugees from Croatia and Bosnia) as well as potential inter-ethnic conflict in the Sandzak region – and saw the establishment of an NDC in Serbia as relevant in this regard, as well.52 Today Serbia faces a number of challenges, most of them deeply inter-linked with post-war and transition processes. The inter-ethnic context within Serbia differs from region to region, with ominous signs of increased inter-ethnic tensions in Sandzak, ethnically segregated communities in the multi-ethnic Vojvodina-region, and periodically open inter-ethnic conflict between ethnic Albanians and Serbs in Southern Serbia. These developments, together with the fragile IDP/refugee-situation in Central Serbia, calls for increased attention and preventive conflict measures.

Profile and activities
According the Plan of Action 2003 the overall goals for the Belgrade Nansen Centre are to:

- promote modern society values
- encourage peaceful conflict resolution through dialogue
- promote co-operation between Balkan states
- create network (of BNC/Nansen alumni) in Serbia
- establish co-operation/partnership with relevant national and international NGOs
- support multi-ethnic dialogue in Serbia
- decrease prejudices and growing intolerance in Serbia and its civil society
- promote active participation in strengthening Nansen Network in the Balkans

In 2002, the office shifted its focus towards a more clear-cut inter-ethnic/post-war-related focus – with conflict prevention based on dialogue activities as the main objective. Consequently, the office has identified its mandate as including activities in the following areas:

- Inter-ethnic challenges in Vojvodina (partly in co-operation with NDC Osijek)
- IDP situation in Central Serbia
- Inter-ethnic challenges in Sandzak (partly in co-operation with NDC Montenegro)
- Inter-ethnic challenges in Southern Serbia (partly in co-operation with Centre for New Visions in Preshevo)
- Trade Unions co-operation
- Tolerance of Differences

52 Information from interview with the Deputy Director General, Head of Norwegian MFA Section for Western Balkan Affairs.
The office conducts the main part of its activities outside Belgrade. The co-ordinators have divided the regions between them, and the programs have different approaches depending on the centre’s analyses of the different regional challenges as well as of the different co-ordinators’ professional background and particular skills. Seminars and workshops are, nevertheless, the main activity in all the BNC programs. In Southern Serbia and Sandžak, the BNC has direct and precise focus on establishing and continuing inter-ethnic dialogue among local leaders representing conflicting communities. In Vojvodina the initial target groups were NGO representatives, youth and refugees gathered in seminars, workshops and summer schools. In 2003, however, the BNC is working towards approaching more influential levels in the Vojvodina society (e.g. local leaders and political representatives). Additionally, the Vojvodina program is promoting cross-border co-operation with Croatia, targeting local authorities with the aim of promoting Serbian/Croatian co-operation on common burning challenges, e.g. return of refugees (partly in co-operation with NDC Osijek). In Central Serbia the BNC has identified the IDP situation as its main target area. The strategy is to address the IDP situation through public information (e.g. media campaigns etc) and to organise public happenings where both local community and IDP/refugee representatives take part. The "Trade Union program" is promoting co-operation between trade unions in Serbia to strengthen their capacities for co-operation and negotiations between respective confederations as well as with the Serbian Government. The "Tolerance of Differences" is promoting tolerance and inclusive values in relation to gender issues, people with disabilities, sexual minorities etc.

We lack data on the visibility and profile reputation of the BNC in all of its areas of activity. This is mainly due to our lack of time to travel to the different regions where the BNC is active. From interviews we have, however, noted that BNC efforts in Southern Serbia have been recognised by local community leaders as well as the OSCE and others. Our impression is that the centre is not very visible in the Belgrade context, but we see the centre’s reputation in Vojvodina, Sandžak, and Central and Southern Serbia as more important.

**Strengths and weaknesses**

**The program**

It is our opinion that the BNC has increased its relevance and potential level of impact with a more defined inter-ethnic and IDP/refugee-oriented perspective in its program for 2003. By focusing on inter-ethnic conflict prevention in Sandžak, Southern Serbia, Vojvodina and the IDP situation in Central Serbia, one can easily agree that the centre has identified "burning issues" all clearly within the mandate of the Balkan Dialogue Project. The BNC’s efforts to co-operate with other NDC’s on specific projects are fine initiatives that could perhaps be further developed. We also support the centre's stated aim of reaching more influential levels in their working areas in order to strengthen the impact of their actions. We are however questioning...
whether the stated goals of promoting co-operation between Balkan states represent a realistic aim for the centre. It is important to underline that we view the work on Serbian-Albanian dialogue in Southern Serbia as a prime example of teamwork and joint efforts between the BNC, local activists in South Serbia\textsuperscript{54} and the PM. In addition, the NMFA has supported this work with additional funds as well as participation in program activities etc.

Despite the number of well-targeted activities, the office could increase its program focus. Firstly, the "Trade Union program" lacks a reconciliation or inter-ethnic dimension. We recognise the need for this issue to be dealt with in a Serbian societal context, but we question its relevance with regard to the overall project philosophy. This corresponds, as well, to our assessment of the "Tolerance of Differences". We acknowledge the need to add force to general tolerance in Serbia, but believe that this is outside the mandate of the Balkan Dialogue Project. Moreover, we consider that the remaining program represents huge challenges in the coming year and will require the full attention and capacity of the four office co-ordinators. Lack of an inter-ethnic component is also the case for the IDP-program, but it is nevertheless related to broader regional conflict issues (i.e. the relation between Kosovo and Serbia proper) and is therefore relevant in relation to the overall project aim. We support the program approach on public information (as planned for in the annual strategy), but recommend the BNC to develop additional activities, planned in dialogue with IDP representatives and local leaders. The program’s Kosovo-link also raises the question of further and more developed co-operation with Nansen-centres in Kosovo.\textsuperscript{55} With regard to the internal division of labour, we wonder whether it would be relevant to involve those members of the BNC's staff with personal IDP experiences, in the further planning/implementation of the IDP program in Central Serbia?

Finally, the principle of inter-ethnic staffing should also be discussed in relation to the BNC. E.g. it is vital that programs focusing on inter-ethnic issues in areas such as Southern Serbia are implemented in co-operation with local ethnic Albanians and Serbs. In relation to this, the office should discuss if parts of the website that describes activities in Southern-Serbia should also be written in Albanian language.

\textit{The office}

The BNC co-ordinators are generally reflective and articulate with regard to political issues, strategic thinking, and inter-ethnic understanding. We were convinced that the co-ordinators share the project idea and the core values, and that the majority of the co-ordinators also have the capacity to further develop the concept of the mission and methodology in a constructive manner. This, we believe, is vital to ensure that the

\textsuperscript{54}This includes also 'Centre for New Vision', a group of young Albanian and Serb NGO-workers in Presho that was associated with the Nansen Network in 2003.

\textsuperscript{55}The BNC has commented that the office has already been involved in activities in Kosovo through co-facilitating/co-planning seminars (together with the PM) for the Kosovo NDCs activities. Additionally, BNC-staff has been facilitated seminar for Kosovo Serbs. Participants from this seminar are now working in Kosovan Nansen Dialogue.
clear-cut pedagogical focus is developed into operational actions that can increase the BNC’s impact on inter-ethnic developments in their area of responsibility. It is also our opinion that the dominating part of their program demonstrates the centre's capacity to take political and inter-ethnic analyses further into well-targeted activities.56

It is also our assessment that the centre has challenges with regard to their role within the Nansen network. Several other colleagues in the network as well as representatives from the PM have remarked that the office should discuss ways and means to improve its co-operation in the network. Finally, we recommend that the PM, together with the BNC/network and the donor should open a discussion on an overall structural issue, namely the current location of the office in relation to the centre's de facto areas of activity. The issue is of relevance not only with regard to logistics and practicalities in the daily work of the BNC, but equally related to the issue of impact and visibility in the respective communities where the BNC is active. The discussion could therefore be related to the following questions: Is it possible for the BNC-staff to be as responsive to political and inter-ethnic developments as is required without being present on a permanent basis? Additionally, does the capital location in relation to the BNC’s areas of activities harmonise with the BDP’s emphasis on building on local initiatives and engagement, together with the stated intent of providing a meeting space – such as an NDC - for persons seeking a venue at which to discuss and act upon inter-ethnic issues. We would also like to emphasise this issue in relation to future funding and the donor’s potential reluctance to support a continuation of the Belgrade premises if other centres are established in targeted areas in Serbia.

**Recommendations** 57

- Further increase the program focus on inter-ethnic issues.
- Develop stronger co-operation between the co-ordinators and the various programs, both with regard to planning and implementation.
- Expand and enhance co-operation with partners and activists within Serbia but outside Belgrade. Open the discussion on the future organisation and location in dialogue with the PM, network, donor and local partners.
- Increase the level of contacts and quality of contact and co-operation with the network in addition to the ongoing joint activities and co-operation with NDC Osijek and NDC Montenegro. Consider whether the IDP-program could involve co-operation with NDC’s in Kosovo.

56 In this regard it is worth mentioning that after being present at an inter-ethnic seminar for local political representatives in Southern Serbia arranged by the BNC, the counsellor at the Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade expressed her view of the event as among the most positive of its kind in Southern Serbia today.

57 One should note that the BNC has commented that it has, based upon an internal evaluation process, tightened the program in line with our recommendations. That includes the transference of the ‘Trade Union’ program to a relevant organisation, as well as giving the ‘Tolerance of Difference’ program a clear inter-ethnic focus.
• Open the discussion on including Albanian language on the BNC’ website & relevant documents in relation to the BNC’s program on Serbian-Albanian dialogue in Southern Serbia.
Chapter 6  Kosovan Nansen Dialogue – KND

Introduction
Since the research team visited KIDS and Nansen Dialogue Mitrovica (NDM) 3-7 April 2003, the project management has been reviewing project activities in Kosovo. It has been decided that KIDS and NDM shall merge into one centre called ‘Kosovan Nansen Dialogue’, with offices in Mitrovica and Pristina. The new centre will be presented below, after a presentation of KIDS and NDM as they were constituted during the time of our data collection. At the end of this chapter, we will follow up with our recommendations for the activities in Kosovo, although some of them have already been addressed with the recent organisational changes.

Kosova Initiative for Democratic Society (KIDS)
The NDC in Pristina was established under the name Kosova Initiative for Democratic Society (KIDS) in July 2000. Pristina had originally set up the first Nansen Centre in the region, established in 1997. Due to the deteriorating situation in Kosovo with the stepping up of Milosevic’ regime’s suppression of the people in Kosovo in 1998/9, the centre was eventually closed.

KIDS was established in 2000, and was primarily mandated to work on intra-ethnic dialogue in the Albanian community and democratisation of the Kosovo society, as well as to prepare the ground for inter-ethnic dialogue in the future. The conditions for working on inter-ethnic dialogue in Kosovo are still challenging. The inter-ethnic situation is relatively tense and the human rights situation for ethnic minorities is cause for concern.

Profile and activities
KIDS’ overall program focuses primarily on efforts to strengthen the civil society in Kosovo. The office’s main objective according to the PoA for 2003 is to build an open and inclusive society by facilitating inter-ethnic dialogue. Furthermore, KIDS’ will work to provide space for civic engagement, promotion of democracy, transparency and civic society, human rights, human capacity building and promotion of gender equality. KIDS has three programs:

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58 A meeting was held in Pristina with the project management, KIDS and NDM between 25 and 27 May 2003.
59 We received slightly contradictory information from the PM during our interviews in August 2003 on whether the first suggested name (Kosovar Nansen Dialogue) would be decided upon later or whether a final decision had been taken on the name. Nevertheless, during September 2003, the name was eventually changed to Kosovan Nansen Dialogue. See also below on further discussions on the name issue.
60 The Kosovo Albanians in KIDS argued that the environment was not conducive to working on inter-ethnic dialogue at that time, and that it could be dangerous to work on inter-ethnic dialogue with the Serbs, as they could become the targets of extremists if they did so. Thus, KIDS was established with only Albanian staff, and initially only worked on intra-ethnic dialogue and democratisation of the Kosovo society. This decision, approved by the PM, provoked ethnic Serbs in the network who felt that by allowing a mono-ethnic KIDS to be part of the network, the Nansen Dialogue Project had betrayed their commitment to inter-ethnic dialogue (Aarbakke 2002).
61 See Amnesty International’s report “Prisoners in our own home” Amnesty International’s concerns for the rights of ethnic minorities in Kosovo/Kosova” 30 April 2003.
According to KIDS, the major program in 2003 is the inter-ethnic program, which consists of three main parts:

- Inter-ethnic dialogue seminars with Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs (and other ethnic groups)
- KIDS co-operation and facilitation in inter-ethnic seminars with Catholic Relief Service (CRS) in Mitrovica
- Cross-border dialogue seminars with neighbouring countries

KIDS’ second program is the work with LOGO, which is a think-tank working on research, analysis, and policy recommendations, established in September 2002. According to information from the PM, KIDS anticipated that LOGO would comprise people from different backgrounds, and that the reports would be published in three languages (English, Albanian and Serbian). KIDS also considered looking into the situation of ethnic minorities in Kosovo, which according to our knowledge has still not been accomplished. KIDS’ third program is public debates, in which three were planned related to the inter-ethnic situation. Debates have been organised on topics such as the relationship between Belgrade and Pristina, the decentralisation process of Kosovo’s municipalities, US policy towards the Balkans after 11 September, and educational reform in Kosovo.

**Strengths and weaknesses**

**The program**

Cooperating partners and persons familiar with KIDS’ work stated that KIDS is active and visible in Pristina, and is well known among the young urban population. KIDS received attention for organising public debates and publications in newspapers, in particular their LOGO report on higher education. However, one can question whether KIDS is equally known in Pristina for its inter-ethnic dialogue work. External informants had no information on KIDS’ reputation within the minority communities. KIDS has so far not worked directly in the enclaves in Kosovo, apart from co-operation with a former seminar-alumni from the enclaves on recruitment of Kosovo Serb participants to inter-ethnic seminars. The co-ordinators in KIDS, however, stressed that they had to turn down several participants, including minority representatives in the last inter-ethnic seminar, which they saw as a sign of KIDS’ becoming more well known and respected in all communities.

KIDS deserves credit for eventually organising inter-ethnic dialogue seminars in 2002. We believe, however, that this was primarily a result of external pressure.

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62 So far, they have published three reports: one on higher education in Kosovo, one on small arms, and one on the administration of Pristina municipality.

63 The LOGO report on higher education in Kosovo was published in Koha Ditore.

64 KIDS (with assistance from NDM) organised their first inter-ethnic seminar for Serbs and Albanians from Kosovo in Struga (Macedonia) in August 2002. The seminar had 20 participants, where Serbs and Albanians were equally represented. Facilitators were PM staff. The seminar was perceived as a success by both organisers and facilitators. Since then, three more seminars with Albanian and Serb
Moreover, one should question whether KIDS could have organised its seminar earlier, having in mind that the NDM, which works in an even more sensitive and dangerous environment, held their first dialogue seminar in 2001. KIDS’ lack of emphasis on inter-ethnic issues during this period should, in addition to the precarious security situation in Kosovo, be seen in relation to the agreement with the PM in 2000 where intra-ethnic issues and democratisation were defined as the main objectives. In fact, one of the co-ordinators stated that KIDS possibly could have started earlier, whereas another staff member admitted that KIDS was pushed toward a greater inter-ethnic orientation by the activities of the NDM. A PM-representative also suggested that the fact that NDM was working on inter-ethnic dialogue in Kosovo might have given KIDS an alibi for not moving into this area of work sooner. In relation to the issue of security, one should also ask why KIDS did not initiate inter-ethnic activities that include non-Serb minorities, while waiting for a momentum to target Albanian-Serb relations. Hence, we question the genuine will within KIDS at that time to enter the field of inter-ethnic dialogue. Secondly, it is our opinion that the PM could have played a more active role in this sense, and stimulated the office’s inter-ethnic orientation from the very beginning.

KIDS have so far not worked on issues related to return of IDPs and refugees to Kosovo. While the office demonstrated a positive attitude when asked if this could be a field for future activities, they had not taken any specific steps on their own to draw up plans for a project in this regard. As commented by a former co-ordinator and Lillehammer alumnus, KIDS could offer its services (inter-ethnic dialogue) to the government, in order to promote returns. With a stronger focus on return issues in Kosovo, we also see a huge potential for co-operation on network level, between KIDS (KND) and BNC and Montenegro NDC.

According to the PoA, the inter-ethnic program is stated to be the main activity. Looking more thoroughly through the activities, we question if this is actually the case. It is our opinion however that there is currently a momentum to work on reconciliation, inter-ethnic relations, and integration of minorities in Kosovo. Although the security situation is still fragile, there have been some positive changes that have opened a window of opportunity to work on inter-ethnic relations. Hence, KIDS should exploit this current political atmosphere and become clearer and more insistent on its stand and inter-ethnic activities, as was recommended by co-operating participants from Kosovo have been organised, as both the organisers and the facilitators were inspired by the successful first seminar in Struga.

65 From the PM, which in turn was under pressure from the donor.
66 Their political party program, the public debates, and LOGO all primarily target the majority population. We are curious as to whether KIDS’ publications and promotional materials are also available in minority languages (e.g. the LOGO reports and KIDS posters for the voters campaign.) We also wonder how many non-Albanians have been present in the public debates, and ask ourselves whether KIDS has made an effort to invite representatives from ethnic minorities to participate, either as audience or speakers. KIDS’ web site, at the time of the data collection, did not reflect the changes in KIDS’ objectives for 2003, the inter-ethnic seminars were not mentioned, and there were no links to NDC Banja Luka and Belgrade NDC. At the time of writing (August 2003), the web page has been updated, but is still under reconstruction, with documents available in English in addition to Albanian.
67 This work has also been blessed from the highest political level, in particular by Prime Minister Rexhepi, who on several occasions has made encouraging and positive statements regarding return of IDPs, integration and rights of ethnic minorities in Kosovo.
partners and persons familiar with KIDS’ work. A former Lillehammer alumnus and a co-ordinator at KIDS also challenged KIDS in this respect.

We believe KIDS should become more focused, prioritise more, and narrow their field of work into activities that are more explicitly linked to inter-ethnic issues. Consequently, KIDS needs to develop its identity in accordance with the Balkan Dialogue Project’s overall philosophy and objectives with the distinct aim and focus of promoting inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo.

The staff
KIDS has developed strong local ownership. Its members are active, hard working, and have a well-developed team spirit in the office, with all staff expressing satisfaction with the co-operation. With regard to political and inter-ethnic attitudes, it is our assessment that the majority among the KIDS’ staff to a large extent mirror the current Kosovo Albanian political discourse and perceptions when describing political and inter-ethnic developments. Hence, KIDS needs to become more professional in terms of questioning developments in their own society as well as to develop a more self-critical stand regarding the way it presents inter-ethnic relations (e.g. the majority-minority situation) and reconciliation processes in Kosovo. It is our opinion that if KIDS includes Kosovo Serb staff members in the office, the current personnel would be confronted on a daily basis with different perceptions and attitudes with regard to social and political realities in Kosovo. Being a multi-ethnic office, KIDS would also achieve increased legitimacy in all communities. Finally, we would like to emphasise that in some political contexts (like in Pristina), the political and social discourse is likely to influence the co-ordinators more strongly than in other contexts in the network. Thus, we believe that KIDS need particular attention including guidance and assistance from the PM in this regard.

Nansen Dialogue Mitrovica (NDM)
Introduction/Background
The NDM in Mitrovica was established in April 2001 with one Kosovo Serb and one Kosovo Albanian working as co-ordinators. During the year, two additional co-ordinators were hired. Due to the security situation in a city that is severely divided into Serb and Albanian areas, the NDM co-ordinators had to work separately on each side of the river. A sub-office was established on the Southern side, and on the Northern side, the co-ordinators worked in their private homes. They met for joint

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68 Examples of such politicisation can be found in the use of Albanian language in KIDS’ documents. For instance, we find it problematic that international names are being Albanianised in bi-monthly reports, and that reports on seminars with internationals quote the facilitators as using the term ‘Kosova’, when they most likely used Kosovo.

69 The co-ordinators in KIDS showed varying degrees of understanding, awareness and self-critical attitudes when these issues were discussed during the interviews.

70 Although it is difficult to find young professional Kosovo Serbs still in Kosovo, we suggest, as advised by ex-Lillehammer alumnus and advisor to Prime Minister Rexhepi, a search for a potential Serb employee among the IDP communities in Montenegro or Serbia proper.

71 The PM should play a crucial role in facilitating the office’s becoming multi-ethnic. The security implications of such a move would have to be carefully assessed and worked out.

72 The first seminar for Serbs and Albanians from Mitrovica was held by Nansen Academy staff (Aarbakke 2002).
meetings in the OSCE office in the South, but only when transport was secured for the co-ordinators from the North. Since its establishment, NDM has experienced one of the most demanding working conditions in the Nansen network. The political situation in Mitrovica is still unpredictable and the security situation volatile. The city has seen many violent incidents since June 1999.73

**Profile and activities**

The mandate of the NDM is to work on dialogue across the divided town of Mitrovica. The NDM’s stated goal, according to its Annual Plan of Action for 2003, is to try to “stop people from fearing and hating the other side”. Its strategy adopted as of 2003 and onwards, is to initially approach the elite and community leaders to get approval for its activities in order to decrease pressure from extremists within their own respective communities.74 The next step is to approach people at the grass-root level. NDM’s third step is to mobilise the participants to get involved in activities with the aim of influencing local politicians and decision-makers. More concretely, NDM aims at increase contact across ethnic boundaries by establishing and building up a group of people who are willing to promote inter-ethnic dialogue and relations in the city. The long-term aim is to change people’s actions by changing their attitudes, thus making an impact on inter-ethnic developments in Mitrovica.

Challenge number one for NDM is to create “a safe space for dialogue” and to increase the number of participants. Currently, the most important activity is the joint dialogue seminar outside Kosovo. Since the establishment of NDM, seven joint seminars have been held with Serbs and Albanians from Mitrovica.75 Due to the security situation, these seminars have been held in Macedonia (Struga), Montenegro (Budva) and Bulgaria. In 2003, NDM plans to organise dialogue seminars for both former and new participants. Some of these seminars will be organised for people at the grass-root level, whereas other seminars will target more influential groups, e.g. decision-makers, journalists, religious leaders and teachers.

**Strengths and weaknesses**

_The program_

The NDM’s objective of contributing to improved dialogue across the divided city of Mitrovica is reflected in all activities.76 Approaching political leaders in order to get consent and support for inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation processes would

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73 The situation for ordinary people in the Northern part of Mitrovica has also been greatly affected in a negative way by the presence and ‘domination’ of the so-called “Bridge watchers”, an organised group of thugs that has undertaken strict social control of the Northern part of the city. At times the gang has terrorized the population, in particular people willing to co-operate inter-ethnically or who work for the international community. Thus, the NDM has been forced to keep a low profile, particularly in the northern part of the city.

74 In 2002, the NDM worked on what it called the Local Capacities Building Program as part of its strategy, but this has now been abandoned. The reason for this change in strategy was NDM’s activities depended strongly on the current political situation, which often prevented their implementation. Its activities also suffered due to lack of motivation to follow all stages of the program, particularly among the participants on the Northern side.

75 Information given by an NDM co-ordinator in April 2003.

76 More than 200 persons in Mitrovica have by now participated in dialogue seminars.
appear to be an appropriate strategy, taking the difficult political situation in Mitrovica into consideration.

For instance, before even responding to an invitation to attend an inter-ethnic seminar in Denmark, the leader of the Serb National Council-North (Milan Ivanovic) publicly slandered the work of the NDM and alleged that the seminar was funded by ‘Albanian drug money’. As a consequence, three participants from the North cancelled their participation, due to fear of reprisals. This was a huge disappointment for the NDM staff who had hoped that this particular key politician’s participation in the Denmark seminar would allow NDM to go more public with their work.

The inter-ethnic climate in Mitrovica has so far kept the office from openly publicising NDM’s activities. This has clearly been an obstacle to general influence on inter-ethnic relations in the city. However, the possibility of going more public should be contemplated with changing political circumstances. Of course, this would have to be done with careful consideration of the security implications involved. NDM has so far no web page, nor a PR strategy to spread information about the office's work in the city. We believe however that the office should open a web-page. Secondly, since the office’s approach is to reach the political level, the office should develop an information strategy directed towards local political authorities and relevant public institutions. Furthermore, the office could benefit from developing cooperation with other groups with similar mandates, e.g. other activist groups working for improved inter-ethnic relations in the city. NDM should also be creative and develop other types of activities that can contribute to improved inter-ethnic relations in Mitrovica as complementary actions to the dialogue seminars. Such activities would be a way of maintaining momentum and developing the approach to inter-ethnic relations. In order to do so, we suggest that the office, based upon broad consultations with people and institutions in Mitrovica, contemplate how the office can increase its relevance with regard to including different age groups and societal segments in the city.

The staff

The NDM co-ordinators seem to co-operate well and have a good team spirit, despite the division of the office. Generally the co-ordinators demonstrated tolerant attitudes and a developed and sensitive understanding of the tense inter-ethnic situation in Mitrovica. All of the staff members gave the impression that they shared the project idea and values. Since the set-up of the NMD, the office has experienced loss of key staff and several replacements. For instance, during winter 2002/2003, one of the Kosovo Serb NDM co-ordinators left Mitrovica, and the second was in the process of leaving at the time of our visit. One new co-ordinator from the northern side has already been hired on temporary contract, and in May 2003, an additional Kosovo Serb co-ordinator was hired for the KND. The vulnerable staff situation, with frequent turnover, can partly explain why the centre is still in need of administrative

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77 A representative from the NMFA referred to meetings with several local activists, among them also more experienced aged groups who where engaged in NGOs working to promote inter-ethnic relations in Mitrovica.

78 One of the Kosovo Albanian co-ordinators even stated that she was ”proud of working in an NGO with Serbs”.
Joint office space for the staff from both sides of the river has been identified in the Confidence Zone in the city centre in Mitrovica. In relation to the reorganisation of the Kosovo centres (see below), an additional full-time co-ordinator will be hired for the team in Mitrovica. It is our opinion that the work of the NDM will benefit with a shared working environment. A joint working facility would probably also strengthen the general impression of the co-ordinators’ representing one office. We believe that there is a need to strengthen relationships between NDM and KIDS, in particular between the Serb representatives in NDM and KIDS. We thus believe that the new organisation, KND, as well as the establishment of a common office in Mitrovica, will have positive impact of the work of the NDM/KND.

Kosovan Nansen Dialogue (KND)

Background
The organisational changes in Kosovo are due to the fact that the PM had been dissatisfied with the low level of inter-ethnic activities on the part of KIDS for a long period of time. Furthermore, there have also been questions as to whether the current organisational structure in Kosovo was optimal. The donor pointed out that it has on several occasions in recent years called attention to the need for KIDS to strengthen its inter-ethnic focus. The PM maintained that with the changing political and inter-ethnic circumstances, there was enough momentum to reorganise the activities in both Pristina and Mitrovica. The PM also saw a growing need to approach the Serb communities in the enclaves in order to expand the inter-ethnic dialogue in Kosovo. As a result of the meeting with the PM in May 2003, a new organisation, called Kosovar Nansen Dialogue – KND, was officially established July 1, 2003 with two offices (Pristina and Mitrovica). As mentioned above, the name was eventually changed to Kosovan Nansen Dialogue in September 2003.

Profile and activities
The staff of NDM and KIDS, now KND, gathered in Macedonia 16-18 June 2003 in order to produce a new Annual Plan of Action for 2003. It was decided that the overall objective of KND would be to contribute to the establishment of “a peaceful, democratic, open and inclusive society in Kosovo.” According to the plans, the purpose of the reorganisation is to achieve an "increased level of interethnic co-operation with the purpose of strengthening peace-building and reconciliation efforts in Kosovo.” The goals (‘results’) will, according to the plan, be:

- “[Provide] safe space for interethnic dialogue and [promote] interethnic dialogue and conflict resolution as instruments to empower people active in society and politics”
- "Facilitate and contribute to the public debate and discussion in Kosovo”
- "Move closer to and influence the public policy making and politics”
- "[Strengthen] the Nansen Network and [expand] the co-operation with other centres”

79 For instance, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) told us that it had offered NDM a common office on the Northern side, but that NDM never responded.
The new organisation seems to have a broad profile, with inter-ethnic dialogue as one of several components. KND will organise inter-ethnic seminars every month with NGO-workers, journalists and municipal officers. The donor has commented that it has not received notification from the PM on the change of PoA that resulted from the amalgamation of the two centres. As the donor funding for 2003 was based on another organisational structure and PoA for project activities in Kosovo, it would be consistent with accepted practice if such notification had been given. In fact, in donor-funded projects such significant changes would commonly be subject to prior donor approval.

**Strengths and weaknesses**

The recent reorganisation of the activities in Kosovo is in line with many of the recommendations this study had identified for the former organisation, KIDS. The plan states increased focus on inter-ethnic dialogue all over Kosovo, which we view as a very welcome and positive development. We believe however, that the new organisation should include minority return and minority rights issues as two prioritised areas for action. We fully support the reorganisation of the centre in Kosovo to become a genuinely multi-ethnic office. This can, we believe, contribute to strengthening the positive perception of the organisation in the eyes of the minority communities in Kosovo. It will be of utmost importance that the new organisation’s staff co-operate on the activities across ethnic boundaries in order to produce activities (and Logo reports) that both ‘sides’ find acceptable. It is vital that the KND’s report are produced jointly, and that all political and ethnically biased language and symbols be avoided.

The first change of name to Kosovar Nansen Dialogue and the decision to include ‘Nansen Dialogue’ was a positive step in the sense that symbolically, it made the new centre more integrated in the network. Nevertheless, we questioned whether this name in fact would represent an inclusive and neutral label that is necessary for an NGO with inter-ethnic dialogue as its main objective and rationale. During our data collection we consulted a number of international organisations as well as representatives from the Kosovo Serbian community, which confirmed our assessment of the name issue. During September 2003 however, the name was eventually modified to Kosovan Nansen Dialogue. We support this shift, and believe that this would help ensure that the name will not hamper the work of the new organisation.

It is also our assessment that the new organisation could benefit from further narrowing its scope and range of activities to become more focused on inter-ethnic relations and reconciliation processes. The new organisation’s program is, we believe, too broad with too many activities focusing on areas lacking inter-ethnic or reconciliation aspects. The current situation in Kosovo appears to be ripe for working on inter-ethnic relations; thus, the new organisation can readily be fully occupied.

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80 With this change, we hope that the KIDS name has been abandoned for good, as this did not represent a neutral name in the Kosovo context.
with a strict focus on such issues. This would also give KND a clearer identity and profile in line with Kosovo’s needs, as well as with the priorities of the project.

**Recommendations**

- Reduce and narrow the range of activities in order for the new organisation to develop a clearer profile with primary focus on inter-ethnic relations, reconciliation processes, minority rights and IDP-return. In this context, there is need for a more overt focus on Serb-Albanian relations, but this must not exclude activities focused on other aspects of multi-ethnicity in Kosovo, for example the situation for Roma.
- Include minority representatives in LOGO and choose topics for the research reports, which are in line with the changed profile of the new centre. Produce all KND reports and documents in both Albanian and Serbian language, and avoid all politically charged symbols.
- Ensure that the Pristina office has a multi-ethnic environment. Toward this end, recruit a Kosovo Serb to the office. Develop greater awareness among Albanian staff on how the office will benefit from including Serbian and possibly other minority staff in the office.
- Ensure frequent communication and improved communication lines through joint staff meetings between the offices in Mitrovica and Pristina in order to develop a shared organisational identity.
Chapter 7  NDC Montenegro

Introduction
The research team visited NDC Montenegro April 10-12 and May 19-20-2003, where we met with the three full-time co-ordinators and the newly appointed director. NDC Montenegro was established in May 2000. A main objective for the establishment of NDC Montenegro was to provide a conflict prevention facility in relation to the tense internal relations between Montenegrins supporting secession from the FRY and those committed to maintaining the federation. At the time, this division represented a potential source of violent conflict. Furthermore, with Montenegro’s ethnically mixed population and the presence of a large number of refugees and IDPs from earlier conflicts in the region, the NMFA was of the view that also inter-ethnic relations could represent a potential source of tension. The inter-ethnic dimension was therefore part of the rationale for NMFA support for the establishment of the centre. With the removal of the Milosovic' regime in October 2000 and the subsequent reorientation of the Yugoslav military, together with the finalisation of the Belgrade agreement, the conflict potential of the secession issue has now been reduced. Although Montenegro has seen relatively good inter-ethnic relations, there are divisions within the majority population, within minorities as well as between majority- and minority populations. The Albanians are the least integrated national minority in Montenegro, consisting of both Catholics and Muslims, while the Bosniac/ (Slavic) Muslim minority, predominantly located in the Sandzak region, has seen increasing internal divisions. Furthermore, Montenegro has experienced considerable internal pressure due to the relatively large IDP/refugee population. Refugee influx has also had a potential bearing on the state of inter-ethnic relations in Montenegro.

Profile and activities
Montenegro NDC presents its activities for 2003 in their Plan of Action for 2003, which consists of three programs:

- Dialogue
- Democratisation
- Development of Civil Society in the north of Montenegro

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81 The peak of the division on the status question was experienced during the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, when it was feared that Montenegro would also break into violent conflict. (Interview in May 2003 with Professor Milan Popovic, Centre for International Studies and Law School, University of Montenegro).
82 The NMFA has stated that elements of its internal reflections and strategic thinking with regard to the set up of the Montenegro NDC, could have been better or more explicitly articulated towards the PM during that time.
83 Since 14 March 2002.
84 While the conflict potential of military armed conflict in relation to the status has been reduced, the issue remains on the political agenda although in a less volatile form. Even though this division is not ‘ethnic’ as such, it contains elements that often are part of an ethnic conflict (socially constructed in many of the violent conflicts in former Yugoslav Republics). The latest developments indicate that there have been attempts to construct a new Montenegrin identity, based on a positive attitude towards independence, in contrast to primarily identify as Serb (and being pro-Union).
85 One major division among the Bosniacs/Slavic Muslim is on the name issue, i.e. whether they should be called ‘Bosniacs’ or (Slavic) Muslims’.
86 Some of the activities under this program could also be categorised under the first program.
In the 'Dialogue Program’ NDC Montenegro promotes:

- ‘Dialogue on state status’
- ‘Dialogue between development strategy leaders’
- ‘Inter-ethnic and intercultural relations’
- ‘General communication skills’.

With regard to 'Dialogue on state status’, the centre plans to organise dialogue seminars and round-tables for 'high representatives of political parties’ from both sides. The goal of these activities is to increase communication between both sides of the political divide. The 'Dialogue between development strategy leaders’ aims to contribute to improving economic and civil institutions’ conditions in Montenegro, facilitating productive interaction between the government, opposition and NGOs. Meetings (‘dialogue evenings’) with top-level representatives will be organised with the aim of developing joint strategies. The target group will be political party representatives from the government and the opposition, as well as representatives from NGOs. The 'Inter-ethnic and intercultural relations’ activity consists of inter-ethnic dialogue workshops between the minority and majority populations, regional dialogue with other NDCs, and inter-ethnic dialogue in Sandzak with the BNC. 87

NDC Montenegro will also organise different activities on reconciliation in the triangle of Herceg Novi, Dubrovnik and Trebinje in co-operation with Mostar NDC and a local NGO. The first part of these activities will be in the cultural field, followed up by seminars and round-tables, if politically possible. The fourth part of the ‘Dialogue Program’ consists of the ‘Communication School’, ‘School on Dialogue and Democracy’, ‘On Communication public lectures’ and ‘Communication on Culture’. These ‘schools’ focus on capacity building, primarily on communication and dialogue skills. 88 ‘Communication on Culture’ consists of nine dialogue evenings conducted in co-operation with the National Library ‘Radosav Ljumovic’ in Podgorica, targeting artists, writers and persons who work in the area of culture in the government. 89 Through the ‘Democratisation Program’ the office wants to promote a process of identifying and implementing relevant steps for improving general conditions in Montenegro. The third program, ‘Development of Civil Society in the North of Montenegro’, has two sub-programs:

- Conflict Management
- Development of a network of future activists

NDC Montenegro will organise workshops and seminars focusing on people who live in northern Montenegro with the aim of ‘breaking enemy images’. Target groups are ‘young people with enthusiasm, local governance employees, students, young members of political parties, NGO-workers,’ believed in the long run to have an

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87 See chapter Twelve on the network activities.
88 They last for 3-4 months, with 1-2 sessions per week. Four lectures will also be organised on communication skills (‘On Communication public lectures’) where the outcome will be the publishing of a book, with contributions from the lecturers and facilitators.
89 The outcome is expected to be an increased level of awareness of the need for more ‘efficient cultural strategy at state level’, in addition to the publishing of a book based on contributions from the facilitators.
influence on decision-making structures.\textsuperscript{90} NDC Montenegro, in co-operation with National Democratic Institute, will also organise capacity-building workshops for young politicians from the northern municipalities. The second sub-program will focus on alternative education (seminars, workshops), with the aim of building capacity and establishing a network of NGOs in all major cities in the northern part.

\textit{Strengths and weaknesses}

\textit{The program}

NDC Montenegro seems to have good contacts in the Podgorica community, as prominent people participate in their activities (ministers, advisors, well-known politicians and personalities in Montenegro). We also find it positive that NDC Montenegro includes rural areas in their program activities. We believe in fact that even more attention could be paid to the areas outside Podgorica, to break out from the NGO-circle in the city, thus to be present and active in areas where reconciliation and conflict preventive efforts are most needed. Considering that the independence issue appears to be an important division line in Montenegro, we consider promotion of dialogue on the state status as well as inter-ethnic relations to be of utmost importance. The inter-ethnic dialogue component should be expanded, as these activities are fairly limited in NDC Montenegro’s program. However, activities related to inter-ethnic issues must be conducted with caution, as they should not contribute to increasing division along ethnic lines.

NDC Montenegro is developing and expanding in many directions, and lack a clear identity and profile, with no clear limits to what kind of activities they should undertake. It is thus our assessment that the program needs to be more focused and better targeted, also in relation to target groups. We question the relevance of a number of activities in relation to the overall mandate; e.g. to what degree does cooperation with the Ministry of Culture on developing a state policy on culture contribute to conflict prevention and/or reconciliation between conflicting groups? The same question is plausible with regard to the plan of organising a conference on the international community’s role in developing democracy in Montenegro, or to coordinate a network of NGOs in the northern region, as well as to the organisation of a campaign to promote conscientious objection to military service. These are all important topics, but hardly within the NDC’s mandate. In line with our general recommendations, we also recommend that the NDC Montenegro should focus primarily on representatives in public structures (e.g. teachers, police, municipality officers, as well as politicians) as their target group.

The office (together with Mostar NDC) deserves credit for the planned reconciliation projects in the triangle of Herceg Novi, Dubrovnik and Trebinje. This is an example of a well-targeted project focusing on a geographical area where reconciliation efforts are greatly needed, both in relation to local and regional inter-ethnic developments (having in mind the political environment and war-time experiences of people in these municipalities). The project serves also as an example of an excellent

\textsuperscript{90} Joint seminars will also be held together with the BNC with participants from Sandzak, as well as one follow-up seminar with NDC Sarajevo, also on Sandzak. See the chapter on the network for more information on the joint activities.
network co-operation, providing well-targeted activities with a clear aim of contributing to reconciliation processes.

The office
All NDC Montenegro staff came across as sensitive and convincing with regard to inter-ethnic issues. Furthermore, NDC Montenegro is clearly visible in Podgorica, and we believe it has developed a good PR strategy. NDC Montenegro received a lot of positive media coverage and publicity last year when its members, live on television, entered the parliament and delivered booklets on dialogue and tolerance to the parliamentarians. Persons interviewed who co-operate closely with the NDC stressed that, although it is difficult or impossible to be completely neutral in the Montenegrin context, the NDC seems to have managed to establish activities where both sides feel comfortable participating. One interlocutor argued that NDC Montenegro is the only place where both sides would be willing to meet. However, working in such a politicised environment will require constant attention from the NDC staff in order to uphold their balanced image and not lose their legitimacy in the eyes of one political side or another. A co-operating partner pointed out that despite NDC Montenegro’s overall strengths and professionalism, it could benefit from more mentoring. Some of the co-ordinators also pointed out the need for further capacity building, as well as more substantive follow-up from the PM’s side.

Montenegro NDC experienced serious internal conflicts during 2002, conflicts that burdened the PM heavily and affected the office’s work negatively. For a time, closing down the centre was seriously considered. This was avoided, however, and one co-ordinator left the office in 2002. A vertical structure was established at the end of 2002 and beginning of 2003. With this new structure, it appears that NDC Montenegro has managed to solve the main conflicts. According to the donor, these problems were never raised explicitly by the PM with respect to the working of the project in Montenegro. The possibility of closing the centre was never discussed with the NMFA.

Recommendations

- Increase focus on inter-ethnic relations.
- Focus on conflict prevention e.g. the Sandzjak area, Albanian areas and further develop the efforts in the triangle of Herceg Novi, Dubrovnik and Trebinje.
- Continue promoting dialogue on the future status of Montenegro.
- Increase focus on representatives from public structures as target group, such as municipal workers, police and teachers in addition to politicians.
- Reassess the relevance of the ‘Dialogue between development strategy leaders’ and the activities under the ‘General Communication Skills’ (‘Dialogue Program’).

91 Professor Popovic at the University in Podgorica.
92 It was our understanding, however, that the newly hired director had not been sufficiently briefed by the PM on the Balkan Dialogue Project in general and the history of NDC Montenegro in particular.
Chapter 8  Mostar NDC

Introduction
The research team visited Mostar NDC in May 11-14, 2003, and conducted interviews with all four NDC co-ordinators as well as with assistants and external partners.

The Mostar NDC was opened during fall 2000 with the aim of promoting inter-ethnic dialogue, conflict resolution and eventually refugee return in the Mostar area. During the Tito-era, Mostar enjoyed a reputation as a multi-cultural town, an example of this being the high number of inter-ethnic marriages. Today, NDC Mostar is working in the divided city of Mostar and its surroundings of war-affected rural areas.

The situation in Mostar remains complex and difficult. Although political and social relations between ethnic groups have improved during the past several years and the situation in the town has become more relaxed, the general motivation for collaboration across ethnic lines is still very limited.

Activities and profile
According to Mostar NDC’s Annual Plan of Action 2003, the focus of the centre is the ethnic division in the town:

"Our target groups are youth from both [Bosniac] and Croatian [sides] of the city. NDC Mostar is not only providing a "physical space" for these young people to meet, it also [organises] seminars, workshops and cultural events with an aim of building up confidence and [educating] – in a non-formal way – Mostar's citizens on peaceful conflict transformation, dialogue and civic society in general. Empowering youth, we see as our main objective of our work for the future of this post-war, ethnically divided community." 93

The main activities are developed under the following two program lines 94

- Ethnic division
- Building Civil Society

Additionally, the centre conducts joint inter-ethnic seminars in collaboration with the other BiH centres. The Ethnic Division Program includes a number of different projects such as dialogue seminars with participants from different nationalities (target groups are students and different professional groups, e.g. media workers, municipal officers) and workshops in rural areas in Herzegovina (targeting NGO workers, youth and influential people). The NDC also conducts "Children's Workshops" targeting children from different national groups. 95 A third program was initiated in 2003 and targets rural areas of Herzegovina with workshops for NGO

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93 Mostar NDC's Plan of Action 2003:2. The office also carries out spontaneous activities under the label "Instant Response Activity" – e.g. roundtables, workshops, lectures and debates to bring balanced information to ordinary Mostar inhabitants on burning political issues.


95 The aim of the workshops is to break stereotypes and prejudices towards different ethnic groups among children in Mostar.
workers, youth and influential people. In addition, the centre is, in co-operation with Orkdal Municipality in Norway, promoting co-operation between two municipalities and schools from different sides in Mostar. Under the label "Dialogue through culture", the office is engaged in cultural activities such as theatre workshops in Mostar (targeting youngsters and NGO workers) and "artistic workshops" for children aged 15 to 18 from different nationalities. The centre is also present on Mostar’s cultural scene, for instance, by organising theatre workshops, street performances, film screenings and public debates.

The second program line, "Building Civil Society," comprises a number and variety of projects promoting inter-ethnic awareness, NGO co-operation and capacity building in the civic sector. The program includes "Seminars for professional groups" (sometimes in co-operation with the other BiH NDCs), targeting e.g. municipal or media workers with seminars on dialogue, conflict resolution etc, as well as relevant issues related to each particular profession. In addition, the program line includes "Two-way Street Forum" where influential people are invited to meet with the general public in an informal context to answer questions from the audience.

Further, and developed in co-operation with the local OSCE "Political Resource Centre" (PRC), the NDC conducts NGO network-building workshops/seminars with the aim of empowering the NGO sector in the Mostar/Herzegovina region and to co-ordinate the establishment of partnerships with local authorities. A similar project is the "NDC Presents" project – a series of information activities to inform the general public about projects initiated and implemented by governing institutions at state level or other vital issues of general interest. Finally, the program included workshops promoting gender issues and informal education on civil society.

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96 The workshops promote inter-ethnic dialogue and tools for conflict resolution and empowerment. Additionally one hopes to encourage and stimulate local grass-roots initiatives through training aimed at increasing the level of participation in the civil society sector (Plan of Action 2003 p: 9).

97 Orkdal municipality had a twinning agreement with the old town municipality (Starigrad - Bosniac side) in Mostar, and approached the MFA for financial support. The NMFA stipulated that also a municipality on the western (Croat) part of the town should be included and suggested that Orkdal co-operate on a more inclusive project in partnership with the local Nansen centre. The aim of the project is to promote and encourage understanding and co-operation among youth and local authorities with different ethnic backgrounds. The project is separately funded by the NMFA.

98 For example, local authorities, well-known business people, or representatives from the international community.

99 With the aim of decreasing the distance between influential levels and the ordinary public, to encouraging an enquiring culture among the public, and to emphasise the responsibility among local authorities in politics and business entrepreneurs towards the general public and society.

100 The OSCE has established Political Resource Centres in a number of cities throughout BiH in an effort help develop political parties and a pluralist political environment in the country. The donor notes that the NMFA supports several of these centres through project-specific grants to the OSCE mission in BiH.

101 For instance, the NDC invited the deputy editor of the independent BiH magazine Dana to discuss "Political and religious blackmail in journalism" (February 2003), the Dep. Federal Ombudsman was invited to discuss "returnee population problematic in Mostar" (March 2003), and a legal adviser from the Centre for Freedom of Access to Information was invited to talk about the right to access public information (also March 2003).
To sum up: the inter-ethnic component represents the backbone of the program activities, although with clear focus on civil society. The centre identifies youth as its main target group - thus the centre’s profile/identity appears as a centre for young people primarily targeting their own generation (18-30). Our impression is that the centre is a visible and well-respected NGO in Mostar. External partners and alumni emphasised the office’s reputation as being an ethnically neutral organisation promoting inter-ethnic dialogue and co-operation. Furthermore, it is our impression that the centre enjoys the reputation of being a strongly engaged organisation, taking public stands in current inter-ethnic/political developments in the town and region. NDC Mostar visibility in their community is also a result of the office’s highly developed sense of PR, which is further shaping the NDC’s image as a dynamic NGO. The research team is short on data on NDC Mostar’s reputation or visibility in Herzegovina in general.

**Strengths and weaknesses**

**Program/activities**

We consider that the Mostar NDC program contains a number of well-targeted and relevant activities. It is our view that most activities preserve an inter-ethnic component, either directly (thematicaly, e.g. inter-ethnic dialogue seminars) or indirectly by including participants from different communities in activities that focus on broader social topics. When looking through the office's activity reports from 2002 and 2003, one can, in fact, estimate that the centre has contributed to increased inter-ethnic contact in Mostar, particularly among youngsters, students and NGO workers. Furthermore, we strongly support the relatively new focus on rural areas, targeting young politicians and NGO-workers. Finally, the program also has an activistic approach, which gives the impression of an office that views current developments directly in relation to its activities, and which in certain cases, issues public statements that reaffirm the office’s ethnically neutral position.

Nevertheless, we have two main reservations towards the program. The first is related to the office's defined target group. Interviews revealed certain reluctance among some of the staff towards the inclusion of mature adults as a target group. The assumption was that youth represent the future and is more flexible as regards cognitive re-orientations. It is our opinion, however, that if youth represent the future, older generations (30-60) create the future, as the younger generations’ leaders, teachers, parents etc. Secondly, we view that the basic premise for the dialogue concept is that people can change through dialogue experiences as presented by the NDCs. Furthermore, we believe that the office has taken a strong enough stand so as to be able to shift focus from predominantly young people in the civil society sector to more socially influential levels in Mostar/Herzegovina society. In line with our general recommendation, we assert that by further targeting public sector officials (e.g. teachers, police, and municipal workers) and political representatives, the centre can increase its relevance and level of influence. Additionally we suggest that the centre's potential could be better preserved by being more focused in its activities. We acknowledge the necessity of being visible and pro-active in a broader sense, particularly in an expansion phase. After two successful years, however, NDC Mostar could, for example, downsize a number of cultural activities in order to be able to increase its focus on the substance and quality of its core activities. That does not imply that all cultural events or activities for young
people should be abandoned, as several of these seem relevant and targeted. However, as a long standing NGO in the Mostar community, we believe that Mostar NDC could co-operate with other organisations with the comparative advantage to organise, for instance cultural activities, but where Mostar NDC could take responsibility for the reconciliation and inter-ethnic aspect of the activity.

The staff
NDC Mostar emphasised neutral standing, high visibility and team spirit as the office’s strong points. The staff impressed us with their ever-present concern for, and consciousness towards, how to present and preserve their neutral image in the ethnically divided Mostar public. For instance, the office has strict routines on the use of language, staff representation in public appearances etc. Hence, the neutrality of the office is widely held as the main prerequisite for the continuation of their mission, as stated by one of the co-ordinators. While four co-ordinators represent different personalities and skills, it is our assessment that the Mostar NDC functions well as a team, and that the flat structure in general does not hamper the work of the office. Moreover, the young average age of the office does not seem to be a handicap with regard to its reputation for seriousness and standing in the wider community, as well.

With regard to weaknesses, several staff members identified the need to work on recruitment mechanisms and capacity building on training and facilitation. We support this view, and believe that substantive capacity-building is required to fulfil the team's potential, and to inspire the staff to keep up their efforts. It is our opinion that NDC Mostar, with its broad network and influential contacts in the community, could benefit from including potential partners, local authorities and relevant institutions in its planning and strategic thinking. Finally, we think that the centre should focus its activities in order to strengthen the office’s singular professional reputation.

The Mostar office represents an important resource in relation to the network. The office has on several occasions actively promoted network-related projects and ideas for further improvement. The office also participates in a number of interesting network co-operation, e.g. the triangle-project in co-operation with Montenegro NDC (see “Presentation the Montenegro NDC”). During interviews with Mostar NDC, several staff members expressed not only good ideas for network development, but also an awareness of the need and relevance of the network at large.

Recommendations

- Define new target groups and include more mature age segments.
- Prioritise. Strengthen focus and downsize less relevant programs.
- Work on substantive and professional capacity building.

102 It is, nevertheless, our assessment that parts of the team due to particular administrative skills and personal abilities, could be allowed to take a de facto leadership position in order to get things done, if need be.

103 The Mostar NDC commented in a meeting in Sarajevo (October 24/25 with NDCs representatives, the reviewers, the PM and the donor that three out of four recommendations are already being - or are in the process of being - implemented.
• Continue to develop further efforts into rural areas.

Chapter 9  NDC Osijek

Introduction
The research team visited Osijek 14-17 May 2003 and interviewed all four co-ordinators and one assistant. NDC Osijek was established in May 2001, as centre number eight in the network. The reason for locating a Nansen Centre in Osijek was to work on inter-ethnic dialogue in connection with return of Croatian Serbs to Eastern Slavonia, an area severely affected by the war in Croatia. The situation in the region is still marked by distrust between the Croat and remaining Serb populations. The minority return to the region has been slow and repossession of property has been one of the main obstacles. Osijek is predominantly Croatian, while Vukovar, the neighbouring city, has a mixed population, but is today totally divided between Croats and Serbs.

Profile and activities
NDC Osijek conducts a broad range of activities, with several focusing on schools and the development of civil society. According to the Plan of Action for 2003, the office will be working on:

“Empowering people to take [an] active role in the development of the civil society; education for the society of equal and responsible persons; community empowering and generating social action for integration of divided societies into one community.”

Their target group is ”informal decision makers, schoolteachers, parents, and youth active in development of civil society”. When targeting these groups, NDC Osijek recognizes "three levels of action": grass-root level (individuals, informal decision-makers, teachers, parents), local government levels and institutions (schools, regional offices, NGOs) and state institutions. NDC Osijek’s program for 2003 consists of three ”challenges”:

- Divided society
- Empowering people to take an active role in the development of the civil society
- Education for the society of equal and responsible people

The first program ”Divided society” consist of five separate activities/projects:

- Divided Cities
- Divided Schools

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104 According to figures from the OSCE Mission in Croatia, 88% of the displaced Croats have returned to their pre-war homes, while only 27% of minority returns (Croatian Serbs) have taken place. See also Human Rights Watch Report Broken Promises: Impediments to Refugee Return to Croatia published 3 September 2003.

105 According to one of the co-ordinators in NDC Osijek, Vukovar, together with Mostar, had the highest rate of mixed marriages in Yugoslavia, but tragically, ended up as one of the most destroyed towns. The pre-war population of Vukovar according to Osijek NDC, was 40% Croat, 40% Serb and 20% other minorities. Today the official figures indicate 50% Serbs and 50% Croats, but one of the NDC coordinators believes the real figures are approximately 9 000 Serbs and 3 000 Croats.

106 This project is a NetCom project and has changed its name to “Divided Communities”. We will discuss this project further in the chapter on the network.
'The New School’ targets the problem of segregation between Croats and Serbs in schools, where both communities today have separate curriculum and school administration, even while sharing the same buildings. The aim of the project is to promote integration by trying to establish a new school where integrated teaching of both Croats and Serbs will take place as an alternative to the current separation along ethnic lines.108 The Multikulti-project aims to promote regional co-operation and exchange of cultural expressions, like concerts, performances and exhibitions, while 'Towards the School Together' targets Roma children in schools (capacity building). With the 'Never-Ending Stories' project, NDC Osijek aims to produce a documentary based on stories collected from people from the whole region who were ready to risk their lives during the war to save the lives or property of neighbours of a different nationality.109 NDC Osijek believes such a project can be seen as a counter-message to hate speech in local media in the region, as well as a way of promoting reconciliation and inter-ethnic dialogue.

The second program ("challenge") is called "Empowering people to take an active role in the development of the civil society". This program consists of three activities:

- BRK (bulletin, workshops and concert)
- Rhetorical Club
- Identity and Embrace

The 'BRK' consists of bulletin production ('Slon'), workshops and concerts, where the aim, besides organising activities (concerts and workshops), is to inform the public about NGO work. The 'Rhetorical Club' consists of a workshop for students at the Faculty of Law in Osijek where the main aim for the participants is to learn rhetorical skills, critical examination of problems and situations and ability to deliver their points of view with valid arguments. 'Identity and Embrace’ consists of dialogue seminars for high school students with different ethnic backgrounds from both Vukovar and Osijek.

The third program ("challenge") is the "Education for the society of equal and responsible people", which consists of two projects:

- 'I can do it'
- 'Right Step to the Future' ('Rights of the Child Everyday')

107 This project has been renamed ‘The New School’.
108 NDC Osijek informed us that according to Croatian law, three models for teaching are allowed: 1. education in the minority’s language and script translated from the obligatory public curriculum; 2. bilingual education where social sciences subjects are taught in the minority language, and natural sciences subjects taught in the official language, and 3. integrated classes, with additional programs for minorities in their ‘national subjects’ (social sciences). Until now, most parents have chosen separated classes for their children, and the model of integrated teaching has not been practised.
109 The documentary will be made in co-operation with a film director from Belgrade, Marko Mamuzic (from the independent Serbian TV-company B92), who also made a film about OFF.
The first project aims at reducing anxiety among school children, while the second project focuses on improving the pupils’ skills and knowledge in several fields, as well as to improve the relationship and interaction between pupils and teachers, however with an ethnically mixed target group.

**Strengths and weaknesses**

**The program**

We view the 'New School' as an interesting project and a concrete attempt to contribute to improved ethnic relations and integration of the divided communities in Vukovar. If the project is implemented, we believe that it could have a potential for long-term impact. The project is still in the planning phase, but the centre has already received positive feedback and support from local as well as central authorities. The project is ambitious, and requires close co-operation with professional organisations with relevant experience and background. Another targeted project is the renovation of the kindergarten in the mixed city of Baranja in 2002. This project aimed at improving ethnic relations in Baranja by improving their common areas, in this case, a kindergarten. The inter-ethnic dialogue seminars ('Identity and Embrace') are also interesting, as well as the "Never-Ending Stories" project, which we see as a creative project with a clear aim of reconciliation. The film would also have relevance in a broader regional context, and could serve as an inspiration for similar project on a network basis. All in all, in NDC Osijek’s program portfolio, we find that the most relevant and promising projects are the ones that directly target the ethnic division between Serbs and Croats.

We question, however, the relevance of activities such as "I can do it” and "Right step to the future” in relation to the overall project aim. Although the latter has an ethnically mixed target group, we question if this activity is focused enough, i.e. in addressing and potentially contributing to improving inter-ethnic relations. Furthermore, we assess that another weak aspect of NDC Osijek’s program is that too many activities are targeted toward children, although the effect and potential impact can be questioned. Along with our general recommendations, we also question the potential impact of activities like 'Multi-Kulti', where cultural expressions are used to promote regional co-operation and dialogue. We have doubts about the objective and rationale behind the BRK project, which seems vague and unfocused. Although we have no doubt that the activity of the 'Rhetorical Club' is important in terms of capacity building, we do not see its relevance and impact potential in relation to the inter-ethnic situation in Osijek/Vukovar.

NDC Osijek would benefit from becoming more focused, both in its programs and with respect to its target group. It is important for the office to develop a clearer project identity. For instance, during the first year, the Osijek office was involved in activities where the link to the overall mission were not very obvious (e.g. a mine awareness programs) as a part of PR-strategy to gain credibility in the local community. We believe however, that Osijek could have benefited from defining PR-

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110 We are well aware of the fact that these projects give NDC Osijek a good reputation and co-operation with the local authorities, and opens doors for future projects. However, we maintain the need to strengthen the focus on inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation.

111 One example is the touring 'Street Performance’ that took place in Mostar, Osijek and Vukovar etc.
projects that were more relevant from the very beginning, and see this also in the context of the current lack of focus of the overall Osijek program. Furthermore, NDC Osijek should choose its target group more strategically, i.e. potentially influential persons in its community – such as teachers (which it is already doing), municipal officials and young politicians. A challenge is also to develop activities where the objective of promoting inter-ethnic dialogue and co-operation, is included in projects that promote practical co-operation on other issues of common interest (e.g. professional interests). This could for instance be a relevant strategy, for instance when targeting political leaders.

The staff

All the co-ordinators gave a strong impression of having tolerant attitudes and a developed and sensitive understanding of the inter-ethnic situation in the area. Thus, NDC Osijek, like other NDC offices with mixed staff, seems to represent balanced views on such issues.\(^{112}\) It is however our impression that the office would benefit from greater clarity and insistence of purpose in their work. We thus recommend that the staff should receive more attention and support from the PM so as to strengthen the ability to see possibilities rather than obstacles in various contexts. An external co-operation partner also underlined this assessment.

Although the staff came across as hard working and dedicated, the co-ordinators demonstrated a varying degree of professional experience and maturity during the interviews. Thus, we believe the centre can benefit from substantive capacity building, both with regard to the individual co-ordinators as well as the overall team. For instance, all co-ordinators were open about the fact that they at times struggled with the flat structure in the office, and could spend time on blaming each other in a non-constructive way (‘blame storming sessions’). Our assessment is that the current office environment appears to some extent to be counterproductive, i.e. staff relations seem to suffer from what we interpreted as an unhealthy internal competition or lack of mutual support among staff members. However, NDC Osijek has demonstrated strength and maturity in addressing these internal disagreements and communication challenges by hiring a psychologist specialising in team work.\(^{113}\)

Moreover, we also believe that some of NDC Osijek staff members could benefit from improving skills in terms of accepting, reflecting upon, and responding to criticism from external sources, including co-operating partners working outside the Osijek context.\(^{114}\) They could also benefit from being more open towards external advice, including advice from within the network.\(^{115}\) It is important for all partners in a functioning network to be willing to take part in binding discussions and dialogue on all aspects of the project. NDC Osijek perception was also that the follow-up

\(^{112}\) One co-ordinator in the NDC Osijek is Serb, two are Croatians and two co-coordinators are from mixed marriages (Serb-Croat and Muslim-Serb).

\(^{101}\) The PM’s regionally based financially co-ordinator was present in one ‘trouble-shooting’ meeting in April 2003 with psychologist Jasenka Predrag, where the internal problems were addressed. NDC Osijek will follow up on these issues with a new meeting with the psychologist later this year.

\(^{114}\) E.g. in contrast to all other NDCs, some of the co-ordinators appeared defensive during our interviews when asked critical questions regarding their activities.

\(^{115}\) One should note that NDC Sarajevo, however, commented that they are experiencing NDC Osijek as open for receiving advises or posing questions to other NDCs.
from PM is insufficient and/or lacking on issues important to the centre. Hence, we assess NDC Osijek could benefit from closer follow-up and supervision as well as to change to a more hierarchical organisational structure. It is our assessment that the current structure and composition of the team should be assessed in order to promote a more constructive working environment.

**Recommendations**

- Clearer focus on inter-ethnic relations.
- Reduction of scope and range of activities. Downsize and evaluate continuation of the "Multicultural Exchange-Multikulti", "Towards the School Together" and the "Education for the society of equal and responsible people" and reassess whether activities of BRK and the "Rhetorical Club" should be continued.
- Substantive capacity building and monitoring by the PM.
- Work on the office' clarity and resolve in dealing with sensitive and controversial issues and thereby help the centre to be more at the forefront of inter-ethnic relations.
- Reassess the current organisational structure of the centre.
- Improve network participation.
Chapter 10  NDC Sarajevo

Introduction
The research team visited NDC Sarajevo 8-11 May 2003 and met with four co-ordinators and the manager.116 NDC Sarajevo was established 1 September 2000. The rationale behind the opening of the centre was to work on inter-ethnic dialogue, reconciliation and return of IDPs and refugees in co-operation with the other centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). BiH saw a devastating civil war between Spring 1992 and November 1995, where as many as 200,000 persons are estimated to have died, and many hundreds of thousands displaced.117 Although several years have passed since the Dayton Agreement ended the war, the population in BiH is still severely divided. Ethnic division, distrust and lack of co-operation between Bosniacs, Croats and Serbs present problems on all administrative levels, as well as between the two entities in BiH.118

Profile and activities
NDC Sarajevo has recently shifted its focus from Sarajevo and its NGO community119 towards rural areas and small towns as well as the divided city of Sarajevo.120 The NDC’s profile today is partly inter-ethnically- and partly civil society-oriented. NDC Sarajevo has developed a strategy with the aim of changing attitudes and strengthening inter-ethnic reconciliation, basically through dialogue seminars. Since the international community has largely ignored rural areas and small towns, NDC Sarajevo has recognized a huge need to work on inter-ethnic dialogue in these areas.121 NDC Sarajevo has identified five main challenges:

- General passivity of the population
- Work on capacity building of rural and small town population
- Inter-ethnic dialogue
- Network development
- Implementation of a new organisational structure

It developed three program lines in order to address these challenges:

- Conflict Management and Dialogue line/Inter-ethnic dialogue
- Civil Society line

116 NDC Sarajevo currently has three full-time co-ordinators and one manager, in addition to an accountant and a technical assistant in part-time positions. These positions are now divided according to division of labour into one programme project developer, operational manager, logistic manager, programme manager and one project co-ordinator. One of the co-ordinators is officially working half time, but full time in reality.
117 According to figures from the OSCE Mission in BiH, the break-up of Yugoslavia led to the displacement of 1.3 million people. More than 800,000 remained displaced across BiH, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro in 2002. The State Commission for Gathering Facts on War Crimes estimates that the number of war-related deaths may have been as many as approximately 200,000.
118 The Bosniac-Croat dominated Federation and the Bosnian-Serb dominated Republika Srpska.
119 This was during the first two years of their existence.
120 Sarajevo and Srpsko Sarajevo.
121 NDC Sarajevo will concentrate its efforts in the rural areas and small towns in Central and Eastern Bosnia (areas both in the Federation and RS) and in the Tuzla and Brcko district, in addition to continuing to work on the inter-ethnic dialogue between Sarajevo and Srpsko Sarajevo, which NDC Sarajevo successfully started last year.
In its dialogue program, a range of seminars will be organised for participants from Sarajevo and Srpsko Sarajevo, facilitated by an NGO from Zagreb (‘Mali Korak’). The target groups will be municipal officers and students from the two respective universities. In addition, dialogue seminars will be held for participants from rural areas and small towns from the whole BiH, targeting representatives from local institutions like the local administration, teachers, political party representatives, NGO-workers and informal leaders. Furthermore, dialogue seminars will be organised for participants from Tuzla-Brcko region with similar target group as described above. In addition to these dialogue seminars, there will be follow-up sessions for the participants from the Sarajevo-Srpsko Sarajevo seminars. NDC Sarajevo will also participate in the organisation of a conference 13-19 October 2003 called 'Singing the Bridge – Conference on Music and Reconciliation'. One key question asked at the conference will be how music can be used in a healing and reconciling way.

The second program of NDC Sarajevo is called ‘Civil Society line’/General passivity of the population’. NDC Sarajevo sees passivity as a major challenge, and argues that increased awareness on the functioning of civil society is a prerequisite for reducing passivity in the population. The program promotes a number of civil society practices in BiH via various activities, like a weekly radio show on GUMA Radio, and the production of a journal for literature and culture (ALBUM). This journal is anti-nationalistic, printed in all three official languages in BiH, and is, for the moment, the only journal that uses both Latin and Cyrillic letters. This journal is also used to promote NDC Sarajevo and the Nansen Network. NDC Sarajevo is also organising activities in co-operation with a Dutch NGO (‘United Against’) such as poster

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122 This programme is related to the internal administration and the organisational development of the office.
123 In Srpsko Sarajevo and Sarajevo.
124 Two of these dialogue seminars are conducted in co-operation with NDC Mostar and NDC Banja Luka. See the chapter on the network for more information on this co-operation.
125 The Croatian NGO ‘Mali Korak’ will also be facilitator for these seminars, together with some local trainers from Tuzla.
126 The idea for this came from the participants in the pilot project during autumn 2002. Students from Sarajevo and Srpsko Sarajevo University met after the pilot project and developed a new NDC project, which consists of joint gatherings on the NDC premises twice a month where various debate evenings will be arranged. The topics of these debates or gatherings are secondary to the fact that students with different ethnic backgrounds from both Sarajavo and Srpsko Sarajevo will meet for joint activities.
127 The conference will be organised jointly by the Dutch Association Unisono, Musicians without borders, Inter Religious Service ‘Face to Face’ and International Forum in BiH.
128 During this conference, NDC Sarajevo will contribute with a seminar on the topic ‘Training in Non-Violent Conflict Transformation Techniques’.
129 NDC Sarajevo co-operates with another NGO (‘AMBROSIA’) in producing a radio show on GUMA Radio consisting of interviews, presentations of authors, discussions, critiques, reviews, music and presentations of poetry and prose. The concrete aim of the radio show is to present activities and events from Sarajevo, BiH or the regions that are connected to GUMA or NDC activities or the promotion of them, ‘human rights/democracy activities’, and ‘civic actions in general’.
130 The journal is approximately 150 pages long and 500 copies are issued. It covers issues from poetry to science, and writers from all over BiH, as well as writers from various ethnic and religious backgrounds, contribute to the journal. Three issues were published in 2002 and four issues are planned for 2003.
campaigns, art events and public lectures in connection with Refugees Day, Day Against Fascism and Anti-Semitism, and European Week Against Racism.\footnote{In this connection, the NDC produced a poster campaign last year that it organized in Sarajevo, Pale and Srpsko Sarajevo with a picture of a skull and the slogan "We are all equal".}

**Strengths and weaknesses**

*The programme*

NDC Sarajevo has become more focused and targeted since its strategic shift in 2003. Although we believe this recognition took a relatively long time,\footnote{One of the co-ordinators stated that he felt like they had wasted two years working on their previous strategy.} NDC Sarajevo is now on the right track, both in terms of activities and target group.\footnote{It is our understanding that one of the reasons behind this shift was related to meetings conducted between the NMFA and the office where possible future orientations were discussed. If this assessment is correct, the office took the signals from the NMFA on a more stringent inter-ethnic focus, and incorporated this in their program plans.} It is promising that NDC Sarajevo is increasing its focus on public structures (teachers, municipal officials), rather than NGO-circles in Sarajevo.\footnote{Many of the co-ordinators emphasised the strong need for inter-ethnic dialogue in the rural areas, and informed us that they now receive calls from schools which are interested in dialogue seminars. For instance, there are still 55-56 schools, primarily in Central Bosnia, that have two schools under one roof, i.e. that have two curricula (either Bosniac, Serbian and/or Croatian) in one school, and no co-operation across the ethnic boundaries.} The office could nevertheless reduce the number of programs and thus strengthen the quality of its core activities. It could also benefit from taking one more step toward solely focusing on inter-ethnic issues. We believe it should downsize the civil society and cultural activities that have less relevance for inter-ethnic relations and reconciliation processes.\footnote{This would primarily be the case for the GUMA radio show and the ‘Dialogue of Arts - Arts in Dialogue’ under the Civil Society program.} Additionally, the office could benefit from narrowing its target group in order to strengthen the focus on representatives in public structures. As suggested by one of the co-ordinators, the office could further increase its efforts in rural areas, as there are plenty of challenges for NDC Sarajevo to address in this respect.\footnote{Perhaps with the exception of the dialogue work between Srpsko Sarajevo and Sarajevo, where the target group has also been university students in addition to municipality officials.} We support this approach, and hope that NDC Sarajevo will go even further in this direction when developing the 2004 program.

The NMFA commented that the office has received some criticism with regard to parts of its PR-strategy. Hence, we would recommend the office to develop a new communications strategy adjusted to the new shift on program profile. We would also recommend that the PM be consulted in this regard.

*The staff*

NDC Sarajevo has developed a strong team of dedicated and professional co-ordinators. Most of the staff have an ethnically mixed family background, which is, we believe, a reason for the co-ordinators deep and sensitive inter-ethnic understanding.\footnote{Their background and views lead to a number of interesting discussions on the problematic use of ethnic labels in today’s BiH, where all are forced to identify themselves as either Bosniac, Croat or Serb. All of the co-ordinators at NDC Sarajevo reject this policy, and personally refuse to identify
Sarajevo positive feedback regarding the mission’s co-operation with the NDC on dialogue seminars for teachers in divided schools. She was impressed by the centre’s level of professionalism and dedication to multi-cultural values.

NDC Sarajevo has demonstrated strength and maturity by changing its internal structure from a flat to a hierarchical structure last year. Firstly, this was due to an identified need for a more precise and clear organisational structure as a prerequisite for sustainability, and secondly, as a preventive measure against internal conflicts. 138 The staff is, on average, older and more experienced than at many of the other NDCs and come across as an intellectually oriented and well-reflecteoffice. However, we wonder whether NDC Sarajevo sometimes spends too much time on discussions and contemplating back and forth. We support the NDC’s need to reflect deeply on all aspects of its actions, but not to an extent that can hamstring actions.

NDC Sarajevo has also taken a clear responsibility for the network. 139 After the meeting in Balaton in 2001, NDC Sarajevo presented a number of suggestions to PRIO and the other NDCs in order to improve the communication and reporting procedures in the project. This outline for reporting was later adopted and is still used by the NDCs when reporting to PRIO.

**Recommendations**

- Further develop NDC Sarajevo’s efforts on activities dealing with inter-ethnic relations.
- Further increase activities directed towards public structures: teachers, municipality officers, political party representatives and informal leaders.
- Focus primarily on areas of BiH outside the capital, in addition to the dialogue activities on Sarajevo and Srpsko Sarajevo.
- Contemplate abolishing the cultural parts of the civil society program 140 in order to achieve a clearer profile and identity of inter-ethnic dialogue.
- Prioritise. Reduce scope and range of activities to ensure better quality, and follow up on core activities.

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138 In NDC Sarajevo’s experience, the flat structure functioned well when the number of activities and staff were limited, but needed to change as its level of activities and staff increased.
139 See also in chapter 12 (The Network).
140 In particular the GUMA radio show and the ‘Dialogue in Arts – Arts in Dialogue.'
Chapter 11 Skopje NDC

Introduction
The research team visited Skopje in April 2003, and conducted interviews with all four NDC co-ordinators as well as with assistants and external partners.

NDC Skopje was founded in January 2000, and was one of the first two centres established in the network. The rationale behind the establishment of a centre in Macedonia was to strengthen strained relations between the ethnic Albanian minority and the ethnic Macedonian majority population. From the NMFA’s perspective, the NDC was viewed as one of several instruments of “preventive diplomacy” in relation to the recognised escalation of inter-ethnic tension in the country. With the outbreak of armed conflict between the Albanian insurgents and the Macedonian army in 2001, the inter-ethnic dialogue decreased to a minimum. NDC Skopje was nevertheless able to remain as a multi-ethnic centre throughout the period and in the aftermath of the conflict. The inter-ethnic and political situation in Macedonia is still fragile, and the climate for conflict has continued with sustained inter-ethnic hostility, economic decline, and a growing feeling of pessimism.

Activities and profile
The main focus of NDC Skopje is dialogue between the two main communities in the country: "NDC Skopje’s activities will continue with general accent on the improvement of the inter-ethnic relations, support and joint activities with other organisations that work on similar projects on national and regional level". The office also views its mission in relation to broader democratic processes of strengthening general tolerance:

The NDC Skopje aspires toward [strengthening] the consciousness about the values of democracy, peace and peaceful conflict resolution, and [emphasises] tolerance and dialogue as models and tools for peaceful conflict resolution among individuals and groups from different social, ethnic, political, faith, gender and other belonging.

The centre’s main activities are conducted within the overall program “Peace Building”. Within this line the annual plan presents three subprograms, according to target groups:

- Youth and NGOs
- Young Political Leaders
- High School Youth Program

The 'Youth and NGO'-subprogram comprises activities to increase the number NDC trainers through capacity-building activities. In addition, the program promotes improved cooperation between NGOs working in similar fields, and develops closer relations between the governmental and non-governmental sectors in Macedonia. The program encompasses for instance seminars on intercultural learning, as well as weekly public meetings where e.g. politicians and political analysts from the region are invited to discuss post-war related issues. Furthermore, the program includes

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141 Annual Plan of Action 03:3.
142 Ibid.
seminars targeting participants from different religious communities. Finally, the program also includes the translation of a number of books on “Peace and Non-Violence”, and the publication of a NDC training manual. The ‘Young Political Leaders’ program provides informal education to young political leaders. Experiences from previous years have led the office to seek an indirect inter-ethnic approach, in contrast to classical inter-ethnic seminars on conflict transformation. By focusing on political capacity-building (e.g. on Macedonian and European institutions and political systems, international response to inter-ethnic conflicts, general political and conflict analyses, etc) in seminars targeting young political leaders from different ethnic groups, the project seeks to strengthen future political cooperation between conflicting political parties and emphasises common political challenges, rather than exclusive national interests.\(^{143}\)

The 'High School Youth' program consists of seminars targeting high school students with different ethnic backgrounds living in either the eastern or the western part of the country.\(^{144}\) As a follow-up activity, NDC Skopje arranges visits where participants from the western region are invited to spend a weekend at the home of a Macedonian family and vice versa. In addition, the office seeks to establish additional social activities and to involve seminar participants in voluntary work within the NDC, or through co-operating organisations. Also targeting high school students is the 'Leadership Development Course', a program which includes lectures and workshops on a wide range of topics: communication skills and team building, diversity management, intercultural learning, community awareness, organisational awareness, organisational management, working styles, human resources, and public relations.

It is our impression that NDC Skopje is viewed as a strong and professional NGO in the field of inter-ethnic dialogue in Macedonia, both in the local NGO community and among international organisations. The inter-ethnic dialogue aspect of its work is well known by local and international organisations and among political leaders.

**Strengths and weaknesses**

**The program**

We believe that most of the NDC activities contain a significant inter-ethnic dimension, either directly or indirectly by gathering different groups in seminars, workshops, or public meetings on different social topics. We fully recognise the need to work indirectly, keeping in mind tense inter-ethnic relations in Macedonian society. Viewing the NDC’s activities over the years, it is possible to argue that NDC Skopje has contributed to raise awareness in the NGO-community in Macedonia on the need to promote inter-ethnic relations. We believe that the ‘Young Political Leaders’ project is indeed promising with potential impact.\(^{145}\) Additionally, there are

\(^{143}\) The content of the lectures was developed in dialogue with the seminar participants within the framework of a “Council for Young Politicians”. This forum was initiated by the NDC, but with the aim of establishing the forum as an independent meeting place.

\(^{144}\) The western part is predominantly ethnic Albanian, while ethnic Macedonians mainly populate the eastern part.

\(^{145}\) A positive influence was also confirmed by a Macedonian participant, representing a right wing Macedonian party, who experienced the program as relevant with regard to the concrete training
several positive elements in the remaining programs, but we believe some of them could be further developed and better targeted. For instance, Macedonian society faces open conflict in a number of ethnically mixed high schools in multi-cultural centres such as Skopje, Kumanovo and Tetovo, which can potentially lead to the development of mono-ethnic schools. As such, the need to facilitate dialogue between students, parents, teachers and local community leaders is vital in order to prevent further ethnic division. This is a chief example of a situation where the inter-ethnic dialogue is missing, and where an NDC could make a difference by offering support and mediation between conflicting parties. We also believe that NDC staff in Skopje has the necessary capacity (or the potential) and personal abilities to enter critical inter-ethnic conflict areas in Macedonia. Moreover, it is our opinion that the focus on political parties should be complimentary to activities that target acute inter-ethnic conflicts in the Macedonian society, thus to promote inter-ethnic developments through different approaches.

Consequently, it is our opinion that the office should restructure its programs to target burning issues and inter-ethnic challenges in Macedonia. It is also important that the NDC direct activities beyond the capital, Skopje. This already takes place, but might be structured more systematically and strategically than at present. Furthermore, we believe that this should allow for the inclusion of more strategically chosen target groups (including older and more influential segments in respective local communities where the NDC is active). Parts of the NGO programs could additionally be transferred to partner organisations with experiences from NDC seminars on inter-ethnic relations in order to save time and capacity for more targeted actions.\(^{146}\) Although we see the need to develop better relations between the NGO and the governmental and parliamentary sectors, we question whether this should be among the core activities of an NDC.\(^{147}\) This also applies for the translation of a number of books on “Peace and Non-Violence,” as well as the publication of an NDC training manual. We question the purpose of these activities in relation to the overall project aim, and whether this represents the most rational strategy with regard to human (and time) resources. Finally, we would like to stress that all programs could be better developed within a more integrated office. This is vital to ensure the overall quality of all NDC activities, and to develop a common feeling of responsibility for each and every program line.

**The staff**

The overall assessment of Skopje NDC is that the staff is inter-ethnically balanced and shares a common understanding of the need to facilitate inter-ethnic dialogue in Macedonia. In addition, it is our opinion that the staff generally has the personal and professional potential required to develop the office into a professional centre on inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation in the Macedonian society.\(^{148}\) However, a major barrier to such development is related to internal working relations. During

\(^{146}\) The NDC Skopje has commented that this is already a part of the office’s strategy.

\(^{147}\) NDC Skopje comments that this program will be part of the office’s side activities in 2004.

\(^{148}\) This is, not least, due to the different personalities within the staff, which could, under the right circumstances, be developed into a challenging team for mutual learning and professional developments.
interviews with the NDC staff, it became apparent that the confidence level within the office is currently not optimal, and that this situation is partially the reason for the office’s strict division in terms of activities. Hence, the situation in the office is marked by limited internal cooperation and communication. It is not an open conflict, but rather, as we see it, a coping strategy to deal with different approaches to professional and administrative matters and labour division, based on different personalities. Without putting an ethnic label on the disagreements, one can nonetheless assume that the conflict in 2001 and political and inter-ethnic developments since then have put the office under heavy pressure with regard to personal and professional relations, as well.

Although the division of labour does not impede implementation of the daily activities, we see a number of challenges related to internal relations in the office. It is our impression that the centre is currently functioning as a shared working facility rather than as a qualitative and integrated cooperation between the staff. This could lead to loss of potential synergies between program lines. For example, according to the annual action plan, the office aims to promote government-NGO relations, and could potentially identify common interests between the NGO and the ‘Young Political Leaders’ program. Moreover, co-operating organisations have experienced that the information flow between the coordinators is limited, and that staff members do not brief each other on program developments or external contacts. Finally, NDC Skopje should be aware that internal (and personnel-based) division lines could be interpreted by outsiders as ethnic disagreements, thus harming the current neutral reputation of the centre. For a centre dealing with dialogue and conflict resolution, it is vital that the office staff is seen as able to resolve internal disagreements and inter-staff tensions. We believe, however, that the PM should respond to the situation in NDC Skopje, and offer substantial follow-up in order to help resolve internal problems.

**Recommendations**

- Develop programs and activities that target the “burning inter-ethnic relations”.
- Develop strategies for dialogue and cooperation with local authorities, school authorities etc in the areas where the need for NDCs activities are mostly needed.
- Prioritise. Reduce the number of activities to achieve better quality and follow-up on core activities.
- Define new target groups that also include mature adults and local leaders outside the NGO community.
- Ensure a more active follow-up by the PM to help resolve internal office issues. Strengthen the team spirit and seek better cooperation across program lines. Seek co-operation that positively emphasises each staff member’s abilities and skills to the mutual benefit of the office staff.
Chapter 12 The Network

Before the discussion on the current functioning of the network, it is necessary to discuss what constitutes a successful and relevant network. It is our assessment that genuine network co-operation must be developed on a foundation of shared understanding of project objectives and values. Secondly, the network should be viewed as a resource for the project at large, as well as for each individual NDC and staff member. It is vital that the project staff views the centres and network as an integrated organisation rather than as different parts of the same project. It is equally important that all network staff view its actions not only in relation to the local centre's context, but equally - in a regional network perspective. That implies awareness of the fact that one centre's success or failure affects not only the respective centre, but also the network at large. Additionally we believe that the following aspects are essential to form a successful and functioning network:

- Willingness to address political challenges arising in each centre location with colleagues in the network.
- The network should constitute a forum for core discussions on project developments, ongoing debates on research regarding methodological as well as socio-political issues and subjects of potential bearing on the projects actual and future activities. This should include relevant reports on inter-ethnic issues, refugee return and the situation for human rights in the region. It is important that the individual NDCs and the Network as a whole address issues that affect the context for their activities and which can have bearing on programs and specific activities both in the present and for the future.
- Co-operation should not only encompass joint projects, both capacity building, and discussions on practical and political/inter-ethnic implications of ongoing projects.
- Willingness to receive network feedback on local activities, thus to share and learn from each others experiences.
- Willingness to co-operate on projects across national borders.
- The network should involve all co-ordinators at different times and to varying degrees (not only the centres respective network co-ordinator).

The current functioning of the network

It is our assessment that the networks' potential is still substantially unfulfilled. In fact, the "On the Road Film Festival" (OFF), (2002) was by several NDC-staff characterised as the first real network project. The implementation of this project, although in some ways a success, identified a number of weaknesses in the network, among them lack of communication, co-ordination and planning. We will not go into the details of OFF, except to mention that some of the co-ordinators pointed out that the project demonstrated limitations with regard to communication flow and lack of clarity on the responsibility of the PM and individual NDC's.

Interviews revealed, in fact, a huge gap in communication between many NDCs. There seems to have been no regular exchange of information between the centres before the establishment of NetCom (see below). Interviews with the NDC-staff revealed that the NDCs are poorly informed about the activities of the other centres. For instance, several NDCs are in the process of developing new projects, but were
not informed that several other NDCs had already implemented similar activities. In a functioning network, information about each others projects would have flowed freely among the centres, allowing for mutual learning and synergies. This does not appear to happen in the BDP Network.

Another dysfunctional practice is that activities have been undertaken in the location of another NDC, without consulting or informing the centre in question. We find the practice worthy of criticism, and believe that the local NDC would have the best overview and knowledge of the situation in their particular community. If an NDC is to conduct activities in the area of operation of another NDC, then the very least one should expect is that there be advance consultation and that the activity be implemented in co-operation between the two. If not, external organisations can easily gain the impression that network partners are neither communicating nor co-operating. To the extent that this phenomenon occurs, it raises questions as to the respective centres' attitudes towards, and understanding of, each other and network co-operation as such. Although most of the co-ordinators stress collegial relations, there seems nonetheless to be an underlying tendency in the network to perceive the other NDCs as competitors.

Another problematic aspect is that strained political relations within the region appear to be mirrored in co-operation (or lack of such) between some centres. The most obvious example can be found in the relationship between KIDS and the BNC, where contact and communication seems to be at a very low level. During the time of our data collection, KIDS lacked links to both the BNC and Banja Luka NDC on their web page, which made us question whether KIDS considered these centres as genuine partners in the network. Furthermore, the BNC was not informed that KIDS had already started to work on inter-ethnic dialogue in 2002, and appeared not to be up-to-date on the Kosovo activities in general. In contrast to the KIDS-BNC relation, it is our assessment that BNC and Montenegro NDC have managed to avoid reproducing the strained political relationship between Belgrade and Podgorica.

Good and constructive NDC relations are, we believe, of outmost importance. It is important to underline that the intention of the project is to counter conflicting and divisive attitudes in relation to within the respective countries as such, as well as between the individual countries in a regional context. If negative local attitudes are mirrored in the centres, then the project will not be capable of fulfilling its mission. Hence, we argue that there should be an explicit PM and network policy on this issue, where co-operation practices, and the implications of such, should be systematically monitored and evaluated.

There are also some positive examples of regular communication and exchange of information between NDCs. For instance, the three centres in BiH have since their establishment held joint bimonthly meetings, where they share information in order to co-ordinate and co-operate on joint activities (see below). NDC Montenegro also informed us that it sends a newsletter about its activities to the network twice a month, a practice we believe the other NDCs should consider emulating.

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149 According to our knowledge, NDC Skopje and KIDS had been involved in organising activities in Mitrovica without informing or consulting the NDM.
The majority of the NDCs expressed that they perceived the network as representing a huge potential, also in relation to the work of each individual NDC. Some NDCs were described as more open towards the network than others, and the co-ordinators expressed different views in terms of how involved their centre could be in network activities. NDC Montenegro was mentioned by many as one of the most integrated centres with regard to practical network co-operation. This could be due to its geographical location, but also related to attitudes with regard to sharing information and the active promotion of co-operation with other NDCs. Some described the BNC as a being more distanced from the network. NDC Sarajevo appears to be one of the centres that has taken a particular responsibility for the development of the network. For instance, after a network meeting in Balaton in 2001, NDC Sarajevo presented two documents to the PM and the network with concrete suggestions on how to improve the functioning of the network. Mostar NDC has identified network building as one of their main challenges for 2003. Banja Luka NDC emphasises the network in relation to capacity building (both on staff and office-levels), and promotes increased network cooperation in their annual Plan of Action for 2003. Co-ordinators in Skopje NDC have co-operated with a number of NDCs in the network, but it is still our understanding that the office first and foremost views potential co-operation in relation to centres in the neighbouring geographical vicinity. This could be related to its geographical location, as well as overwhelming local inter-ethnic challenges. KIDS/NDM have mainly cooperated with Skopje NDC. KIDS emphasise in their interviews a wish to increase cooperation with a larger part of the network. This aim was also stated in KND’s new Plan of Action, developed in July 2003.

Networks within the network
The BDP includes not only the overall large network, but also smaller networks related to specific regional issues and situations. These appear to be based on concrete project co-operation related to geographical, and/or thematically interlinked issues. An obvious connection is between the BiH-centres, where inter-entity co-operation is stated as a shared project objective. Secondly, and indeed interesting, is the co-operation between Mostar and Montenegro in the triangle of Herceg Novi, Dubrovnik and Trebinje. Based upon geographical and political linkages, two additional network co-operation efforts involving NDCs in Skopje, Pristina and Mitrovica, as well as co-operation between the Centre for New Visions in Preshevo (associated with the BDP in 2003) and the Belgrade office. Furthermore, there is ongoing project co-operation between BNC and Montenegro related to inter-ethnic relations in the Sandzak region, as well as between Osijek and Belgrade NDCs on IDP-return and border policy issues.

Examples of joint activities/projects
Despite the lack of communication and information sharing in the network, the NDCs have co-operated well on concrete activities on a number of occasions. As noted above, the NDCs in BiH have had successful co-operation on several seminars. They have organised dialogue seminars with participants from all over BiH on topics like regional co-operation, war crimes, and IDPs/refugees. Such mutual effort represents

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150 Based upon interviews with PM-representatives and NDC-staff. NDC Montenegro however underlined the close and good co-operation with BNC. In addition to joint projects, the BNC is for instance represented in the NDC Montenegro’s board.
good examples of network co-operation on joint activities on important and burning issues. Some seminars have also specifically targeted municipal workers, with the stated aim of improving inter-municipal co-operation.

NDC Montenegro and the BNC have also co-operated successfully on dialogue seminars in Sandzak. NDC Montenegro has additionally co-operated with NDC Skopje on a dialogue seminar in the predominantly ethnic-Albanian-populated town of Ulcinj in Montenegro, where a co-ordinator from NDC Skopje facilitated. KIDS and NDC Skopje also undertook a very targeted activity in 2001, when they - in the middle of the crisis in Macedonia- organised a visit to Sarajevo for politicians from Kosovo and Macedonia. These activities are examples of excellent co-operation and genuine use of the network.

We do not believe, however, that all network activities are equally relevant in relation to the overall project objective. In line with our general recommendations, we are sceptical towards co-operation on certain cultural activities. For instance, NDC Montenegro co-operated with the Mostar and Osijek NDCs on a Street Performance in May 2003, where a group of graffiti artists organised street performances in Kosovo, Montenegro, BiH, Croatia and Southern Serbia. The aim of this activity was to bring people of different ethnic backgrounds together and spread the message of 'dialogue - not conflict.' It is our view that this project was merely conducted as "happenings" in the targeted towns and villages where performances were not presented as parts of a larger program context. Furthermore, we do not see this as an example of a genuine substantive co-operation among centres, but rather more as practical and logistical collaboration. Is it our assessment that such expressions or "happenings" do not represent an adequate activity in and of themselves, but could for instance been used more instrumentally to advertise for other activities. They might also be more explicitly related to larger events, such as elections, so that an NDC-statement presented on the street, could be made in the context of a particular issue.

As mentioned above, it is vital to see network relations in a broader context than simply as joint project co-operation. We believe there is a huge potential for sharing the different experiences and expertise of each centre and their staff in the network, and that all NDCs could benefit from inter-office exchanges for a period of time, as suggested by NDC Mostar. Furthermore, we see that all the NDCs and the network would benefit from sharing views and discussions on overall issues that affect all countries in the region, e.g. human rights issues, majority/minority relations, issues related to IDP/refugee return, etc. Constructive network discussions could also serve as a corrective to local perceptions of political and inter-ethnic developments, as well as to contribute to a deeper understanding of regional developments among NDC and PM-staff.

Network Committee (NetCom)

"We need a body to be responsible and one to blame." At the Annual Meeting in Mostar in November 2002 it was stated that one of the priorities for 2003 would be to strengthen the network, thus a Network Committee (NetCom) was established.
NetCom is led by PM-staff, together with representatives from each NDC. The mandate declares that NetCom is to:

- consider drafting a mission statement for the project as a whole, in order to think through the objectives and strategy of the project's work and ensure that the centres, while functioning independently, also function as a group;\(^{151}\)
- ensure proper planning of the project as a whole and increase the co-ordination of the NDCs in the planning process;
- take the initiative on joint activities in the network, and systematise the network-wide discussion on joint activities;
- look after the process of meeting the training needs in the network and develop the centre's competence;
- set up working groups for specific tasks, that will report back to NetCom;
- function as a channel of communication between the NDCs - among the centres and between the centres and PM.\(^{152}\)

The criteria for the joint projects were discussed at the NetCom meeting in Athens in April 2003. It was decided that at least one joint project involving all nine NDCs should be implemented; in addition to the implementation of smaller projects involving only some of the NDCs. NetCom has identified four projects:

- Divided Societies,' with NDC Osijek as lead NDC
- Potential research project on Small Arms
- Conference on NGOs and peace building in the Balkans in 2004
- Possible network summer school in 2004

We believe that NetCom has potential to further stimulate contacts and co-operation within the network. The exchange of information and experience between the NDCs will hopefully improve, as well as increase attention to the network's potential. We support the need to think through the objectives and strategy of the project, and are also welcoming the potential NetCom represent in terms of strengthening strategic planning, cooperation and co-ordination of the NDCs activities in the network.

In relation to activities, we believe that the network should focus primarily on developing joint projects that can have an impact on reconciliation and inter-ethnic relations in the region, as stated by a BDP-staff member. In line with our general recommendations, we believe that the joint activities in the network must be focused and targeted. In this context we question if a research project on small arms in fact represents a meaningful focus for the BDP. Although we see the implications of the issue in relation to regional instability and reconciliation, we do not see the comparative advantage of the BDP entering this particular field. Neither do we see how this project could contribute to developing competences that are relevant for actions and program development in the network. Moreover, in relation to the "summer school "project, we raise the question of launching activities before addressing a relevant content. This is also related to our assessment of the need to prioritise quality over quantity in relation to project implementations.

\(^{151}\) Representatives from both PM and the NetCom have clarified that this statement is made to ensure that the network is in fact functioning within the frames of the existing mission statement of BDP, and it does not indicates drafting a new mission statement.

\(^{152}\) PM points out that NetCom is not to replace existing communication within the network, but to function as a systematic and formalised supplement to the everyday communication.
Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)
During 2003 the PM-initiated a process of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), which includes six centres. During the NetCom meeting in Budva 7-9 July 2003, it was decided that evaluation of the NDC's activities should be included as a priority objective of the M&E project. One co-ordinator from each centre will visit a different centre in order to facilitate a discussion on the impact of their activities. The process will result in a report from each participating NDC that will be compiled into a common report by the PM. The main aim of this project is to stimulate a process of self-reflection at the centres, in addition to developing tools that can be used in impact assessment in the dialogue work conducted by the NDCs.

We believe that this initiative is indeed a positive step that can lead to more targeted activities in the BDP. In addition, we believe this is an important process through which to raise awareness of the centre's activities in relation to potential impact. Furthermore, we view M&E-processes as a vital tool for the PM, in order to secure relevant follow-up of the NDCs individually and as a network. Thus, it is our assessment and recommendation that the PM should take responsibility to further develop this process and to ensure that all the NDCs are included in future M&E activities.

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153 According to the M&E team leader, the M&E team has drawn on experiences from two main studies during their work: Anderson & Olson (2003) and S.E.Kruse (1999).
154 According to the M&E team leader, “the M&E-team concluded with a strong recommendation to the Project Management for prompt actions to continue the ongoing M&E development work”. As a result, the M&E process will be continued also in 2004.
155 KND and Montenegro NDC are currently not participating in the M&E project. A representative in PM pointed out that it was voluntary for the centres to participate in this M&E, which are perceived as a pilot M&E project.
Chapter 13  The Norwegian partners

PRIO and the Nansen Academy are two separate organisations cooperating on the implementation and the management of the Balkan Dialogue Project. The organisations’ respective responsibilities are defined in contracts and through an agreed division of labour. PRIO bears the main responsibility for management of the NDCs. The current project staff at PRIO comprises a project leader (40%), a project manager, a region-based financial co-ordinator, a project adviser, and a project consultant. The PM also includes a senior project consultant (33%) and a project officer (50%) from the Nansen Academy.

Before elaborating on the role of the Norwegian partners, one should note that we view project developments and efforts in the context of a broader evolution containing different phases with different needs. During the three years of the BDP existence, nine centres have been established as relatively independent and functioning local NGOs. After three years with a strong focus on administrative establishment/consolidation of the project, it is our view that emphasis should now be put on qualitative project developments and professionalisation.

The PM’s follow up of the NDCs

PRIO is responsible for the day-to-day follow-up of the NDCs. Communication between the NDCs and the PM (i.e. PRIO) is basically carried out through fixed reporting routines, including an annual strategic planning process where all centres are requested to draw up a Plan of Action with an overall strategy for programs/activities based upon an analysis of the political and inter-ethnic challenges in their respective societies. In the case of particular needs or burning issues, the NDCs contact the PM for additional support. A majority of the co-ordinators appreciated that the PM has become more efficient and expedient with regard to follow-up, feedback requests etc during the last year. Most centres stated that the current PM leadership appear to be more responding since the appointing of a new project manager during 2002. In this respect one should mention that the PM has invested much effort in the process of developing annual plans of action for the NDCs for 2003, which has considerably improved the centres strategy planning since 2002. The deployment of a financial co-ordinator to the region during 2001 has also been highly appreciated by the NDCs and has proved to be successful with regard to administrative capacity building of, and the level of accountability among, the NDCs. A number of centres however, explained that they still lack attention and follow up from the PM.

It is our understanding that the PM first and foremost has focused its efforts on administrative capacity building, a task clearly within the framework of PRIO’s

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156 PRIO has no responsibility for the seminars at Lillehammer; however, the NDCs are involved in identifying and recruiting candidates to the seminars in Lillehammer.

157 E.g. compulsory bi-monthly reports on the centres’ activities as well as the staff’s evaluation of their own performances and implementations of set goals (Personal Reports).

158 PRIO, as the responsible administrative organisation, should be given credit for its effort in this respect.
responsibility for administration and management of the project.\footnote{This focus should also be seen in a historical context. The issue of the administrative capacity of PRIIO was explicitly raised by the donor before the expansion of the number of centres in 2001 and subsequently in connection with the budget problems experienced in 2001 (see below on “Financial Situation”). It is our understanding that PRIIO responded to this episode by focusing more on administrative and financial capacities in the NDCs (see also below on the role of the NMFA, and relations between the PM and the NMFA), perhaps at the expense of substantive issues.} Yet, the field trips revealed that all centres are in need of follow-up on issues related to substance and strategy planning, including focus, programs and activities. Thus, we believe the PM should focus more on substantive matters, as several centres are conducting programs without the necessary quality control on overall strategies, program focus and specific activities. While the NDC’s are reporting on strategies and activity implementation on a regular basis, it is our understanding that the PM only to a limited extent responds with substantive feedback and follow-up questions in relation to the reports. This was also recognised by several of the representatives in the PM. Time constraints, inefficient division of labour, and lack of a full-time director were pointed out as causes for this situation. Consequently, one should ask if existing reporting routines constitute an adequate basis for the PM’s supervision, or whether the PM and the Network should consider other communications and reporting routines, as suggested by the PM.\footnote{Discussed in an interview conducted in August 2003 where the project manager pointed out the need to develop reporting routines that will secure more adequate information, which again could constitute a better base for relevant and substantive PM-feedback.} In spite of the fact that the NDCs include many gifted and enthusiastic co-ordinators, we believe that each and every centre and co-ordinator could benefit from supplementary substantive input and more guidance. In addition the PM should consider individual needs of co-ordinators and other staff members in various areas of substantive capacity building. The PM would thus be better able to help develop more fully the potentials of the staff and thereby also the network and the project as such. Clearly, if the network is to achieve greater sustainability over time, then capacity building through systematic transfer of knowledge and expertise is of fundamental importance. The PM can have an overall responsibility in this regard. In order to identify requirements, it is vital to establish Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems, also in relation to human resources. Linked to this is also the issue of staff recruitment, follow-up, and criteria for renewal of contracts. Today staff contract renewals are effected more or less mechanically, without evaluating the co-ordinators in relation to efforts, individual qualities, and the particular challenges faced by the centre and the network.

Another follow-up aspect is related to the understanding that, as a starting point for actions, the NDCs should approach the PM if need be, also in cases where the PM are aware of internal problems in an NDC. Accordingly, the PM seems hesitant to intervene or initiate actions in a centre without having been specifically asked to do so.\footnote{The PM comments that they on a number of occasions have intervened in centres, for instance in NDC Montenegro and NDC Banja Luka. It was however stated by a PM-representative during an interview that also in cases when the PM was aware of internal problems, further actions would depend upon the actual NDCs initiative (August 2003).} Moreover, it is our assessment that the PM has ‘allowed’ the NDCs to be involved in too many irrelevant activities. We do however recognize the challenge faced by the PM with regard to encouraging local ownership in the NDCs, without imposing decisions on the NDCs, while simultaneously acting as a responsible
administrative and professional unit. It is our opinion, however, that the development of greater autonomy and local ownership does not necessarily conflict with a responsible and substantive relationship with an outside agency.\footnote{In fact, studies show that partnerships between “insiders” (i.e. local organisations) and “outsiders” (e.g. foreign organisations) can produce opportunities for increased effectiveness – as long as the partnership is well designed and well managed (e.g. Anderson & Olson 2003).} It is our impression that the NDCs in principal identify themselves as local and autonomous \textit{NGOs}, but simultaneously feel accountable towards the Norwegian partners. This, we believe, is not only due to the overall position of the PM in relation to the donor and the administration of the project, but also to part of the NDC staff’s historical and personal links to Norway through the training programme in Lillehammer.\footnote{This “link” was emphasised by the majority of the NDC staff. Additionally, a major part of the co-ordinators staff stressed their relationship/feeling of responsibility towards Dan Smith and Steinar Bryn, who are widely viewed as key persons with regard to the development of the project idea and the philosophy.} Hence, we believe the role of the PM could be to “lead from behind” with the primary aim of helping the centres to define their role and focus within the framework of the overall philosophy, without establishing rigid hierarchical control mechanisms. \textit{The nature of the “leadership” envisaged in this regard can usefully be thought of as an organisational form of mentoring and guidance}. Through posing questions, raising issues and providing the benefit of expertise and experience to the co-ordinators, the PM would be more proactive in promoting awareness and implementation of the overall project objectives. It would also be a useful monitoring tool for all involved, allowing for improved understanding of “what the NDCs are doing, why are they doing it, and how are they doing it”.\footnote{ToR.3.} Additionally, we believe that it is the PM’s responsibility to communicate the overall principles of the project to the centres, and to see that the project is moving in the right direction.

There are several examples of positive and fruitful co-operation between the PM and the NDCs. E.g. we assess that joint efforts and team work between the PM and the BNC represent a significant cause for the promising program progression in Southern Serbia. Furthermore, one should ask if the NDM’s inter-ethnic program in the divided city of Mitrovica would have been initiated and continued without PM’s particular follow-up and support.

We would furthermore raise some issues in relation to the fact that the PM is located in a peace research institute. After three years, PRIO has only to a very limited extent initiated research that seeks to develop theory/methodology on conflict transformation based upon experiences from the Balkan Dialogue Project.\footnote{See Aarbakke (2002) “Mutual Learning. Facilitating Dialogue in Former Yugoslavia”, Donna Isaak (2001) “Response to conflict”, and David Wubs-Mrozewicz’s ongoing study on the Nansen Network.} In applications to the NMFA, the PM has stated that PRIO should give more attention to the research potentials inbuilt in the operational activities.\footnote{See for instance the Grant Application for 2001 where “research potentials ingrained in the operational activities” is listed as the first challenge for 2001.} During interviews however, PRIO emphasised the difficulties in funding individual research projects, either within the limited budget of PRIO, Balkan Dialogue Project Budget itself, or through additional external funding. According to the NMFA, however, PRIO has
never applied for additional funding for research, nor submitted proposals suggesting possible reallocation of funds for that purpose.\textsuperscript{167} It is our assessment that PRIO, as a research institution, has not made enough efforts to establish research in connection with the project or tried to initiate research for the mutual benefit of the Balkan Dialogue Project and PRIO\textquotesingle s other research activities. By this we specifically imply \textit{research that seek to develop theory and methodology in relation to practical dialogue/reconciliation work, or more indirectly on inter-ethnic relations/conflict patterns in the Western Balkans}.\textsuperscript{168} One should also consider to what degree PM (i.e. PRIO/Nansen Academy) over the years has explored the possibilities for further development of the project concept and sought to adjust the methodology and activities to political developments in the region.\textsuperscript{169} This is also related to the overall pedagogical methodology, where we see a need for the PM/network to further elaborate and adjust the methodology into relevant and targeted actions. Today too many activities are conducted in classrooms and seminar rooms in the NDC\textquotesingle s home city communities. While we support the Nansen Dialogue concept, we believe that the project partners should initiate a process on how to use the dialogue tool in order to reach more people (and more influential levels) in areas where inter-ethnic relations are especially negatively affected.

It is also important to raise attention to the need for the PM to increase its level of contact and co-operation with other Norwegian NGOs that are active in the field, including partner organisations like the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) or the Norwegian Helsinki Committee. For instance, there are areas where the PM could benefit from its partner organisations\textquotesingle experiences, e.g. in relation to NGO field management and partnership potentials. This is also related to the BDP network being a knowledge-based organisation, and seeking to learn from relevant experiences in relation to administrative and substantive matters. Secondly, being among the largest Norwegian financed projects in the Western Balkans, the BDP has a particular responsibility to ensure that actions and plans are well co-ordinated with organisations with associated mandates (e.g. the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Norwegian Church Aid and the Norwegian Refugee Council).\textsuperscript{170}

Finally, and also related to the issue of being a knowledge-based, learning organisation; it is our view that conclusions and recommendations for this report to a large extent correspond not only with external research (including studies that directly involve the BDP), but also with the content of a number of grant proposals to the NMFA over the years. Thus, one should ask to what extent the PM has been too optimistic in its own stated goals (in relation to the follow-up on the NDC\textquotesingle s, research

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{167} Interview with NMFA-representative.
\item \textsuperscript{168} During interview with PRIO\textquotesingle s deputy director, she acknowledged that PRIO so far has not been able to integrate the Balkan Dialogue Project within the research activities of the institute. She underlined however that PRIO will seek to develop its role both with regard to substantial follow-up as well as to further explore the possibility of developing relevant research projects.
\item \textsuperscript{169} One recent initiative by the PM however is the development of the Evaluation & Monitoring project (see chapter 12 on the Network) which is developed on the basis of a study by Mary B. Anderson & Lara Olson (2003). In this study the NDCs and the Balkan Dialogue Project was one of several projects examined, and a number of relevant recommendations were presented.
\item \textsuperscript{170} One should also note that a Norwegian Church Aid representative addressed a need for increased awareness on the part of the PM to be more open and constructive when receiving feedback on the NDCs, particularly from partner organisations that are present in the field on permanent basis.
\end{itemize}
activities, etc.), and secondly, to what extent the PM has actively sought to draw on relevant experiences and research results that could improve the overall project.

The relation between the Norwegian partners: PRIO and the Nansen Academy.
Both the Nansen Academy (NA) and PRIO underline the positive co-operation between the two institutions, and both partners view each other as complimentary with regard to the professional and administrative capacity. Still the NA appears to believe that its potential is not fully made use of in the PM, and that the role of NA in the current functioning of the PM has become increasingly vague and marginal. This view is also partly supported by interviews among PRIO project staff, and could be related to the division of labour, as well as different institutional identities.\(^{171}\) However, all PM representatives see the need for both approaches, and stress that misunderstandings and disagreements can be solved with better lines of communication.\(^{172}\) Representatives from both institutions recognise a need to rethink the current organisational structure of the PM in order to achieve smoother functioning and better utilisation of the resources.

Viewing the co-operation between PRIO and the NA in the context of the annual proposals to the NMFA over the years, it is possible to see a development from close partnership in 1999/2000, where the roles of the two institutions are equally emphasised, towards a more dominant role of PRIO, with a corresponding downsizing of the NA. This could also be mirrored in the tendency of the two organisations to view the project as either two separate projects, or as one project with two separate, but related components, where one component (the establishment of the NDCs and PRIO’s role) grew out of the first component (the seminars at Lillehammer) (NA’s view). It is our understanding that PRIO emphasises the distinction between the different parts of the Balkan Dialogue Project whereas the Nansen Academy views the projects as one.\(^{173}\) One should note however, that according to the large majority of the NDC staff, the NA plays a particular role with regard to substantive matters and the project identity with regard to inter-ethnic relations and reconciliation methods.\(^{174}\) Thus, the PM should define a clearer role for the NA in the future organisation.

Interviews with PRIO and Nansen Academy staff also revealed varying comprehension of the project objectives. The main differences were related to 1) the administrative focus, and 2) the introduction of a broader civil society perspective in the project objectives. The first has accentuated different interpretations with regard

\(^{171}\) As the unit with administrative responsibility, PRIO emphasises the need to formalise decisions and to conduct proper processes, whereas the Nansen Academy tends to act under less formalised circumstances.
\(^{172}\) Within the PM it was also expressed that relations had improved through more frequent contact and better integrated efforts.
\(^{173}\) Assessment based upon statements from PM representatives at PRIO and the NA. One should also note that the NDC’s staffs mainly share the latter interpretation of the projects as one integrated project with two components. This has also been the donor’s interpretation. See also Isaac (2001) on her assessment of this particular issue.
\(^{174}\) Stated in interviews by the large majority of the NDC’s staff when discussing PM responsibilities and the respective roles of the NA and PRIO. This was also discussed in similar manners during the meeting in Sarajevo (October 24/25), participated by the NDCs, the PM, the donor and the review team.
to the Norwegian/NDC relationship among PM representatives: Should NDCs develop into independent NGOs with the aim of loosening and eventually cutting the umbilical chord to the Nansen Academy and /PRIO? Or should the partnership between the centres in the field and the PM (Norwegian partners) be continued in the coming years and, perhaps, be even further developed? The latter is linked to the former PM leadership's decision to include a broader engagement in the NDC's stated objectives, namely the goal of working for a general strengthening of civil society in the region. This stands in contrast to what can be perceived as the Nansen Academy's stricter focus on inter-ethnic dialogue. According to the Nansen Academy, the inclusion of this broader civil society perspective was not based on a thorough and formal discussion within the PM that led to a consensus-based decision on making this shift. According to PRIO, there were discussions on this issue before the drafting of the proposal to the NMFA in which the civil society dimension was given priority. However that may be, the PM acknowledges that the shift in focus was not followed up with a dialogue with the NDCs to ensure a shared understanding of the implications of the shift toward the civil society approach. Based upon interviews with PM-representatives and NDC-staff, it is our view that different opinions within the PM also led to different interpretations amongst the NDCs. As a result, a number of NDCs initiated activities whose value can be questioned with regard to conflict prevention and inter-ethnic relations. It is also our opinion that this shift led to a loss of the clear-cut peacebuilding identity, and delayed further progress in the process of professional specialisation on the part of the NDCs. This could also be the main reason for what we see as a lack of a common understanding of the project concept and overall philosophy within the current PM and among the NDCs.

There are different views to the issues raised above. It is our opinion, however, that in order to establish a viable network of NDCs in the Balkans, it is imperative to raise awareness on common objectives and a shared project philosophy, as well as to enhance the professional specialisation, focus and comparative advantages of the

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175 The donor also shares this opinion.
176 I.e. the grant proposal for 2001.
177 As stated by a PM representatives in September 2003. One should also note that there are numbers of definitions of civil society, ranging from a set of values, a network of organisations, a space for action, a historical moment and an antidote to the state. In order to define actions within this field, a clarification of the concept is essential, both with regard to "how to define", and "how to respond" depending on varying local contexts. Thirdly, it is equally important to critically analyse the potential role of civil society in peacebuilding, and relate to studies that seek to problematise civil society efforts in conflict transformation (see for instance Orjuela 2003, Hoffman 2002).
178 Our interviews revealed different assessments of the role of the NDCs in their respective communities, both among NDC staff and within the PM. Differences are related to diverse perspectives on the role of the NDCs in conflict prevention/reconciliation processes: either as organisations with a strict professional mandate (specialists on inter-ethnic dialogue) or a broader (civil society) approach with activities on a wide range of areas. In discussions with the NDCs in Sarajevo November 23/24 2003 however, the NDCs welcomed a clearer message with regard to future project focus. During the meeting a clear-cut focus on inter-ethnic relations and reconciliation was agreed upon, which was also the conclusion from the internal M&E-process conducted during 2003. It should be added, however, that during the annual network meeting in Mostar in November 2002, it was also agreed by the network to adopt a tighter inter-ethnic focus in the strategic planning for 2003.
individual centres and the network as a whole. Based upon our assessments above, it is our recommendation that the PM redefines its follow-up activities towards the NDCs to ensure that follow-up and capacity-building assistance is expanded and improved both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

Finally, we assess that being two different institutions with shared administrative/follow-up responsibilities has proven to be challenging and partly dysfunctional over time with respect to communication lines and contact within the PM, between the PM/NDCs as well as with the donor. Hence, we recommend that the PM initiate a process to define a more efficient organisation structure to secure a more functional, efficient and streamlined project management.

**The role of the donor**

The project is, as noted above, among the largest single projects in the NMFA’s Balkan portfolio (and probably among the largest single projects of its kind in the region). Although funded on a yearly basis, the NMFA have made a longer-term commitment that has allowed the project to expand and develop. The rational behind the Norwegian support was based on the NMFA's assessment of the conflict potential in Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and post-war challenges in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia.

The Norwegian NMFA has played an active role during the establishment phase. The NMFA was interested in the idea of inter-ethnic dialogue and the Nansen concept, and saw the establishment of a dialogue network as a potential tool for the promotion of inter-ethnic reconciliation and preventive diplomacy efforts in the Western Balkans. The project was furthermore seen as a pioneering work in reconciliation processes in the Balkans. Its grassroots approach and basis in local contexts was thought to be a useful and necessary supplement to traditional diplomatic efforts at government and state levels. As such, the project was also viewed as being complementary to traditional diplomacy in the Western Balkans. Furthermore, the NMFA also wanted to support people who actively worked for positive changes in their local communities in the Former Yugoslavia. It was believed to be important to support “advocates of reconciliation” in the various communities in the Western Balkans, and especially so in areas of actual or potential refugee return.

The setting up of NDCs was seen in the context of the overall Norwegian support to the region with emphasis on inter-ethnic relations and refugee return. Based on meetings and contacts with the PM as well as visits to the centres, the NMFA viewed the Balkan Dialogue Project as a reconciliation and preventive diplomacy project with inter-ethnic dialogue as the prime focus. It was defined as a political project aimed at influencing political currents and processes in the local communities of the NDCs. Additionally, the network was seen as a potential “confidence-building” mechanism at the societal level and thus as one of several instruments for easing strained relations between communities and countries in the region. The NDC, and the network were believed to have the potential of developing into a functioning

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179 Professional specialisation on the part of the recipients is widely held to be one of the main preconditions for financial support by most donors today.

180 Initially in Vojvodina and the Sandzak region, and later in Southern Serbia.
professional network across former conflict lines, and between organisations aspiring for local and regional reconciliation. The NMFA comments that over the years, the NMFA has continued to emphasise the value and potential of the project and it has actively promoted the network and the NDCs, not only in the Norwegian political community, but also within the diplomatic community and in contacts with foreign governments and organisations. For example, according to the NMFA, during 2003 one worked to include the BDP in the project list of “The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe”, in the hope that this would generate interest among other potential donor countries. 181

Relations between the NMFA and the PM

Contact between the NMFA and PRIO/Nansen Academy over the years has been relatively frequent, with discussions conducted in a generally good atmosphere. Interviews with PM as well as with the NMFA indicates that the PM and donor have talked at cross-purposes with one another from time to time, with possible misunderstandings as a result. 182 Nevertheless, the substantial and continued financial support for the project was a result of the NMFA's confidence in the administrative and substantive capabilities of the Norwegian partners, as well as respect for the commitment of local activists in the region. Until the budgetary problems in 2001, 183 the project enjoyed considerable trust, support and political blessing. During 2001/2002, however, the NMFA began to question the role of the PM with regard to the NDCs, and whether the PM and the donor shared the same perspectives for the project and its follow-up. The PM, on its side, has explained that it did not perceive signals from the ministry as being consistent over time, e.g. with regard to the NDCs’ organisational developments, and in relation to whether NDCs should seek alternative funding or rely on continuous Norwegian backing. Experiences over the years have therefore accentuated a need to formalise the contact between the donor and the PM to improve the quality of the communication and information flow. 184 Closer contact is also needed to ensure greater clarity between the project partners and the donor on project implementation. Members of the PM seem to have different opinions on how the relationship to the NMFA should be, and to what extent the NMFA should be seen exclusively as a donor or as also a partner in the development and implementation of the project. Hence there is also a need to clarify the future role of the donor in the project.

In connection to this, the NMFA also suggest a closer consultation with the donor on strategic planning and project developments, not only since the NMFA is the main donor, but also in view of the fact that the NMFA’s funding through other organisations in many cases ultimately involves local NDCs and the network. Furthermore, the donor underlined the need for closer consultancy on substantive issues regarding political developments, minority rights, refugee return, etc., between the PM/network and the NMFA because the NMFA is concerned with issues of this

181 Interview with NFMA representative.
182 This could, we believe, also correlate to a more general challenge in the donor-recipient relation.
183 See below on "Financial situation".
184 The PM admits that shifts in overall project principles could have been more explicitly formulated and formalised. The NMFA on its side acknowledges that with hindsight there were issues in relation to its support that were not communicated explicitly enough (in writing) to the Norwegian partners. (Interviews with NMFA representative and PM staff, August 2003).
kind at the governmental level and therefore can act as a source of supplementary input to the network. The donor comment that the network should neither underestimate the potential for itself being able to influence NMFA thinking on specific issues where the network has a knowledge- and experience-driven foundation. Such interaction with the NMFA can therefore be in the interest of the Network and the NDC’s.185

The NMFA deserves credit for its solid financial and substantive support to a pioneering initiative like the BDP. However, if pulling back at this stage, we argue that already invested financial and human resources could be lost. It is our assessment that a lot has been achieved so far, and that the current network represent a strong potential for further development. One should also note that not only have conflict prevention and reconciliation proved to be long-term processes, the set up and development of a sizeable network such as BDP, also requires long term donor engagement.186 Hence, we recommend the NMFA to prolong its financial support of the BDP.

Financial situation
Related to the PM-donor discussion, is also the level of financial support from the NMFA. PRIO bears the overall responsibility for the administration of an annual budget of approximately NOK 15 million. In 2001 the PM experienced serious budgetary problems due to insufficient budgetary oversight and control. The budget overrun was dealt with through an additional grant of NOK 1 million from the NMFA, combined with a cost-cutting exercise within the project that generated an additional NOK 1 million. On the administrative level, the overspending issue led the NMFA to request a total review of budget routines, and to underscore the need for increased budget supervision. In addition, the donor approved and funded the set up and running of a regional administrative unit, with a financial project co-ordinator in order to ensure transfer of administrative capacity to the NDC’s and thus contribute to overall financial and budget discipline and control. The donor has commented however, that while the budget problems in 2001 were the result of the PM’s administrative mismanagement; actions were apparently basically directed towards the centres.

One should note that the financial administration of the project has improved considerably, and that the PM and PRIO should be given credit for this. Nevertheless, according to the NMFA, the problems in 2001 represented a turning point for the NMFA’s confidence in PRIO’s administrative capacity. This resulted in a process where the donor has requested more transparent budget plans.187 It is our recommendation that this process should be completed, and that the PM should provide the donor with a fully transparent financial plan for all NDC activities, including externally funded programs.188

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185 Interviews with NMFA representatives August/September 2003.
186 See e.g. OECD/DAC guidelines (2001).
187 Interview with NMFA representative.
188 E.g. there are examples of projects where the NMFA through funding for other organisations, is actually funding additional activities conducted by the NDCs. Thus, in order for the NMFA to get an overall picture of the financial situation for the BDP, a more thorough financial plan should be requested.
It is our opinion that the project could benefit from developing a more moderate spending practice. This is first and foremost related to the allocation of funds to the centres, which is of a size that for example allows the hiring of cleaning and secretarial staff, and to surpass office standards generally found in the region and local salary levels of, for instance Norwegian NGOs in the region. This does not imply, however, that we disagree with the need for the NDCs to receive substantial funding to cover administrative costs and the implementation of activities. We are nevertheless questioning a financial strategy that seems to lack sufficient critical reflection on the potentially negative consequences of excessive funding. For instance, could disproportionate funding reduce local initiative and activism? Could excessive funding lead to a shift in focus and effort, away from the activist approach to a more bureaucratised approach? Employment in the BDP should not be based on financial interests, although it is clear that salary levels must be reasonable and in line with local NGO levels. During our field trips, we received several indications that the NDCs are perceived by other local NGO’s as being relatively well off financially in comparison with other NGOs or even some INGOs. In our view, this perception can harm the reputation of the NDCs as a dedicated NGO with a clear local commitment. Furthermore, we question if the PM has harmonised NDC staff’s salary with the average NGO level in the various local contexts, in order to avoid further enlarging the difference between “ordinary salaries” and NGO salaries? We have come across examples of more senior and experienced staff in the region holding the position of project director in externally funded projects, but still receiving lower salaries than an NDC coordinator. Is it functional for the project that all NDC staff receives the same salaries without reference to previous professional and academic background, work experience or actual performance? It is also vital that the PM acts in line with the general conditions for NMFA funding, thus abandoning the practise of spending non-allocated funds in the late phase of the year to avoid possible budget cuts to the next year’s funding. In relation to this, according to normal evolution of budgets in other projects, funding requirements generally tend to fall when the establishment phase is over. This has not been the case for this project. Finally, the administrative cost of the project, compared to other projects implemented by Norwegian partners, suggests that expenditures on the Norwegian side could be decreased. Accordingly, we believe there are areas for potential rationalisation in current expenditures. We would thus recommend that the PM initiate a financial evaluation with the aim of establishing a more efficient budget expenditure patterns, without harming the quality of the NDC’s activities and the PM’s follow-up responsibility.

**Future challenges**

Based on the issues presented in this chapter, we would like to challenge PRIO and the Nansen Academy, together with the donor, to embark upon a thorough discussion.

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189 Impression gained from interviews with PM staff.
190 Based upon interviews with local and international NGOs in the region.
191 For instance staff employed by multi-lateral organisations such as the OSCE.
192 The project director informed us that the PM is now moving towards introducing differentiated salaries.
193 Info based on interview with the project director and the PM’s finance manager.
on how the PM can be reorganised in order to secure better use of human resources, clarify roles and division of labour within the PM, and better serve the needs of the NDCs in the field. Interviews with the PM revealed that key personnel view the current review process as an important opportunity to discuss the structure of the PM "under a blue sky," i.e. with open minds, as stated by the project director. It is also our opinion that a reorganisation should emphasise better co-operation and coordination of activities with other Norwegian NGOs that are present in the field.

We see a number of issues that should be raised during a discussion of a potential future (re)organisation of the Balkan Dialogue Project. Some of these should be:

- Discussions on challenges with regard to the PM encompassing two institutions.
- A discussion on what is the added value of locating the main part of the PM at PRIO (e.g. with regard to research development and general management).
- An assessment of the current staffing level in the PM.
- An assessment of the PM’s job descriptions and division of labour.
- Discussions on alternative organisation models, for example:
  a) Outside PRIO, but in co-operation with a Norwegian NGO with a different, but related, mandate (e.g. a human rights organisations).
  b) Integration of the project at the Nansen Academy (possibly with a PM satellite office in Oslo).
  c) A better integrated/unified Nansen Academy - PRIO body.
  d) Basic administration conducted in the region; i.e. an administrative regional coordinator (recruited from the region).
  e) A regional coordinator (recruited from the region) with a substantial follow-up responsibility in relation to the programs and activities of the NDC’s.

In addition to a discussion of possible alternatives for restructuring the PM, we emphasize the need for a director engaged on a full-time basis. Due to other working obligations, the current project director is only engaged on a part-time contract.\(^{194}\) According to his experiences, however, the needs of the project require a full-time director.

\(^{194}\) The current project director is employed on a 40 % contract.
Chapter 14 Conclusion

The task of this study has been to assess the quality of the Balkan Dialogue Project, and its comparative advantage in the field of conflict prevention and reconciliation in the Western Balkans. During the Balkan Dialogue Project's three-year history, nine NDCs have been established and developed into semi-autonomous administrative units working to promote reconciliation and conflict prevention in the region. Moreover, the development of a functioning NGO network is in process, which potentially can evolve the project into a unique regional network. An integrated regional network would be unique and could make important contributions to knowledge-based reconciliation and conflict transformation in the Western Balkans. It is our opinion that the project has unfulfilled potential, with a large number of devoted co-ordinators who are investing time and energy in a dedicated mission for improved inter-ethnic relations.

To review the status of a sizeable organisation such as the Balkan Dialogue Project, we believe it is meaningful to view the current state in the context of a larger development with different phases, each containing different sets of goals. It is our opinion that after an establishment phase, i.e. consolidation of the administrative capacities of the NDCs, the emphasis should now be put on qualitative project development and professionalisation. In order to achieve this, each NDC must view its mission in relation to local and regional political developments, and take responsibility for its action also in relation to the network. This process is still in the preliminarily phase and needs to be developed.

PRIO and the Nansen Academy have conducted their role as project managers with respect for local knowledge and ownership in the NDCs. We believe, however, that the PM needs to redefine its role and undertake a different kind of responsibility to meet current and future challenges. This should include a shift of focus from predominantly administrative support towards more substantive assistance and guidance, conducted in a mentoring and partnership-oriented relationship.

Throughout this period, the project has relied on substantial and steady financial support from the NMFA. External support is undoubtedly a prerequisite for the existence and future development of the Balkan Dialogue Project. It is our recommendation that NMFA support should be prolonged, provided that adjustments and shifts are made in line with recommendations in this report. While the inter-state conflicts are settled in large parts of the region, challenges remain with regard to refugee- and IDP-return, inter-ethnic relations, sustainability of achieved returns, as well as the development of an inclusive and non-confrontational political discourse in each country, as well as in the region as a whole. Additionally, increased ethnic tension in the Sandzak region, instability and inter-ethnic division in Macedonia, Kosovo and Southern Serbia, as well as persistent distrust and lack of inter-ethnic co-operation in Croatia and BiH, emphasise the need for continuing conflict prevention and reconciliation efforts at the community level throughout the region. The Balkan Dialogue Project can have a role to play in facilitating conflict prevention, reconciliation and IDP/refugee return processes in the region, given further specialisation and stronger professional focus.
The NMFA's role in the project over the years can be defined as an active supporting donor. This is highly appreciated by the NDCs as well as by the PM. This cooperation should continue in the future; however, within the framework of a more formalised information system and better developed communication lines.
Appendix I  List of abbreviations

BDP - Balkan Dialogue Project
BiH – Bosnia & Herzegovina
BNC- Belgrade Nansen Centre
CRS – Catholic Relief Service
ECCP - European Centre for Conflict Prevention
IDP – internally displaced person
KFOR - Kosovo Force
KIDS – Kosova Initiative for Democratic Society
KND - Kosovar Nansen Dialogue
LOGO – Logical Solutions Group
M&E – Monitoring & Evaluation
NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCA – Norwegian Church Aid
NDC - Nansen Dialogue Centre
NDC BL - Nansen Dialogue Centre Banjaluka
NDM – Nansen Dialogue Mitrovica
Net Com - Network Committee
NGO – non-governmental organisation
NMFA - Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
OFF - On the Road Film Festival
OSCE - Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PM – Project Management
PRC – Political Resource Centre
PRIO - International Peace Research Institute
RS – Republika Srpska
T4T - Training for Trainers
UNMIK – United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
Appendix II References


Nansen Network Annual Report. PRIO 2000

Nansen Network Annual Report. PRIO 2001


*In addition the authors have studied Annual Proposals to the NMFA and Annual Reports by PRIO and the Nansen Academy between 1999-2003.*
Appendix III  List of interlocutors

Interviews  
Oslo/Lillehammer  

**PRIO**  
Dan Smith, Project Director  
Jorunn Tonnesen, Project Manager  
Ivar Evensmo, Project Advisor  
Snezana Popovic Vujovic, Field Coordinator  
Hilde Henriksen Waage, Deputy Director, PRIO  
Lars Even Andersen, Financial Coordinator, PRIO, located in Zagreb  

**Nansen Academy**  
Steinar Bryn, Senior Project Consultant  
Vanja Pestoric, Project Officer  
Heidrun Sørlie Røhr, Pedagogical Coordinator  

**Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs**  
Jan Braathu -The Section for Western Balkan Affairs  

**NDC Banjaluka**  
Tanja Milovanovic - Coordinator/Manager  
Dragana Sarengaca –Coordinator  
Armin Fazlic, former coordinator NDC Banjaluka /UNHCR  

*External interlocutors/cooperating partners/Lillehammer alumni*  
Sanja Mijatovic, member of NDC Banjaluka Network/student  
Ivana Levi, member of NDC Banjaluka Network/student  
Andjelina Osap, member of NDC Banjaluka Network/student  
Zinaida Hrvat, Lillehammer alumni/EURECNA, Banjaluka,  
Marica Seatovic, Lillehammer alumni/ICRC Banjaluka  
Vesna Maric, assistant, Department for cooperation with NGOs, Banjaluka City Administration  

**Belgrade Nansen Centre**  
Goran Lojancic - Coordinator  
Vesna Matovic - Coordinator  
Jelena Lengold - Coordinator  
Tatjana Popovic - Coordinator  
Danijela Gajovic - Assistant  
Srdjan Dosljak -Assistant
External interlocutors/cooperating partners/Lillehammer alumni
Eli Jonsvik – Counselor at the Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade
Milorad Bjeletic - Nansen alumni/Director of Belgrade Open School.
Sanda Babic, Lillehammer alumni/Political & Legal officer, EU’s Delegation of the European Commission in FRY
Aleksandar Rajcevic (Lillehammer alumni, participant of BNC activities)
Snezana Mrse, Group Most Belgrade

Kosovan Nansen Dialogue
KIDS
Artan Venhari -Coordinator
Artor Sejfija -Coordinator
Bersant Disha -Coordinator
Petrit Tahiri -Coordinator
Xheraldina Cernobregu –Coordinator

External interlocutors/cooperating partners/Lillehammer alumni
Ardijan Gjini – Lillehammer alumni/Political Adviser for Prime Minister Rexhepi
Arjeta Emra – former KIDS Coordinator/ Lillehammer alumni/ Director, British Council Pristina
Valon Murati – member in LOGO/Manager at AMM advertisement company, Lillehammer alumni
Dritan Gjonbalaj – member of LOGO/Civil Aviation Regulatory Office, Ministry of Transport and Telecommunication
Alan Frisk – Manager of Catholic Relief Service (CRS) Peace Building Program/Head of Regional Office of CRS

Nansen Dialogue Mitrovica
Miranda Ibishi -Coordinator
Abdullah Ferizi -Coordinator
Vladimir Rajovic -Coordinator
Jelena Ravnjak -Coordinator

External interlocutors/cooperating partners/Lillehammer alumni
Florent Hajrizi, Office Manager, Multiethnic Children and Youth Peace Centre (MCYPC)
Jelena Neradovic, seminar participant/journalist, Radio Kontakt Plus
Daniel Kanoti, seminar participant/student

Mostar NDC
Vladimir Maric - Coordinator
Maria Vlaho - Coordinator
Elvir Djuliman - Coordinator
Vernes Voloder - Coordinator
Gordana Pehar - Assistant
External interlocutors/cooperating partners/Lillehammer alumni
Nedim Suta – Lillehammer alumni (non-active), Senior Loan Officer for Micro Enterprise Bank (MEB) in Mostar
Vanesa Galic - Lillehammer alumni, active, leading NDC Mostar’s Children's Workshops
Amela Rebac - Lillehammer alumni, non-active, Editor-in-Chief of Radio Studio 88

NDC Osijek
Jasmina Krkic-Poznic - Coordinator
Ivana Milas -Coordinator
Srdjan Antic -Coordinator
Suzana Agotic -Coordinator
Nikolina Svalina –Assistant Coordinator

External interlocutors/co-operating partners/Lillehammer alumni
Sanja Spanja PRONI, Vukovar
Martina Uglik, assistant, NDC Osijek, Lillehammer alumni
Biljana Mrdovic Varevac (Lillehammer alumni/Psychologist/Advisor to NDC Osijek)

Montenegro NDC
Svetlana Racanovic, Director
Boris Raonic - Coordinator
Dragutin Djekovic - Coordinator
Ivana Gajovic - Coordinator

External interlocutors/cooperating partners/Lillehammer alumni
Milan Popovic, PhD – Professor on Law Faculty, Podgorica
Daliborka Uljarevic, former Coordinator Montenegro NDC/Media and Political Adviser, Council of Europe, Podgorica
Sasa Cadjenovic, former Lillehammer Alumni/UNHCR Podgorica
Kerim Medjedovic, former Coordinator Montenegro NDC/current NDC Montenegro associate/freelance trainer (& Oslo Summer School Participant)
Lisa Mc Lain – Director, National Democratic Institute (NDI), (email interview)

NDC Sarajevo
Nebojsa Savija Valha – Programme Project Development Manager
Ljulijeta Goranci Brkic – General Manager
Mustafà Cerò –Operational Manager
Amar Prasovic – IT & Technical Assistant
Zoran Telalbasic –Logistical Manager

External interlocutors/cooperating partners/Lillehammer alumni
Adisa Zahiragic - Lillehammer alumni/Judge at Cantonal Court, Sarajevo
Amela Mahic - Lillehammer alumni/Judge at Municipal Court Sarajevo
Jorunn Hageler, Regional Education Coordinator. OSCE Mission to BiH
**NDC Skopje**
Aleksandar Petkovski - Coordinator
Saso Stojkovski - Coordinator
Xhevahire Pruthi Zajazi - Coordinator
Albert Hani - Coordinator
Edmund Zhaku – Assistant/former coordinator for NDM

*External interlocutors/cooperating partners/Lillehammer alumni*
Ilija Dimovski, member of the Executive Committee of the Union of Youth Forces of VMRO-DPMNE/member of Central Committee of VMRO-DPMNE
Marina Tuneva, Lillehammer alumni/Communication and Media Coordinator in the Institute for Sustainable Communities, Skopje
Anne Caroline Tveoy, Norwegian Church Aid

*Additional interlocutors*
Torild Kvamme, The Norwegian Red Cross
Bjoern Engesland and Gunnar Karlsen, The Norwegian Helsinki Committee.
Appendix IV  Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Project Review:  A Qualitative Study of PRIO’s and Nansen Academy’s Balkan Dialogue Project

1. Background

The project began in 1995, after the idea was first conceived during the organisation of the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer in 1994. At that time the war was still raging in Bosnia-Herzegovina, with extensive media coverage of the besieged city of Sarajevo, which had hosted the Winter Olympics’ a decade earlier. This left a strong impression in Lillehammer, as in the rest of the world, and triggered the inspiration to design and develop a 12 week course in Lillehammer for participants from the former Yugoslavia. The training programme was a joint project between the Nansen Academy, Norwegian Red Cross, Norwegian Church Aid and the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), with financial support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA), the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration and the Lillehammer Olympic Committee. The project sought to target potential leaders in the former Yugoslavia, and was intended as an experience that would try to change peoples’ attitudes, and thereby their actions, through the transfer of knowledge combined with practical work with dialogue.195 The basic idea was to stimulate the participants “to obtain relevant education and training in democracy, human rights and peaceful conflict resolution that would prepare them for the building of a democratic civil society in their homeland.”196

Once the Lillehammer project was consolidated, ideas of further project developments emerged. It became clear to the organisers, as well to several participants, that it was necessary to integrate what had been learned at Lillehammer into activities and work in the participant’s local communities. This led to the opening of the first Nansen Dialogue Centre in Pristina in 1997, based on initiatives from Kosovar activists. The war in Kosovo in 1999, however, led to the collapse of the first Nansen Dialogue Centre, but it became the model for the formation of new NDC offices. From 1999 to 2001 additional centres were established in Skopje, Belgrade, Podgorica, Sarajevo, Mostar, Banja Luka and Osijek. In 2000 a new NDC-centre was also founded in Pristina under the name of “Kosovo Initiative for Democratic Society” (KIDS). Moreover, in 2001 the project included fieldworkers in Mitrovica (Kosovo) and Presevo (Southern Serbia) working on Serb/Albanian

195 Aarbakke 2002
196 Ibid: iii
dialogue. A regional Balkan dialogue network scattered throughout the territory of the Former Yugoslavia, comprising eight fully-fledged centres and a dialogue group in Mitrovica, have now been established.197

2. The Nansen Dialogue Project

Firstly, it is important to note that the Nansen Dialogue Project can either be seen as two separate projects or as one project with two separate but related components, where one component (the establishment of the NDCs and PRIO’s role) grew out of the first component (the seminars at Lillehammer). For the purpose of this study, it is important to underline that it will be irrelevant whether the project is perceived as one or two, as the study in any event will look at several aspects of all components of the project(-s).198

Our understanding of the project is that it consists of several “levels”, one being the ‘Norwegian level’, comprising PRIO, the Nansen Academy and the NMFA. The second can be described as the ‘field level’, consisting of the NDCs, KIDS and the Mitrovica Nansen Group, as well as the activities within the network. These two main levels will be studied within the framework of the project’s objectives and goals, both separately and combined.199

The network includes seven fully-fledged Nansen Dialogue Centres, activities of offices like the Mitrovica Nansen Group, and financial support and co-operation with an associated NGO, CNV, in Presevo.200 The project is managed by PRIO and the Nansen Academy, with PRIO bearing the main responsibility for managing and supervising field activities.

The seminars taking place at the Nansen Academy in Lillehammer, are believed to have played a vital role in the recruitment process to the NDCs, as almost all staff working in the NDCs have participated in seminars at Lillehammer. This has also been seen as a pre-condition for employment in the project.201

3. Purpose and focus of the qualitative study

197 From now on when we use the acronym NDC in this presentation it also includes Nansen Mitrovica Group and KIDS in Pristina.
198 PRIO and the Nansen Academy are two distinct organisations cooperating on the implementation of the Balkan Dialogue Project. Their respective responsibilities are set out in contracts and an agreed division of labour. PRIO has responsibility for the follow-up of the NDCs, and has no responsibilities regarding the courses run by the Nansen Academy. For the purposes of this review and its ToR, however, we use the term ‘project’ in singular.
199 Presenting the different levels of the project does not necessarily imply that the project should be viewed from a top-bottom-perspective, but is rather done for analytical purposes and in order to facilitate a more clear discussion of the findings. Field-located management staff are considered to be part of PRIO administration.
200 CNV in Presevo will not be part of this study.
201 Ibid:55, and interview with Steinar Bryn (Nansen Academy) conducted in May 2002.
The study will seek to assess the actual and potential contribution and impact of the NDCs’ on processes of reconciliation, democratisation and political developments in their respective local communities, and in the region as a whole.

After two years of establishing and consolidating the NDC centres and the network, the project has reached a new phase. Due to this, and to the fact that the project has received substantial funding from the NMFA over the last years, the NMFA has decided to conduct a study of the Nansen Dialogue Project. The overall aim and purpose will be to discuss and analyse the strengths and the weaknesses of the project, and as conclusions crystallise – to develop recommendations on how to improve the project. Consequently, a thorough analysis and assessment of the project will be made, taking into account the results achieved in relation to the stated objectives, purposes and goals defined by PRIO/Nansen Academy:

”The Mission of the Nansen Dialogue Network is to empower people who live in conflict situations – through application of ideas and techniques of dialogue – to contribute to peaceful conflict transformation, democratic development and promotion of human rights.” and ”.... providing neutral and open space where different actors in a serious conflict can meet face to face in truthful and honest communication...” and also to ”.. break down enemy images, as well as to increase understanding of each other’s positions, interests, and needs”

The primary focus will be on the centers in the field. How do the NDC centers fulfill their objectives? How do they function? Do they, through their activities, contribute to strengthening inter-ethnic relations in their respective societies? Is it possible to assess the impact of their work? This also includes an examination of the role of the PRIO/ Nansen Academy with regard to their supervision, follow-up, and quality assurance on the part of the NDC centers and their activities. Given the structure of the project, as well as its objectives, the main focus will thus be on three key questions: What are the NDC centers/PRIO/Nansen Academy doing? Why are they doing it? How are they doing it?

As a point of departure for a qualitative study of the NDC centres, we seek to assess the centres in the field according to a range of criteria that we would expect to find in an ideally functioning NDC (and among its staff). These criteria will be viewed in relation to the constraints and opportunities prevailing in the environments in which the NDC’s work. The criteria have been established based on the above-mentioned goals and objectives of the project, and include:

- positive attitudes towards inter-ethnic cooperation
- will and courage to work for inter-ethnic dialogue
- will and courage to make a difference in their respective societies
- deep and refined political and cultural understanding of their respective societies
- strong commitment and activism
- pedagogical skills and a developed understanding of dialogue methodology
- ability to self-development and willingness to learn
- a well developed communication strategy, both within the network and

vis à vis their respective communities, i.e. the NGOs, their local authorities and international organisations

- administrative experience and economic management

4. Major Issues

The primary focus of the qualitative study will be on the functioning of the NDC’s in the field in terms of the overall project objectives, and not in terms of administrative aspects. Within this overarching substantive framework, a number of subsidiary issues arise. These will be addressed only to the extent that they help provide a better understanding of the implementation of overall project objectives at the NDC-level. These subsidiary issues will not be examined exhaustively, but will only be considered in terms of the primary focus of the study. The issues addressed will be operationalised in greater detail in the interview guides. The issues are listed below in non-prioritised order:

Subsidiary issues:

a) An assessment of the co-operation between PRIO and the Nansen Academy.

What is the division of labour between PRIO and the Nansen Academy? How smooth is the cooperation between the two institutions? What is the impression of the co-operation between the Nansen Academy and PRIO among the NDCs?

b) An assessment of the cooperation and role of the MFA in the development of the project.

What has been the NMFA’s role in the development and implementation of the project? How is the co-operation and communications between the NMFA – and the two respective institutions?

c) An assessment of the management of the project at PRIO/Nansen Academy, and the relationship between the management of the project and the field activities.

How are the NDCs managed from PRIO/Nansen Academy? How are the NDCs supervised? Do they receive the supervision and guidance they need? What are the routines from PRIO/Nansen Academy for quality control of the activities of the NDCs? How do the NDCs view the supervision and management from PRIO/Nansen Academy?

d) An assessment of PRIO and the Nansen Academy's efforts in developing the concept of the "Nansen Dialogue" and the pedagogical methodology?

Have PRIO/ Nansen Academy conducted systematic and critical valuations of their pedagogical approach, and if so – in what way have new learning and improvement

203 The order of the presentation of the different topics under ‘Major Issues’ does not represent a rating in terms of importance.
been transferred to the centres? How are the PRIO/Nansen adjusting/tuning their methodological approach to the various local political/cultural contexts in the field? And have PRIO (as a Peace Research Institute), and the Nansen Academy initiated and developed systematic studies on the Balkan Dialogue Project over the years, in order to further develop theory and methodology on peace dialogue and civil society efforts in peace work?

e) Interpretation of the project’s philosophy and approach

What is the interpretation of the part of the various actors (PRIO/Nansen Academy/NDCs and NMFA) regarding the approach of the project? What philosophy and approach do PRIO/Nansen Academy/NDCs and NMFA have to the project? Do these actors share the same perception of what should be the project’s approach and how the objectives should be achieved?

f) An assessment of the development of the project and the expansion of the NDCs and the network.

How did the expansion of the project take place? What were the long-term and short-term objectives and achievements of the project? Have the priorities of the project changed during the project period? If yes, in what way have they changed, and what are the assessments of why they were changed? Was there a strategic approach to establishment and the expansion of the network?

g) An assessment of the activities at each NDC in relation to their defined objectives (their activity plans & contracts with PRIO/Nansen Academy), as well as the NDCs actual or potential impact on their respective societies.

What are the objectives of the individual NDCs? Do the activities of the NDCs reflect their objectives? Do the NDCs have an impact on the political development in their respective societies? Does PRIO/Nansen Academy/NDCs have a strategy to make a difference/influence on the civil society in the respective communities? To what extent does each NDC function within a wider network strategy?

h) An assessment of the inter-ethnic dialogue component at each NDC.

How central is the inter-ethnic dialogue in the work of the respective NDCs? Do the NDCs represent a useful and efficient forum for inter-ethnic dialogue in their respective societies? How much competence do the NDCs have in dialogue-work? Is there a discrepancy between their theoretical knowledge and their practical implementation? How is this followed up by PRIO/Nansen Academy? What is the knowledge and understanding among the NDC staff with regard to other ethnic groups (“the others”)? What are the centres and the Norwegian partners doing to improve such knowledge and awareness? Are the NDCs at the “cutting edge”? Should they be at the cutting edge? What does being ‘on the cutting edge’ mean in the various political contexts?
i) Do the NDCs and the network have a communications strategy?

What is the perception of the need to have a communication strategy? To what extent do they have a communication strategy? What does the communication strategy of the NDCs exist of? How are PRIO and the Nansen Academy contributing to the development of such a communication strategy? Who are the NDCs communicating with? And what is the impact of the NDCs communication with their surrounding environment?

j) An assessment of the political awareness and understanding of each NDC centre.

Is the NDC staff politically aware? Are the staff or the centres politically affiliated? What are the relations between NDC centres and political organisations and leaders? Is the staff at the NDCs politically active? If yes, how is this affecting the work of the centre? Do the centres agree on political opinions, or are different political views among the staff accepted or desirable? Can the NDCs have an impact on the political development in their respective societies? To what extent can the NDCs realistically expect to have an impact on the political developments, and in case, what sectors can they influence? What is the perception on the part of PRIO/Nansen Academy/NDCs of the possibilities for political impact and the relationship with the political system?

k) An assessment of the engagement and commitment of the NDCs and the staff.

How committed are the NDC participants? What are the motivations for taking part in the NDC centre activities and the NDC network?

l) An assessment of the network and the cooperation between the NDCs.

To what extent do the NDCs function as a network? Does it function as one network or several network? Which of the NDCs cooperate, and why? What kind of contact, cooperation or exchange do they have with other networks? How are the network activities facilitated from PRIO/Nansen Academy’s side? What is the NDCs perception of the need to have a network? If so, what kind of network? Or is the idea of a network across the Western-Balkans relevant or more an expression of Yugo-nostalgia (in Norway)?

m) An assessment of the recruitment-process to the NDCs.

What is the recruitment policy for NDC staff (leaders, facilitators, activists, volunteers)? What policy have PRIO/Nansen Academy/NDCs/the network for recruitment and development of personnel? How systematic and well thought-through has the recruitment of NDC staff been? Who were recruited to the NDCs? How were
they recruited? Why were these people recruited? How do the staff function? Are they the right persons for the positions? How is the management within each NDC? What is the average age of the NDC staff? Does age have an effect on the staff’s impact in their respective societies? Would the centres benefit from including other age groups? Are there any limitations when it comes to age and recruitment?

n) An assessment of the future strategy for the NDCs.

What is Nansen Academy and PRIO’s strategy for the NDCs and the network? What are the future plans for the NDCs? How should they develop? What should be their niche? What is the NDCs own long-term strategy? Can they become self-sustainable local NGOs? What are the NDCs thinking regarding continued contact between the field and Norway? Do they envision the NDCs as future sustainable and independent NGOs, without Norway/PRIO/Nansen/NMFA support? If not, do they have an exit-strategy? What is the perception of the possibility of an exit-strategy? What would be the content of a possible exit-strategy?

o) The study will also interview a limited sample204 of previous participants in the Lillehammer seminars who have not ended up working in the NDCs, but who are currently in the locations of the NDCs, and that are able to give useful assessments and perspectives on the NDCs work.

How did you experience the seminar at Lillehammer? Are you using the competence you achieved in the Lillehammer-seminar in your own personal and professional life? Have you been active with the NDCs after the seminar? If not, why? How do you view the work of the NDCs? Do you believe it can have a positive impact on processes of reconciliation, democratisation and political developments in your local community? (Have you stayed in contact with the Nansen Academy after the seminar at Lillehammer?)

5. Methods

The project review will take stock of the project as it is at the time of study. The review is not intended to evaluate the functioning of the project in an historical sense from the inception of the project until the present.

The methodological approach will consist partly of a review of documents from MFA, PRIO, Nansen Academy, NDCs/KIDS/Mitrovica, as well as qualitative in-depth interviews with project staff at PRIO, Nansen Academy, NMFA, staff at all NDCs/KIDS/Mitrovica (both regular and voluntary staff), a limited sample of former participants at seminars at Lillehammer, as well as multilateral organisations and local NGOs in the locations of the NDCs in the field. Both group and individual interviews will be conducted.

204 Due to the timeframe of the study will it only be possible to interview maximum 1-2 persons in each location.
It is important to underline that the methodological approach of conducting personal interviews serves the purpose of gaining a deeper knowledge and insight into the complexity of the Balkan Dialogue Project, as it is seen and experienced by all parties involved. By systematically collecting data on the relevant aspects of the projects through in-depth, and follow-up interviews, it is believed that a deeper understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the project will become clearer, thus providing the basis for developing recommendations for potential changes or improvements of the project.

6. Evaluation Team
Anne Hushagen. Cand Polit.

7. Reporting of Findings
i) August 2003: Presentation of findings and recommendations to the NMFA and Project Management team at PRIO & the Nansen Academy.


iii) Fall 2003: Presentation of findings and recommendations in association with the NMFA and in cooperation with PRIO & Nansen Academy, at the half-yearly NDC Staff Meeting.

8. Timetable
3 months from 1.04.03 – 31.06.03

1.04-13.4.03 Thessaloniki-seminar and fieldwork 205
14.4-27.4: Easter/data assessment and writing of report
28.4-22.5.03: data collection in the field 206
23.05-31.6.03: writing of report

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205 NDC Skopje, KIDS, Nansen Dialogue Mitrovica
206 Podgorica NDC, Belgrade NDC, Sarajevo NDC, Mostar NDC, Banja Luka NDC, Osijek NDC