Has Peacebuilding Made a Difference in Kosovo?

A Study of the Effectiveness of Peacebuilding in Preventing Violence: Lessons Learned from the March 2004 Riots in Kosovo

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One name if same in both languages
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UNHCR GIS Unit Skopje
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List of Abbreviations

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

SNC	Serbian National Council
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General (United Nations)
TMK	Trupat Mbrojtëse të Kosovës, or Kosovo Protection Corps
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo

Foreward

The violence that shook Kosovo in March 2004 came as a blow to the people of Kosovo, and, especially to the international community. After nearly five years of significant investment in a variety of economic, social and cultural initiatives aimed at bridging the gap separating the different ethnic groups, the events of March 2004 were a sad reminder of the urgent need to assess critically whether such interventions were contributing towards the goal of building a peaceful, multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. This was particularly important for those specifically *peacebuilding* initiatives which focused on promoting conflict management and resolution through dialogue and mediation, as well as through the implementation of a diversity of development interventions in ethnically mixed areas.

CARE International viewed the March 2004 events as an opportunity to assess whether its peacebuilding work was in fact making a difference, as there was some evidence that a number of communities engaged in its programmes had either resisted or experienced little violence. Given the relevance of such a study for future peacebuilding programming in Kosovo, it soon became evident that this exercise could not limit itself to reviewing CARE's programmes but that it should include the peacebuilding work carried out by a number of local and international NGOs, as well as by municipal governments and some international organisations. Broadening the scope of the study was a means of obtaining more reliable, and therefore, more useful results for all those undertaking some form of peacebuilding work in Kosovo and hopefully elsewhere.

A successful combination of efforts by a number of organisations made this research possible. CARE International invited the Collaborative for Development Action (CDA) to undertake the study. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom generously offered to fund a substantial part of its cost. CARE UK, CARE Austria, as well as CDA also contributed funds to the study.

Although the research findings cannot be considered conclusive, as they are necessarily based on a small sample of interventions in Kosovo, they do provide extremely valuable insights into the impact of peacebuilding initiatives that we cannot afford to ignore. Thus, the report indicates that important achievements obtained through dialogue and training in dispelling certain fears and breaking down stereotypes and 'enemy images' remain at the level of individuals and are not adding up by involving larger groups of individuals, communities and key organisations or by creating broader networks that could contribute more effectively to reducing tension and generating meaningful forms of inter-ethnic cooperation. The assumption that the implementation of ethnically mixed initiatives will bridge political divisions, diminish feelings of hatred and fear, and will facilitate acceptance of the "Other" is not materialising. This is due, among other reasons, because 'multi-ethnicity' is widely perceived as a 'conditionality' imposed by the international community, and because these initiatives are not addressing the issues

that continue to divide and confront Kosovo along ethnic lines such as war crimes, missing persons, justice, impunity, security and property titles. With the partial exception of the latter, these admittedly sensitive issues are not being considered by most peacebuilding initiatives in a systematic way, perhaps because they demand a long-term and progressive approach that cannot be accommodated within the typically short life of projects which, moreover, are expected to demonstrate concrete, and at times immediate, results. The requirement of *quick-impact* peacebuilding interventions rather than gradual *time-healing* processes that allow for the sustainable resolution of ethnic antagonisms explains at least in part why 'multi-ethnicity' has not been internalised as a positive value by all ethnic groups and why they largely regard it as a component of an internationally-driven agenda. It is hard but valuable lessons such as these that make the CDA research report so relevant for rethinking and adjusting peacebuilding programming in Kosovo with a view to enhancing its impact. The report also enables us to envisage the immense challenges that will continue to haunt Kosovo after the resolution of its political status.

CARE International Kosovo is pleased to share this research report on *Has Peacebuilding Made a Difference?* We are convinced that it will greatly help the work of all those committed to achieving a lasting peace in Kosovo.

CARE International Kosovo

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The violence of March 2004 prompted many agencies to reflect on their peacebuilding programming throughout Kosovo. What had gone wrong? Could they have done better? Some communities escaped the violence. This study was commissioned by CARE International, with other NGOs, and funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, CARE UK, CARE Austria, and CDA Collaborative Learning Projects' *Reflecting on Peace Practice* project. It looks at what went right in those communities, and what lessons can be learned from those experiences to improve the effectiveness of peacebuilding programming in preventing violence in the future. What factors enabled communities to avoid or resist inter-ethnic violence? To what extent did peacebuilding work contribute to these factors?

The study was conducted in three phases. Between January and May, 2005, we conducted a desk study and several consultative workshops with NGOs and other agencies in Kosovo to analyse patterns of violence from 2002 onward. The results informed our selection and conduct of field-based, rich narrative case studies from June – November 2005 in seven communities, interviewing about 200 people individually about their community's experience with inter-ethnic violence and peacebuilding. In the final phase, we analysed the cases collaboratively in several consultative workshops in Kosovo, Washington and Boston with NGOs, donors, international agencies and issue experts. The findings reflect what we have heard from a wide range of people in these communities and the international and governmental organisations and NGOs, about what has enabled them to avoid or resist violence, or, in cases where there was violence, what happened and why.

The study produced several major findings regarding the prevention of inter-ethnic violence in communities and the possible roles and contributions of peacebuilding programming.

Perceptions of improvements in inter-ethnic violence (IEV) from 2002 – 2004 masked a reality of a steady level of inter-ethnic violence during that time. Rather than improving, IEV had shifted in nature and visibility over time, from direct inter-ethnic intimidation and assaults to more indirect forms of intimidation and pressure, such as property-related crime, vandalism and theft. Many people discounted the significance of these kinds of property crimes, because the motivations were not purely ethnic. Indicators of improved inter-ethnic contact and movement by minorities – K-Serbs moving in private cars and without escorts, going more frequently to cities and towns, interacting with K-Albanians in multi-ethnic markets – did not reflect improvements in the underlying situation.

Contrary to expectation, places with greater inter-ethnic contact – whether in the form of business/economic ties or personal relationships – did not experience less violence. On the contrary, many communities considered "good" in 2003-2004 in terms of inter-ethnic relations, from Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje to Gjilan/Gnjilane, experienced some of the worst violence in March 2004, despite efforts by individuals, often at great personal risk, to protect their neighbours. The evidence suggests that inter-ethnic contact in these communities remained at the individual level and did not produce "bridging social capital," or inter-ethnic networks of engagement, that could restrain politicians' efforts to polarise communities, and create mechanisms for communication and rumor or crisis control.

Intra-ethnic social networks (or 'bonding social capital') were more important than inter-ethnic engagement in preventing violence. Communities that avoided violence in March 2004 experienced no influx of 'newcomers' and were generally able to bridge intra-community political divides. As a result, intra-ethnic social networks remained intact and strong, and were a significant resource for dissemination of information and mobilisation of collective action. Where communities had access to relatively reliable information about the other's intentions and the situation, leaders anticipated the arrival of violence in their communities and took action to interrupt the cycle of action-reaction. These communities were able to draw on the bonding social capital to take and implement collective decisions in the community to refrain from action that would provoke violent reactions. However, while this bonding social capital was a significant resource for preventing violence in Kosovo, it was (and is) also used to prevent cooperation and preserve tension. In the absence of powerful strategic motivations for avoiding violence—such as the need to demonstrate fulfillment of the Standards for Kosovo in order to gain independence—bonding social capital could in the future be used to mobilise violence.

Peacebuilding programming did not contribute significantly to prevention of inter-ethnic violence. Peacebuilding programming has had some important, if modest, effects on inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo, especially on the people who have directly participated. However, the evidence points to several ways in which peacebuilding programming has missed the mark and could be more effective than it has been.

   1. *Missing the mark? Failure to transform individual ties into networks of civic engagement***.** The neglible role of inter-ethnic "bridging" social capital in preventing IEV is due, in part, to the failure of efforts to build (or rebuild) cross-ethnic ties and cooperation to transform individual ties into *networks* of civic engagement that connect people across ethnic lines, built trust and facilitate communication and cooperation on

issues of public concern.[1] Peacebuilding programming fell short of its potential in three areas:

Ø The programmes often did not move beyond the entry point for inter-ethnic contact, in terms of deepening or expanding initial experiences of inter-ethnic interaction. Funding for "soft" programming was limited, and often withdrawn or redirected once initial successes were achieved, limiting the depth and scope of inter-ethnic engagement. At the same time, while some programmes were sustained, there was considerable duplication of kinds of interaction, leading some local NGOs to reflect that interest in their programmes had dropped off because the programmes had nothing new to add.

Ø Peacebuilding through economic cooperation tended also to mirror existing, implicit "rules of the game" for inter-ethnic interaction amongst K-Albanians and K-Serbs, which permitted interaction for economic, but not social or political purposes. Therefore they added little to the existing quality of interaction.

Ø Finally, peacebuilding programmes often worked *around* issues of intra-community resistance to inter-ethnic contact and rapprochement – providing space, protection, logistics and a cover for people to meet. They did not, however, work *on* intra-community IEV perpetrated because of pressure not to engage with people across ethnic lines. Consequently, they did not address the forces keeping political and social space for rapprochement closed.

2.   Missing the mark?   Programmes did not address key driving factors of conflict. The focus on returns and democracy-building as the core of peacebuilding overlooked critical issues affecting the relationship between K-Serbs and K-Albanians. Although the violence in March 2004 was attributed by many to the poor state of the economy, community members consistently mentioned missing persons and war crimes (K-Albanians) and security, justice and failure to prosecute perpetrators of IEV when asked about obstacles to peace. Horizontal inequalities between K-Albanians and K-Serbs also seem to have played a role. K-Albanians resented K-Serbs taking "double salaries" and receiving what was perceived as disproportionate support from Belgrade and the international community, while their own economic progress was stymied by the lack of resolution of the question of the political status of Kosovo. K-Serbs feared and resented property-related IEV that deprived them of housing and livelihoods. Their dependence mostly on social institutions financed by Belgrade for employment also has been an engine in the growth of radicals. In this sense, frustration and anger about the economy go hand in hand with political frustration.

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[1] *See* Ashutosh Varshney, "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society," *World Politics* 53 (April 2001), pp. 362-98.

Yet few (if any) programmes addressed these key issues even indirectly. In some cases, programme participants signed formal memoranda that they would not discuss politics. In many programmes in which K-Albanians and K-Serbs worked well together, no effort was made to talk about the conflict or the issues communities themselves identified as obstacles to peace. Central-level programmes for institutional development, especially in the justice, police and local government sector are, of course, designed to lay the institutional foundations for dealing with these factors. However, at the community level, these programmes have not significantly affected the conflict dynamic. Both K-Serbs and K-Albanians believed that their main fears and concerns – especially issues related to freedom of movement and punishment of war crimes – were not being addressed adequately. Poor communication between communities and police and justice providers reinforced this feeling and increased fear, resentment and hostility between K-Serbs and K-Albanians.

3. Missing the Mark? The focus on multi-ethnicity and returns as the core of peacebuilding increased divisions rather than improving relations. The emphasis on returns and aid to returning IDPs or refugees inadvertently worsened divisions between K-Serbs and K-Albanians. Resentment developed amongst K-Albanians as they perceived that resources and attention had been dedicated to K-Serbs—their former oppressors—at the expense of the needs of the majority population. The practice of providing balancing grants did not significantly alleviate this feeling. At the same time, policies of promoting "multi-ethnicity" through providing rewards and incentives for cross-ethnic contact and activities did not yield hoped-for results. While many people did in fact come together and work together on needed infrastructure and economic projects, the emphasis on multi-ethnicity was perceived in communities not as a "carrot" or reward for cooperation, but as a "conditionality" that was (and is) widely resented. Communities developed ways to circumvent the spirit of multi-ethnicity, either through *pro forma* multi-ethnicity in projects or by imposing conditions for agreeing to multi-ethnic cooperation. Peacebuilding programming exacerbated these unintended consequences by rewarding form and not following up on or monitoring substance. This created a great degree of cynicism about multi-ethnicity and opportunism, rather than increased trust, interdependence and information sharing.

4. Missing the mark? Programmes did not engage many key people and areas. A significant proportion of programmes identified in this study focused on women, youth and returnees and their receiving communities. This is partly because women and youth are considered natural bridge-builders or focused on the future. Yet youth and women's programming did not support their potential to become key positive forces for peacebuilding in a hostile and polarised environment. There was also little focus on the "hard to reach"[2] – less moderate people and people and groups that are "key" to success

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[2] See Mary Anderson and Lara Olson, *Confronting War* (Cambridge, MA: Collaborative for Development Action, 2003), p. 59.

in the peace process. These constituencies, especially those who might undermine any potential agreement (such as KLA and war veterans, the Serbian Orthodox Church, less moderate Serbian parties in Kosovo), have only recently begun to receive some attention. Participant selection processes requiring that applicants exhibit tolerance and a willingness to live together reinforced the tendency to engage the easiest to reach. As a result youth programming seldom reached youth that were likely to or did participate in violence. At the same time, their teachers and principals, who played a role in the March 2004 riots, were rarely targeted in peace programming. Even when they were, it was not in relation to their role vis-à-vis the driving factors of conflict.

Finally, there is a question about the geographical targets of programming. Areas that were most affected by the war and largely mono-ethnic now (e.g., Drenica) are reported to be more extreme politically, especially with regard to the status of Kosovo. Residents from these areas are reported to have traveled to participate, and in some cases lead, the violence in March 2004. Yet these areas did not receive the same levels of assistance as more mixed areas. Nor were they included significantly in inter-ethnic peacebuilding efforts. Similarly, "Belgrade" was mentioned as key to the evolution of the situation and of inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo, yet aside from high-level talks and working groups, there was little cross-border or coordinated programming with Serbia.

Conclusions and Recommendations. As the status negotiations proceed, the temptation is strong to assume that provisions in the agreement on decentralisation, cultural heritage, minority rights, and property, along with democratisation and economic development, will build the peace. To be sure, it will provide a more stable political framework within which K-Serb—K-Albanian, and more generally minority-majority, relations can develop. Yet this study suggests these will not be sufficient to build communities' ability to withstand the pressure of future shocks or crises that will inevitably arise in the implementation of any agreement. In order to strengthen the effectiveness of peacebuilding programming, action is recommended in the following areas:

- *Shift focus of peacebuilding programming.* Questions raised by communities in this study about the desirability or feasibility of "multi-ethnicity" as it has been promoted in Kosovo, as well as the effectiveness of promotion of inter-ethnic cooperation, should prompt us to rethink the focus of peacebuilding programming on refugee and IDP returns and "multi-ethnicity," even while maintaining the pursuit of democracy and European standards as a strong goal. As decentralisation and returns policies are formulated, and questions of how to delineate municipal structured or permit returns to places other than the original place of residence are considered, the fact that concentrations of K-Serbs have been less vulnerable to inter-ethnic violence than more dispersed populations should be taken into account.

- *Deal directly with driving forces of conflict.* Effectiveness could be enhanced if programming were targeted to deal more directly with the driving forces of conflict. Agencies working in different sectors and at all levels of society could identify ways to

deal more directly with political issues in their work. This would enhance the impact of work on the degree of inter-ethnic tension, in the medium term, if not in the short term.

- *Rethink targeting of areas and beneficiaries of programming.* Focus not on targeting the more moderate people – the "easy to reach" – but on facilitating their evolution into a peace constituency, while simultaneously addressing the "hard to reach." The process of selecting of partners, participants and beneficiaries could focus on identifying and supporting "innovators" and "early adopters" who will take public action for peace, as well as people who exercise informal leadership and authority in communities. Simultaneously, greater steps could be taken to engage with key people and mono-ethnic areas more systematically, especially KLA veterans and war victims, K-Serb political and community leaders, less moderate K-Albanian organisations such as "Vetevendosje" and the Serbian Orthodox Church.

- *Transform individual ties into networks of inter-ethnic engagement that can proactively resist violence.* The events of March 2004 suggest that there is a critical mass of young people that can be mobilised for violence by those interested in undermining dialogue and compromise. A strategy is needed for turning individual ties into meaningful "bridging social capital" that could provide a counterforce. In this context, it is important that donors and implementing agencies invest in follow-up and linkages between programmes. Funding for "soft" elements of programmes should be expanded and sustained over longer periods of time, and greater coordination and collaboration encouraged. "Single identity" work should also be supported, not just as a preparatory step to inter-ethnic interaction, but as a follow-up process to deal with intra-ethnic resistance to engagement.

- *Work with intra-ethnic networks on conflict issues.* In the short- to medium-term, "bonding social capital" – the intra-ethnic networks of trust and reciprocity – are likely to be more important than inter-ethnic relations in preventing and mitigating violence, especially in rural areas. In urban areas, support for development of networks across political and "newcomer to the community"vs "old resident" lines of cleavage could help stem the disintegration of these communities' capacity for collective action in times of crisis; fostering dialogue and civic engagement across these lines on issues of community development and issues such as inter-ethnic cooperation, property issues and other drivers of conflict would be an important area of activity. At the same time, strengthening of mechanisms that provide accurate information about the "other" (whether they operate within or across ethnic lines) would enhance chances of decisions against violence. With the Standards for Kosovo and resolution of the question of status operating as a weaker source of motivation, another set of incentives will need to replace them. These could be associated with European integration, but in order to be effective, will require clear consequences for failure to meet standards of behavior.

Has peacebuilding made a difference in Kosovo?

The violence that occurred March 17-18, 2004 was unique in many ways, a response to a particular set of circumstances at a particular time, and should not be the only benchmark for assessing peacebuilding in Kosovo. As status negotiations proceed, many of the politico-strategic reasons for violence are likely to disappear or evolve. Yet as K-Serbs and K-Albanians struggle to find ways to coexist, the experiences of communities that avoided violence in March 2004 can offer us relevant lessons regarding effective peacebuilding policy and practice.

I. INTRODUCTION

The violence of March 2004 prompted many agencies to reflect on their peacebuilding programming throughout Kosovo. While violence consumed Kosovo for two days, it was noted that the communities in which the international non-governmental organisation, CARE, was implementing its peacebuilding programmes experienced little or no violence.[3] Was CARE's and other agencies' peacebuilding programming responsible for this difference? The purpose of this study is to answer that question. Specifically, it seeks to understand whether and how peacebuilding programming in Kosovo contributed to communities' resistance to or lack of participation in violence, especially that which occurred in March 2004.

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

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

The cases included communities with varied experience of the 1998-1999 conflict, communities that experienced high levels of inter-ethnic violence (IEV) prior to March 2004 but none on March 17-18, as well as communities considered to be relatively peaceful but that experienced violence in March 2004. The cases focused on Serb—Albanian relations in Kosovo and unfortunately were not able to take account of other minority communities, although non-Serb minorities do suffer discrimination and did suffer violence in the March 2004 events. Limited resources prevented us from doing a comprehensive study, and we chose to focus on Kosovo Albanian—Kosovo Serb relations and violence because an initial mapping of violence indicated that, in general, the presence of K-Serbs correlated more with higher levels of IEV than the presence of

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

other minorities.[4]   The relationship between K-Serbs and K-Albanians also coincides with the main lines of political conflict and thus is more directly related to the peace process, as opposed to the larger process of nation-building, democratic development and social stability.

Due to the sensitive nature of the information contained in the case studies, we have changed the real names of the villages, and their neighbouring communities, in order to minimise the potential risks for the persons that generously contributed to the research. However, the real names of the larger towns and municipalities such as Gjilan/Gnjilane, Klinë/Klina, Pejë/Peć, Štrpce/Shtërpcë, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje and Mitrovicë/Mitrovica have been retained.

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

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

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[4] See section IV.B below for a full explanation of this finding.

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PART 1: UNDERSTANDING VIOLENCE AND PEACEBUILDING IN KOSOVO

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

Pre-war and war violence

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

- Arbitrary arrest and detention, and the violation of the right to a fair trial, increasingly became the tools of the law enforcement agencies in the suppression of Kosovo Albanian civil and political rights, and, accompanied by torture and ill-treatment, were applied as a means to intimidate the entire Kosovo Albanian society.
- Rape and other forms of sexual violence were applied sometimes as a weapon of war.
- Forced expulsion carried out by Yugoslav and Serbian forces took place on a massive scale, with evident strategic planning and in clear violation of the laws and customs of war. It was often accompanied by deliberate destruction of property, and looting. Opportunities for extortion of money were a prime motivator for Yugoslav and Serbian perpetrators of human rights and humanitarian law violations.[5]

These events brutally exacerbated and institutionalised the already existing segregation of the Kosovo Albanians and Serbs, two communities that for most of the 90's inhabited "parallel worlds."[6] After mass dismissals from state structures and enterprises in 1990-1991, the Kosovo Albanians turned to parallel structures and entrepreneurship, both legal and illegal, to survive. This nonviolent resistance movement kept the conflict latent but

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

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

unresolved for over five years.[7] While war raged in the collapsing Yugoslav Federation, Kosovo remained under a state of emergency that gave the police and forces deployed unprecedented powers to carry on with their abuses.

As the Dayton Accords for Bosnia Herzegovina were signed in 1995 without resolving the issue of Kosovo, the conflict escalated. K-Albanians had now re-armed through an influx of weapons from the collapsing Albanian state. By 1997 the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA) was actively engaged in operations against both civilian and security targets. Kidnappings and assassinations of both Serbs and "collaborators" amongst Albanians were frequent.[8] Both Kosovo Albanians and Serbs were displaced from areas where hostilities flared, and both communities suffered enormously.

By early 1998, Kosovo had erupted into full-scale civil war, carried out mostly in rural areas. Many urban centres retained some normality. Violence by armed groups, which included special units with experience of ethnic cleansing in Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina and irregular units of armed civilians, actively engaged in the campaign. Villages considered by the Yugoslav forces to be sympathetic to the KLA were systematically 'cleansed.'[9] The diplomatic drive by the international community in late 1998 proved insufficient to reverse the process, leading to a controversial military campaign in June 1999 that saw the most brutal three months of the civil war. An estimated 10,000 people were killed, 863,000 Kosovo Albanian and other non-Serb minorities became refugees, while 590,000 became IDPs.[10]

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

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

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

[9] OSCE, As Seen, As Told – Part II, June to October 1999.

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

Post-war violence[11]

In the immediate aftermath of NATO's military campaign, and against the advice of international agencies, hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians began to return home from Macedonia, Albania, and South Serbia. By the end of July 1999, 740,000 had spontaneously returned. Over the course of that summer over 150,000 Kosovo Serb and their alleged Roma collaborators fled to Northern Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro, or to mono-ethnic enclaves such as Gracanica and Gorazhdec/Gorazdevac.[12]

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

> "Violence has taken many forms: killings, rape, beatings, torture, house-burning and abductions. Not all violence has been physical, however, fear and terror tactics have been used as weapons of revenge. Sustained aggression, even without physical injury, exerts extreme pressure, leaving people not only unable to move outside their home, but unable to live peacefully within their home. In many instances, fear has generated silence, in turn allowing the climate of impunity to go unchecked." [13]

Between June and December 1999, 454 murders, 190 kidnappings, and 1,327 incidents of arson took place in Kosovo. Between January 2000 and June 2000 these figures had decreased to 146 murders, 94 kidnappings and 362 arson attacks.[14]

This trend continued into 2001. UNHCR's 10th Assessment on the Situation of Minorities noted "the positive trends of increased security and mobility of minorities in Kosovo," but underlined "that minority communities continue to face varying degrees of harassment, intimidation and provocation, as well as limited freedom of movement."[15] The improvement was partly due to the increasing departures and segregation of Serbs in

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

[12] UNHCR, *Tenth Assessment of the Situation of Ethnic Minorities in Kosovo; Prishtina/Priština* (Kosovo: UNHCR, March 2003), http://www.unmikonline.org/press/reports/ MinorityAssssmentReport10ENG.pdf (accessed 15th April 2005).

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

[14] UNMIK, *Civpol in Kosovo Report* (Prishtina: UNMIK, August 2000).

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

mainly rural areas,[16] and, some believe, to the feeling of momentum in the K-Albanian community resulting from the holding of municipal and parliamentary elections and the focus on the establishment of the institutions of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) and municipal government. The "Standards before Status" policy announced in April 2002 and the subsequent plan for its "operationalisation" seemingly created a path to independence. Occasional high profile murders still shocked minorities and the international community, but overall many thought that reduction in overt violence represented significant change.

March 2004

The failure to define status, coupled with Serbian resistance to recognition of the PISG structures and increasing clashes between the PISG and UNMIK, which resisted PISG declarations on status and demands for more powers, heightened tensions. In addition, by 2003, unemployment was at about 50%. Tensions exploded in March 2004. The ICG Report, *Collapse in Kosovo* (22 April 2004) – one of the authoritative analyses of the riots of 17-18 March 2004 in Kosovo[17] – describes the start of the riots in the following way:

> March 2004, the week ahead was set for demonstrations: on KLA grievances on 16 March and on trade union demands for resumption of privatisation and the dismissal of Fucci on 18 March. On the evening of 15 March, however, a Kosovo Serb teenager was shot and severely wounded in the Serb village of Caglavica, which straddles the highway south to Macedonia just outside Pristina. Allegedly, it was a drive-by shooting. For the Serbs it was yet another in a series of unsettling "terrorist" incidents, and they felt that KFOR and UNMIK were not paying sufficient attention.

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

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

> They reacted predictably, by blocking the highway. In a show of solidarity, on 16 March Serbs in the enclave of Gracanica, straddling the Pristina to Gjilan/Gnjilane highway, also blocked their road, thus severing Pristina from the south of Kosovo.
>
> [. . . .]
>
> Around midday demonstrations of the "associations emerged from war" went ahead in Pristina, Prizren, Peja/Pec and many other municipalities (still reproducing anger over the 16 February arrest for war crimes of senior KPC figures from Prizren). Anger against the internationals was palpable. The pro-KLA *Epoka e Re* reproduced on its front page the next morning a slogan that attracted cheers from the crowd in Peja: "UNMIK watch your step, the KLA has gunpowder for you too!" During the evening of 16 March, RTK -- Kosovo's public television channel -- broadcast an interview with a twelve-year old boy from the Albanian village of Caber, on the north bank of the Ibar near Mitrovica. Journalists reported - although the boy did not explicitly say so in his interview - that Serb youths with a dog had chased him and three companions, aged nine, eleven and twelve, into the river. The companions were missing, presumed drowned (two bodies have since been recovered).[18]

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

The events of March 2004 have been analised extensively, and the purpose of this research is not to re-analise these events, but rather to begin to develop an understanding of the reasons violence was avoided in areas that escaped the March 2004 destruction. Nonetheless, a number of factors identified in these analyses (as well as in this study's feedback workshops, community studies[19] and case studies) are worth underlining as significant factors for violence:

- *The role of children.* Secondary school children were one of the main perpetrators of March 2004 violence. While this was a shock to many, children were regularly engaged in acts of intimidation against minorities (stoning, verbal abuse) that

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

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

reflected both permissiveness in society towards IEV, but also the result of years of brutalisation and a widespread nationalistic K-Albanian primary education system where the K-Serb & Serbs are defined as "the enemy."

- *The role of media.* Media played a key role in the riots, first by misinforming the population about the circumstances surrounding the drowning of the three Albanian children (trigger event), then by portraying the escalating unrest as legitimate protests.[20]

- *Resistance to returns.* Houses that had been returned to their rightful owners were illegally re-occupied after the displacement caused by the riots had left them vacant.[21] This suggests that resistance to returns, especially in urban areas, may have been a factor in the March 2004 violence itself.

- *Quiet acceptance of IEV.* A culture of silence and quiet acceptance of violence may have played a role in fueling the March 2004 events. The lack of response by civil society actors during the riots revealed at best a lack of initiative or a fear to step out of line, and at worst a quiet acceptance of yet another display of behaviour that has become equated with "patriotism." Many influential NGOs created within the peaceful resistance movement of liberation in the 90's struggled to re-define their role during peacetime, and some, particularly the Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms, played a controversial role during the March riots.

- *Role of international community.* KPS, KFOR, and UNMIK were criticised for their response. They certainly played a part in the escalation by not sending an unequivocal message from the very beginning about the zero-tolerance to IEV. Although in retrospect certain actions by UNMIK, KFOR and KPS (such as clearing the highway to Skopje) might have helped reduce the intensity of violence, their pre-riots performance did not have a determining role in whether violence occurred.

- *Role of "outsiders."* In explaining March 2004, a common discourse has developed to explain the events in the following terms: "They came from outside, the rioters were not from this town/village." This allows the community to explain what happened without having to accept responsibility, and both majority and minority communities are finding that explanation convenient. Yet at the early stages, the rioters had extremely widespread public support in the K-Albanian community, and there was practically no public criticism of the violence perpetrated against K Serbs.

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[20] *See* OSCE, *The Role of the Media in the March 2004 Events in Kosovo* (Vienna: OSCE, 2004).
[21] OSCE, *Human Rights Challenges Following the March Riots* (Prishtinë/Priština: OSCE Mission in Kosovo, May 2004).

- *The primacy of political vs. social or economic causes.* Some have commented that the message of March 2004 was primarily political, rather than social, and in this way different from the overall IEV, as areas worst affected by the March violence were also the relatively more economically developed.

III. What is Peacebuilding in Kosovo? Understanding the Major Approaches

The term "peacebuilding" has been used alternatively to describe the entire endeavour of the international community in Kosovo and to describe specific programming designed to address the causes of ongoing and future conflict. For this study the latter conception is used. Within this conception, however, there are no *a priori* boundaries of peacebuilding activity; policies and approaches that have been labeled as peacebuilding in one context are not in another. Consequently, rather than supply a definition of peacebuilding, this research sought to identify and reflect on what people themselves – from UNMIK to NGOs to local community members – characterised as peacebuilding in the Kosovo context, and to explore the assumptions driving these activities regarding how peace comes about. Peacebuilding is thus defined as any activity or programming, undertaken by any agency – local or international NGO, UNMIK, OSCE, government, KFOR, etc. – that is *intended*, in part or fully, to prevent renewal of inter-ethnic violence or to address the political, economic and social causes driving conflict.

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

1. Inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue

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

"Dialogue" most frequently was focused in three areas: a) conditions for sustainable returns of refugees or IDPs; b) priority-setting and implementation of community development activities; and c) non-political issues of common interest and potential

future cooperation for participants, such as HIV/AIDS, drug use, business and entrepreneurship, women's rights, infrastructure, etc. Many, even most, of these were conducted amongst youth, women and returnees and their host communities, with several, though fewer, programmes working with civil society and municipal authorities. Dialogue amongst religious leaders, media and politicians was undertaken by a few organisations, but was not widespread. A few programmes of dialogue were being implemented in the communities visited in this research on cultural heritage of Kosovo, on religious tolerance and inter-ethnic relations, and on politically-relevant issues such as the causes of conflict and distrust, freedom of movement, implementation of the Standards for Kosovo, and decentralisation. However, these dialogues were few and fairly isolated.

2. *Training and peace education*

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

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

3. *Multi-ethnic projects and institutions*

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

The kinds of joint projects or activities varied widely. One category of programming sought economic interdependence, such as: a project providing greenhouses to both K-Serbs and K-Albanians, an agricultural cooperative designed to bring Serbs and Albanians in neighbouring communities together to share equipment, or business grants to promote cross-ethnic business linkages, in which, for example, an Albanian-owned milk station would obtain its milk from Serbs. The idea of these programmes was to

provide economic benefits for both communities, and, as one agency's staff described it, make it "bad business to harm your neighbour."[22]

A second, related, category of joint projects programming sought to create inter-ethnic cooperation. Some were more *ad hoc* projects, such as: a women's programme bringing together women to develop income-generation possibilities in cross-ethnic bakery supply or handicrafts projects, youth internet cafes servicing multi-ethnic youth; a joint environmental clean-up project, multi-ethnic youth magazines, or a joint advocacy project for access to youth services. Others sought to institutionalise multi-ethnic cooperation by supporting the creation of multi-ethnic NGOs, multi-ethnic community centres, multi-ethnic youth organisations (e.g., the Kosovo Youth Assembly), multi-ethnic media organisations, and more broadly integrate minorities into local government. In both cases, programming aimed to bridge mistrust and tension between ethnicities by providing opportunities for people to work together in areas of common interest.

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

4. *Democratic governance and capacity-building*

Many international donors, agencies and NGOs have implemented peacebuilding activities designed to strengthen municipal government institutions to support integration of minorities, better communication and dialogue, and sustainable returns. For example, the OSCE's Local Governance Support Section has provided oversight, monitoring and training for local government officials on implementation of the Standards for Kosovo, and more generally on "how to improve and standardise their administrative practices and how to provide services to all communities without discrimination."[23] The Municipal Infrastructure Support Initiative (MISI), implemented by Mercy Corps, has assisted municipal officials in identifying and addressing barriers to return and reintegration of minorities. The OSCE-sponsored Kosovo Youth Assembly was designed to "facilitate communication, exchange of information and experience and promote dialogue among young people across ethnic lines" through simulation of the Municipal Assembly in Kosovo and associated training in democratic decision making and joint projects on issues of concern.[24] Programmes for civil society development, including advocacy

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

[23] OSCE Mission in Kosovo, http://www.osce.org/kosovo/13420.html.

[24] http://www.youthassemblies.com/youth/index.html.

training and advocacy on social issues, such as the Kosovo Centre for International Cooperation's "Advo-net," were also characterised by agencies as peacebuilding.

5. *Media*

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

The second approach aimed to build multi-ethnic media – with multi-ethnic staff and multi-ethnic programming, such as Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje's Radio K and a number of multi-ethnic magazines and bulletins implemented from Pejë/Peć to Gjilan/Gnjilane. The idea in this approach is both to integrate the media institutions and to promote mutual respect and the values of a multi-cultural society, through providing multi-ethnic programming or articles.

6. *Psychosocial programming*

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

IV. UNDERSTANDING INTER-ETHNIC VIOLENCE IN KOSOVO

What is inter-ethnic violence? In this study, acts of both physical and psychological violence by members of one ethnic group against members of another are included, in recognition that psychological violence, such as intimidation, is both a frequent method of aggression and an important contributor to fears that perpetuate conflict. What does this mean in Kosovo? A clear picture emerged from discussions in communities of the types of incidents or behavior K-Albanians and K-Serbs *experience* as violence.

- *Direct physical and psychological violence* is the form best captured in the crime statistics. It includes intimidation, physical assault, property damage, theft, fighting, arson and murder. Some forms are ethnically-motivated, while others, such as theft or property usurpation, may not be entirely (or even primarily) ethnically motivated, but may occur nonetheless with greater impunity when perpetrated across ethnic lines.

- *Indirect psychological violence*. People also experience many things that do not rise to the level of a reportable or prosecutable incident of violence, such as graffiti, verbal insults and swearing, offensive gestures, pressure to sell property and actual inter-ethnic property sales. Indeed, these more "minor" forms of violence, as many K-Albanians characterised them, are important forms of psychological violence and contribute significantly to people's (especially K-Serbs) sense of insecurity, in part because they are so frequent.

- *Intra-ethnic violence* designed to prevent or punish inter-ethnic contact and cooperation is considered by many – both in the communities and by agencies – as perhaps more important than inter-ethnic violence in sustaining polarised, hostile relations between groups. It is nearly impossible to measure levels of intra-ethnic violence.[25]

A. Assessing Levels of IEV: Perceptions vs. Reality

With such a breadth of acts experienced by people as inter-ethnically-related violence, assessment of the levels of IEV is very difficult. Ordinary crime and inter-ethnic crime

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[25] Crime statistics confirm that the greatest proportion of crime is intra-ethnic; typically, intra-ethnic violence constitutes more than 90% of total crime, and over 90% of that is intra-Kosovo Albanian. CivPol 2004. However, it is impossible to assess how much of that intra-ethnic violence is related to inter-ethnic relations.

can be difficult to distinguish, as incidents perpetrated for economic or other criminal (not specifically inter-ethnic) motives also have impact on inter-ethnic relations. Even if there is clarity as to how to classify incidents, determining the level of IEV is difficult, because much IEV is not reported at all by victims, or when it is, may be under- or over-classified as "inter-ethnic" due to officials' fears of creating self-fulfilling prophecies when the information becomes public. In Gjilan/Gnjilane, for example, the "Committee of the Serbian Community," which collects data on violence against K-Serbs and their property, reports that in 60% of the cases the Serbs do not report attacks on people or property, because attackers are often not recognised (due to the dark, stress, etc.) and because they fear reporting will make the situation worse and induce more attacks. In addition, even if fully reliable, the statistics on IEV cannot paint a full picture of ethnically-related violence and insecurity. They miss the potentially important role of *intra-ethnic* intimidation and violence committed as punishment for stepping across ethnic lines.

Despite these difficulties, some trends can be identified. Figure 1, Overview of Inter-Ethnic Crime, summarises UNMIK CivPol statistics on IEV. Contrary to public perception, the statistics show a modest but steady increase in IEV that reversed improvements during the 2001-2002 period reported by UNHCR in its 2002 Assessment of Minorities Report.[26]

Figure 1

Overview of Inter-Ethnic Crime
March 2002 - September 2004

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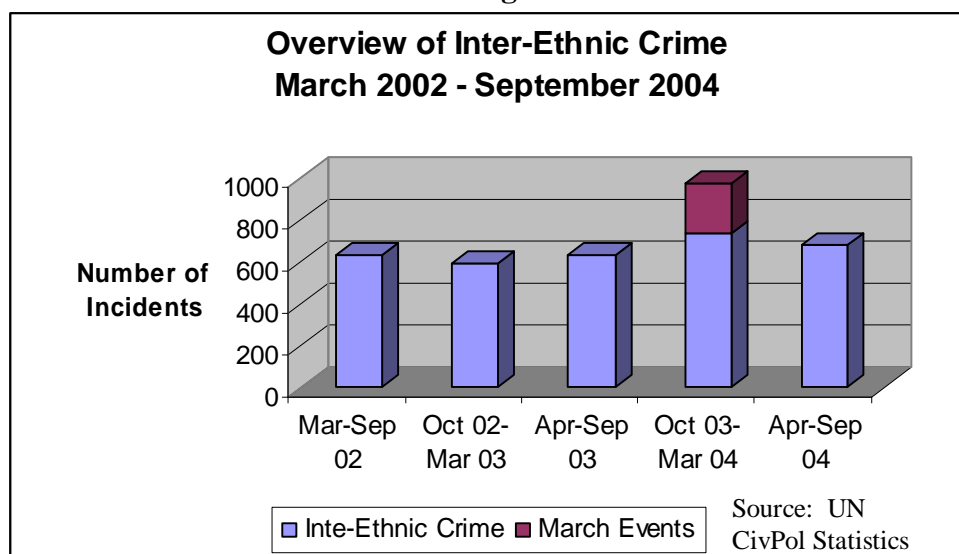
[26] The first period shows higher levels of IEV, but includes seven months, as opposed to the six months in all the subsequent time periods.

The immediate post-riot (April – September 2004) lull that many claimed had taken place is also not supported by the figures, which show it to be equal to the average spring incidence of inter-ethnic violence. In the aftermath of the riots, despite the displacement of about half of the Kosovo Serb and Roma populations, the figures remained high, reflecting the increased looting, theft and damage of private property of those who left, which remained without police or other protection until reconstruction began. Levels of IEV began to fall only after November 2004, though it should be noted that the January – March 2005 levels, while lower than those of the similar time period in 2004, still did not decrease to below 2002 levels overall.

In sum, the steady and slightly rising level of violence over the period 2002-2004 challenges the perception of significant reductions in levels of violence (and consequent improvement of security for minorities) that made the March 2004 events seem so unexpected. What drove these inaccurate perceptions of improvement?

1. Mixed municipalities experienced decreases in IEV. Several municipalities, including several with minority populations, did experience significant decreases in levels of IEV prior to March 2004. Kamenicë/Kamenica, Viti/Vitina, Prizren, Rahovec/Orahovac and Dragash/Dragaš, for example, experienced significant decreases in levels of IEV from 2002-2004 (see Figure 2). [27]

Figure 2: Declining IEV 2002-2004

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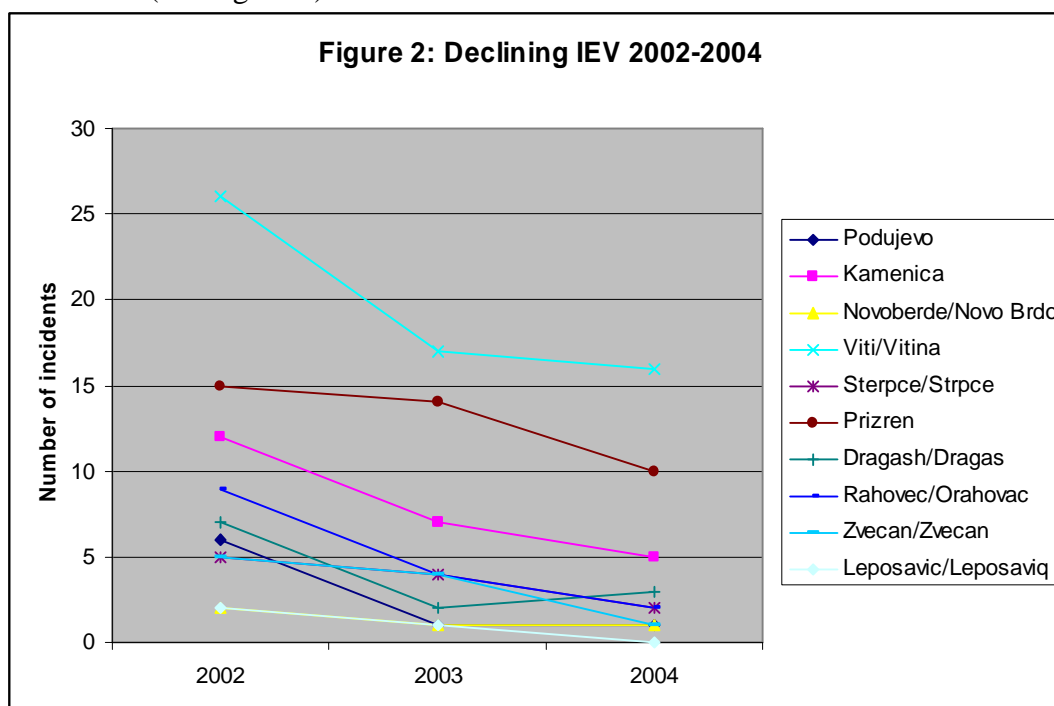
[27] Three sources of data have been used to assess IEV levels by municipality: UNMIK CivPol Inter-ethnic crime data, UNHCR Daily Situation Reports, and OSCE Daily Situation Reports. All recorded incidents (based on UNHCR and OSCE Daily Situation Reports, supplemented by

Others, including municipalities with high levels of IEV such as Gjilan/Gnjilane, Pejë/Peć, and Istog/Istok, saw significant decreases in 2003, only to see IEV rise again to 2002 levels or higher in 2004. Still, it is thus not surprising that by 2004, the perception of a significantly improved situation with regard to IEV prevailed. The improvements in the other municipalities could have obscured trends suggesting deterioration of the overall situation of IEV.

Many of the municipalities with the highest levels of IEV overall and the greatest violence in March 2004, however, also had steadily increasing levels of IEV over the three-year (2002-2004) period examined (see Figure 3). This includes Prishtinë/Priština, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Vushtrri/Vučitrn and Lipjan/Lipljan.

Figure 3: Increasing IEV 2002-2004
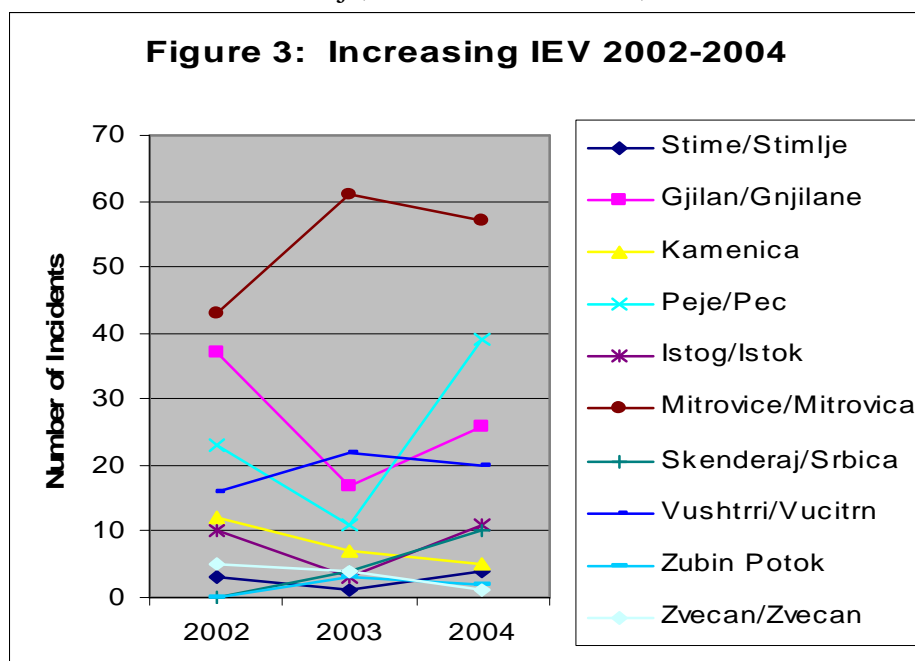
UNMIK CivPol Situation Reports) were input on tables following the categorisation of type of incident. The categorisation of crime was developed to reflect the most common types of incidents recorded (I-intimidation, A-assault, M-murder, P-damage to property, T-theft, F-fight/group fight, R-riot related incidents). Theft (T) was included as a significant category in the overall typology of inter-ethnic violence as it is comparable to that of intimidation. Many incidents displayed a combination of the categories. For example, burglary and intimidation were classified TI, throwing of explosives at inhabited property was classified PI, with what appeared to be the most prominent aspect of the incident coming first. For simplicity, in these figures these mixed-type incidents have been classified under the predominant type, e.g., TI as theft, property damage and intimidation as property. IEV figures from the period March 17-18, 2004 have been excluded from these trends.

2. Changes in the nature of IEV over time. Figure 4, summarising trends in various types of IEV from 2002-2004, reflects a shift in the nature of IEV over time, from pure intimidation and assault to more property-related forms of IEV which resemble ordinary crime and vandalism. A sharp increase in theft and property crimes is also observable, along with significant decrease in assault. The increasing frequency of property-related IEV, such as damage to homes and building or theft,[28] relative to pure intimidation and assault, reinforces the impression that ethnically-motivated violence had subsided, and that there are multiple motives for IEV. Indeed, while overall levels of IEV did not decrease significantly since 2002, IEV *did* remain steadily at around 8-10% of overall crime rates throughout the reporting period, and, except in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, attacks did not increase during politically significant periods (e.g., elections in Kosovo or Serbia, arrests of prominent KLA figures, commemorations of key events, returns of bodies of the missing, etc.). This relatively stable relationship of IEV to overall crime rates suggests that IEV may be related equally to more permanent features of Kosovo's landscape that underlie ordinary crime as to the state of inter-ethnic relations or political events.[29] In several places, UNMIK and Kosovo Police suggested, "real" inter-ethnic incidents were (and are) rare; they were more often stealing or criminal damages.

Figure 4: IEV Trends by Type
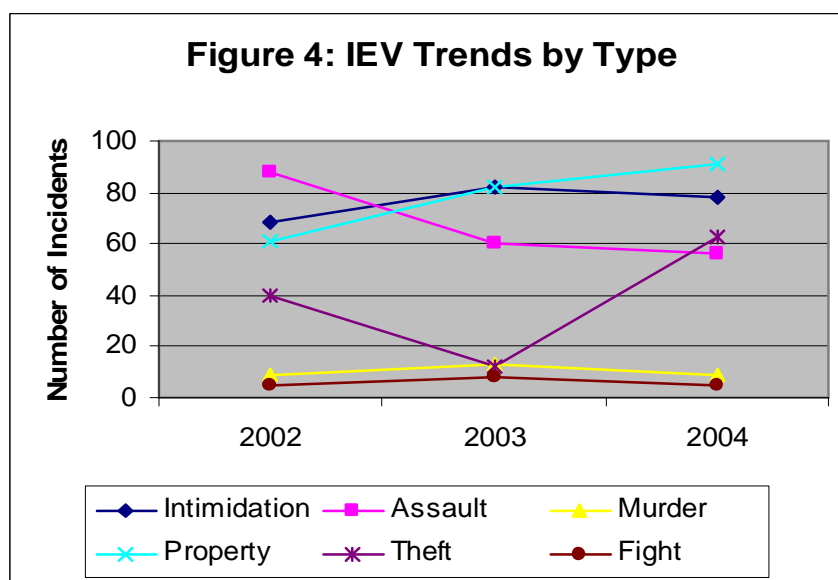
While these incidents were not primarily ethnically-motivated and often not seen as "really" inter-ethnic, the climate of impunity towards inter-ethnic crime made the likelihood of theft against minorities more likely. Minorities felt victimised due to their ethnicity, irrespective of the motives of the perpetrator.

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[28] A common theft suffered by minorities is of farming equipment and cattle, which threatens livelihoods. In one community, UNMIK police even suspected that K-Serbs and K-Albanians were working together to perpetrate the thefts.

[29] This cannot be concluded with certainty, as the *intra-ethnic* crime statistics are not disaggregated by type or motive of violence, and increases in overall crime rates may also reflect increases in politically-motivated intra-ethnic violence related to inter-ethnic relations.

3. Indicators of progress did not reflect reduced vulnerability to violence. Several municipalities were characterised as "good" in terms of IEV by international agencies and local residents alike prior to March 2004: Obiliq/Obilic, Viti/Vitina, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Gjilan/Gnjilane, and Lipjan/Lipljan, among others. In these municipalities, UNMIK staff, security actors, NGOs and community members noted that K-Serbs had begun to travel in private cars, travel without escorts, move on foot in the centre of town, shop in Albanian shops, and speak Serbian in town and in local cafes. Multi-ethnic markets in some communities were being used by both ethnicities, and people in "better" communities, such as Gjilan/Gnjilane and Boksic/Bokaj, had started reviving old friendships from before the war. Before March 2004, K-Albanians and some KFOR interviewees in several communities said, the presence of K-Serbs in K-Albanian areas had been considered a provocation to violence. By 2004, they noted, there were few intimidations and no physical violence against Serbs, only "minor" incidents such as "dirty looks" or "swearing from drunken people," "swearing at people when they are passing by, shouts from cars," which make Serbian women and girls uncomfortable, and some defacing of ethnic symbols.

> **Perceived indicator of security: Presence of Serbs no longer a provocation to violence**
>
> In 2001, one person recounted, an old Serb with a traditional Serb hat (sajkaca) was walking through the center of Gjilan/Gnjilane town, and young Albanian boys topped it off his head and onto the ground. This "cannot happen anymore," he said, as "people are now used to seeing Serbs in town, and there is no reason to fear."
>
> Outside Dom/Dhomi, if a Serb had walked into the subunit in the years immediately following the war, this would have been treated as a provocation and people would have reacted aggressively. This would no longer occur, Albanian young men explained, because Kosovo was becoming more European.
>
> The multi-ethnic police station is an "indication that Serbs are now safe working in the village." (Fushë/Livadje)

Yet these same municipalities not only experienced high levels of violence in March 2004 – to the surprise of many, especially in Gjilan/Gnjilane – but, contrary to popular belief and perception, consistently had amongst the highest levels of inter-ethnic violence in Kosovo over the entire 2002-2004 period. This suggests that the indicators were incomplete, missing several important factors relevant to security. What was missed?

First, increased contact also creates increased opportunities for violence, whether ethnically motivated or not. Moreover, as tensions ease and inter-ethnic contact improves, more extreme actors are also likely to be motivated to resist these developments through violent action designed to re-polarise communities. They are afraid of one another." Easing of tensions could thus be expected to have provoked some backlash.

Second, the very *local* nature of the indicators, emphasising movements and interactions *within* the local community, also may have led international and local observers to miss the continuing threat of more

> "I recognised a lot of children from [town] but also a lot of people from outside" in March 2004.
> -- Resident, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje

external sources and triggers of violence. Nearly all community residents interviewed attributed at least some of the violence in March 2004 and previously to "outsiders" coming from regions of Kosovo known for more extreme political views who then worked with local residents, mostly young people, to identify houses and property to attack.

Third, the same progress on these indicators may have led international agencies and local leaders to take actions that actually increased communities' vulnerability to violence. In the sites considered to be "better" than others in terms of freedom of movement, integration of minorities and inter-ethnic cooperation, checkpoints had been removed, KFOR was out of town, programmes were closed or funding reduced, "in conformity with the situation." These communities were considered to be "stable," as one KFOR officer put it, "with no particular concerns about security and ethnic tensions," However, they experienced violence in March 2004.

Finally, the indicators led to inaccurate conclusions and assumptions about actual security and minorities' (K-Serbs') sense of security. Increased movement and progress on other indicators did not necessarily reflect significant improvements in actual conditions of security, in people's sense of security, or in real engagement between K-Albanians and K-Serbs. The increased freedom of movement observed by locals and internationals alike was accompanied by precautions to minimise the risk of falling victim to violence. Still, as one international official noted in Gjilan/Gnjilane, while K-Serbs move more freely now, it is "in limited areas and with fear." Serbs moved freely and interacted with Albanians, but they followed (and still follow) a set of implicit protocols for reducing the risk of confrontation when they did: moving in limited areas, especially those with strong presence of security forces, developing information and communication networks to warn each other about potential dangers, adopting a "low profile" in the streets, speaking quietly or not at all when in public, etc. One interviewee would walk to town with a dog on a leash for protection. K-Serbs in all the communities that were part of this study said they shunned inter-ethnic situations, as they felt and feel vulnerable, and they moved as little as possible other than for their most indispensable affairs.

While K-Serbs move freely, one international official noted in Gjilan/Gnjilane, it is "in limited areas and with fear."

Are these precautions the result of exaggerated fears stoked by politicians and the media in Belgrade and in Kosovo? Perhaps. It is also likely that these precautions reduced points of friction, thereby contributing to reductions in violence, as well as perceptions of improved security. K-Serbs interviewed in this study predominantly attributed improvements in freedom of movement and decrease in IEV to these precautionary measures and to their efforts to minimise contact with K-Albanians.[30]

It is worth noting that K-Albanian claims of "normal" relations and greater freedom of movement may partly reflect their own improved sense of security. K-Albanians' improved overall sense of security is well documented in the 2004 UNDP study on security and police performance in Kosovo, which found that nearly 50% of Kosovans felt the security situation Kosovo-wide had "gotten better," and that 82% had not changed behavior out of concern about crime.[31] In the communities visited in this study, when speaking about improvements in the security situation, K-Albanians underlined how their own fears had eased – that they no longer feared Serbs or saw them as a threat.

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[30] Ambassador Kai Eide also points this out in his 2005 report on Kosovo: "The low number of reported inter-ethnic incidents partly also stems from the fact that the minorities tend to avoid or reduce to a minimum their contacts with the majority population." K. Eide, *Comprehensive Review of the Situation in Kosovo*, in Letter dated 7 Ocotber 2005 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council, UN Doc. S/635/2005, p. 9.

[31] See UNDP Kosovo, *Light Blue: Public perceptions of security and police performance in Kosovo* (Pristhinë/Priština: UNDP, 2004), pp. 19, 31.

B. Minority presence and IEV: Who is vulnerable and how?

Were all minorities equally vulnerable to IEV before (and during) the March 2004 events? Overall, presence of minorities is a key factor for IEV. Yet higher levels of IEV are associated with higher *K-Serb*, rather than other minority, populations.

Figure 5 depicts the average yearly IEV by municipality for the three years 2002—2004, in order of the level of IEV in the municipality.

Figure 5: Average Yearly IEV, 2002-2004
Source: UNHCR, OSCE, UN CivPol Situation Reports
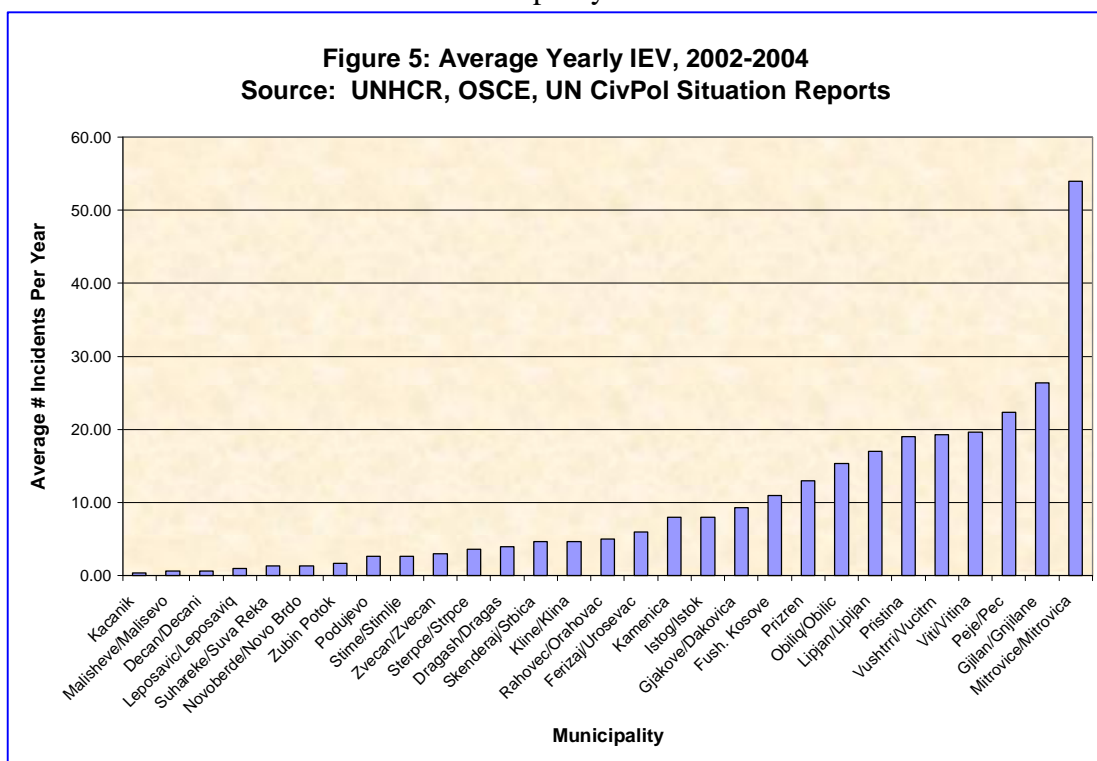
The municipalities with the highest average yearly IEV also tended to have relatively significant (over 5%) minority populations: Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Pejë/Peć, Viti/Vitina, Lipjan/Lipljan, Obiliq/Obilic, Prizren, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje.[32]

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[32] In general, per capita analysis did not significantly change conclusions regarding levels of IEV, except for the largest and the smallest municipalities; municipalities with large populations and a high number of IEV incidents (such as Prishtinë/Priština and Prizren, two of the largest urban areas in Kosovo) fare better when IEV incidence is considered relative to the size of the population, while municipalities with the smallest populations (under 20,000, e.g., Novobërdë/Novo Brdo and Shtërpcë/Štrpce) see the reverse (moving from amongst the lowest in numbers of incidents to amongst the highest per capita rates of IEV), perhaps reflecting the

Figure 6: Proportion of minorities by municipality, in order of lowest to highest levels of IEV

Municipality (in order of average IEV incidents over 3-year period)
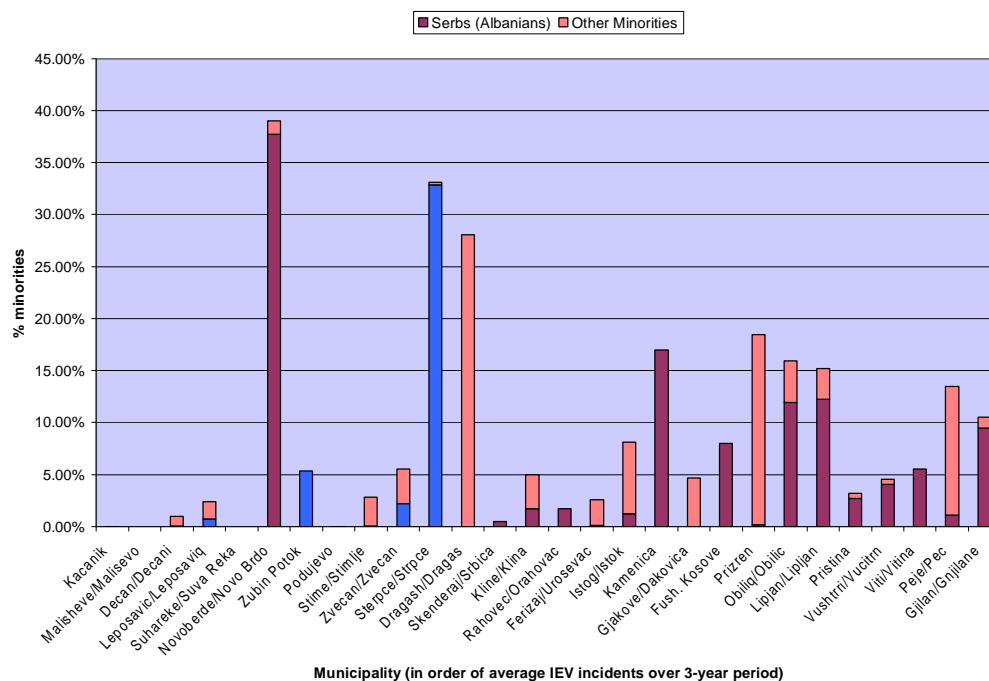
A closer examination of levels of IEV in relation to the demographics of municipalities, as depicted in Figure 6, suggests that the presence of K-Serbs correlates more with higher levels of IEV than the presence of other minorities, whether Roma, Egyptian, Ashkali, Bosniak, Turkish, or Goran. The municipalities with the highest levels of IEV have a primarily Serb minority. By contrast, a number of municipalities with a significant proportion of other minorities and very few or no Kosovo Serbs had low or lower levels of violence, including Ferizaj/Urosevac, Dragash/Dragaš, Suharekë/Suva Reka, and Prizren (on a per capita basis).[33] This is not to suggest that non-Serb minorities have not suffered IEV, or that they have not suffered discrimination and other forms of violations of minority rights. Several municipalities with significant non-Serb minority populations tended to experience greater levels of IEV than those with no minorities (e.g., Prizren,

ongoing underlying tension in these municipalities. Calculations for IEV per capita were not possible for Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, because the population is unknown.
[33] The level of IEV in relation to other municipalities of these more urban areas, like Prishtinë/Priština, drops significantly when IEV is measured on a per capita basis.

Gjakovë/Đakovica, Istog/Istok). However, it is those with Serb or predominantly Serb minority populations that experienced the greatest levels of IEV.[34]

While greater numbers of K-Serb residents appear to correlate with higher levels of IEV, higher *concentrations* of K-Serbs appear to reduce vulnerability to violence. Municipalities with greater than 15% Serb population, including the four Serb-majority municipalities (Štrpce/Shtërpcë, Leposavic/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok, Zvecan/Zveqan), had amongst the lowest levels of inter-ethnic violence, along with nearly mono-ethnic K-Albanian municipalities (less than 2-3% minorities). Municipalities with 4-15% K-Serbs experienced the most violence.

The reduced vulnerability of areas of concentrated K-Serb population is reflected at the more "micro" level within communities as well. In several communities – including Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Fushë/Livadje and Gjilan/Gnjilane – large K-Serb populated apartment complexes and nearby mono-ethnic K-Serb villages were not attacked in March 2004. People (from both sides) reported that this was because they were considered difficult to target and overwhelm. In some instances, people thought (or were told) that the Serbs in these areas had arms or were otherwise capable of fighting back.[35]

> **Concentrated K-Serb population avoided attack in March 2004**
> In Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, neither the complex of apartment buildings where K-Serbs lived nor the nearby K-Serb villages, such as Kuzmin, or even neighbouring Bresje, were attacked during March 17-18, 2004. K-Serbs believe the demonstrators feared that people living in the apartment complexes might be armed and capable of resistance, as the complex in question had previously been occupied by army officers.
>
> In Fushë/Livadje, local people dispersed a group of protesters who had prepared to go to a Serb village nearby. They told the demonstrators that Serbs were "most probably armed and if anything happened they would start a conflict between the communities."
>
> In Gjilan/Gnjilane, there was no violence in the surrounding K-Serb villages, including the largest village, Šilovo/Shilovo, where many K-Serbs from town now reside, because the crowds "couldn't" attack; "they didn't dare to attack such a high concentration of Serbs."

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[34] Pejë/Peć is the big exception to this observation. The high levels of violence experienced there may be associated with its urban character, as several of the areas with higher levels of IEV targeting non-Serb minorities are among the more populated in Kosovo (e.g., Prizren, Gjakovë/Đakovica). They may also be connected to what many people interviewed in the case studies reported as politico-strategic efforts to keep urban areas nearly fully K-Albanian.

[35] Clearly, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica is an exception, but can be explained by the fact that it is the "front line" of the conflict. Still, neither the apartment complex in the Miner's Hill/Microsettlement area in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica north, which houses a mixed population with a significant number of K-Albanians, nor the Bosnia Mahalla, was attacked in March 2004.

PART 2
UNDERSTANDING THE ABSENCE OF INTER-ETHNIC VIOLENCE

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

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

Social capital refers to the "features of social organisation such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit."[36] It includes the institutions, relationships, attitudes, norms, and values that govern interactions among people, and, it is argued, contribute to social and economic development.[37] The notion of "bridging" social capital has captured the imagination of policy makers and NGOs engaged in peacebuilding around the world. The expectation is that if cross-ethnic bonds of trust, cooperation and solidarity are formed, they will counterbalance the divisive force of "bonding" social capital, or the social networks, values, norms and connections that keep homogenous groups cohesive. The theory postulates that "because they build bridges and manage tensions, inter-ethnic networks are agents of peace, but if communities are organised only along intraethnic lines and the interconnections with other communities are very weak or even nonexistent, then ethnic violence is quite

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[36] Robert Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 6, No. 1 (1995), p. 66.
[37] Christiaan Grootaert.& Thierry van Bastelaer, *A Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations from the Social Capital Initiative* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2001), p. 4.

likely."[38]   Routine, everyday types of inter-ethnic engagement (such as social visits, cultural festivals, business dealings, marketplace contact, etc.) promote communication across conflict lines, and allows people to come together, even temporarily, in formal or informal organisations in times of tension to police neighbourhoods, dispel rumors, and talk with each other during times of crisis.[39]   Associational forms (business associations, trade unions, professional associations, NGOs, sports clubs, etc.) that serve the cultural, economic or social needs of both communities prevent and mitigate violence by constraining politicians who try to polarise the sides or engineer violence. As Varshney notes, "[o]rganisations that would lose from a communal split fight for their turf, alerting not only their members but also the public at large to the dangers of communal violence."[40]

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

Communities with greater inter-ethnic engagement before March 2004, such as Gjilan/Gnjilane or Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, erupted in violence in March 2004, and indeed had higher levels of IEV throughout the 2002-2005 time period. At the same time, the absence of significant cross-ethnic engagement in most of the communities studied that avoided violence in March 2004 – Ujë/Voda and Avala/Avallë and Borac/Borishtë, Fushë/Livadje and Dom/Dhomi – stood out.[41]   In those communities, there was little or no inter-ethnic communication, little cooperation, hostile relations, accusations of war crimes and in some, a history of IEV.

To be sure, in the communities that experienced violence, many individuals took action, often at significant personal risk, to protect or help their K-Serb neighbours. Yet these individual ties and actions, even if numerous, did not add up or lead to collective inter-ethnic action to prevent or mitigate the severity of the riots; these communities were unable to withstand "exogenous communal shocks," such as the drowning of the three children on March 17, that commonly provoke violence.[42]   Nor was there even significant communication across ethnic lines to warn of impending events. In a few instances, again on an individual basis, K-Albanians called their K-Serb friends to warn that

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[38] Varshney, "Ethnic Conflict & Civil Society," p. 363.

[39] *Id.*, p. 375.

[40] *Id.*, p. 378.

[41] The one exception is Butan and Boksic/Bokaj, where inter-ethnic interaction on a daily basis, as well as local efforts to develop cross-ethnic associations, were greater than in other areas. These villages did, however, experience significant tension and confrontation before March 2004, even if they did not become violent.

[42] Varshney, "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society," p. 378.

something bad might happen, but mostly K-Serbs reported being "surprised," "unready" or having "no idea what was going on" except insofar as they observed the behaviour of their Albanian colleagues and neighbours on March 17. But there was no direct communication about impending trouble. Why?

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

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

. *1. Greater vulnerability of urban areas.* A wide range of people interviewed for this study believe that the March 2004 violence, and IEV against K-Serbs more generally, had a strong geo-strategic dimension to it. Analyses of the March 2004 violence identified "a more calculated side,"[43] even if not a fully organised dimension, of the violence. Urban areas and areas and populations along main roads were particularly hard hit because, many people suggested, the goal was to clear them of Serbs by targeting minority properties there. In this context, in March 2004, communities such as Gjilan/Gnjilane and Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, or Prizren experienced greater vulnerability to IEV than other areas far from strategic main roads or rurally located. These areas would have required greater density and depth of inter-ethnic engagement than rural areas to have withstood the violence.

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[43] ICG, *Collapse in Kosovo*, p. 15.

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

2. "Rules of the inter-ethnic game" regarding interaction limited the development of bridging social capital. The cases suggest that in both K-Serb and K-Albanian communities, there are clear unwritten "rules of the game" concerning when, how, why and to what extent people can/should interact across conflict lines. These "rules of the inter-ethnic game" created boundaries on the depth and breadth of relationships that could permissibly be developed and ensured that any inter-ethnic engagement that did occur would not challenge the polarisation of K-Serb—K-Albanian relations. As people across the range of communities in this study noted,

> **Boundaries of permissible contact**
> It is "ok" to conduct trade with Albanians, but "not ok" to socialise. It is "ok" to go to the municipality, but not to cafes or the cinema. Cafes once popular and used by everyone are no longer used by Serbs.
>   -- K-Serbs from Fushë Kosovë/
>   Kosovo Polje

contacts for personal, economic gain (e.g., trade, economic transactions and property sales) were "ok," but socialising generally was (and is) not "ok."   Inter-ethnic contact – even "permissible" economic dealings – usually happened "at night," or discreetly, in places and at times when it is not visible (even if everyone knew it was happening).

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

The limiting effect of these "rules" on the possibilities for real, substantive engagement across ethnic lines that could transform relationships or give birth to conflict mitigation mechanisms is clear. While inter-ethnic sports activities were quite common, the

Fushë/Livadjeyouth dialogue group was the only location in this study that mounted a mixed football team. Further, youth participants in multi-ethnic activities and interactions said they generally did not keep contact outside the organised activities. They phoned their friends of the other ethnicity, but did not meet unless an NGO or international agency organised an activity.

These narrow boundaries of interaction have actively (albeit informally) been policed within each community, preventing the development of real bridging social capital. There is evidence that opposition to inter-ethnic contact was quite strong before 2004, and is still present. Both K-Albanians and K-Serbs, while claiming that intimidation had decreased or did not exist in their own community in relaton to to inter-ethnic contact, believe that intimidation by extremists prevents good-willed people from the other community from interacting and cooperating with them. Both sides cited examples of friends from the other community stating that they were not "able" to be seen with them due to fear of censure from their own community. And in fact, some local NGOs organising inter-ethnic activities reported that they were "threatened" by their own community "almost constantly" before 2004 because of their activities. Facing "big problems from the Albanian community," many were forced to meet outside their community for inter-ethnic activities. K-Albanians noted the same thing about their K-Serb friends and colleagues: "When you speak to one Serb and when you speak to two it is completely different. They are afraid of one another." K-Serbs, especially in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, were under pressure not to deal with Albanians; NGO staff to NGO staff contact seemed to be "okay," said one international official, but "average people would never do it as the [political] leadership would say no."

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

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

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

3. Interdependence related to roads, not relationships. In the communities that did not experience violence, people consistently cited access to roads and fear of suffering harm as significant reasons for refraining from violence. In Dom/Dhomi and Fushë/Livadje, for example, vital roads connecting K-Albanian villages to the towns of Pejë/Peć and Gjilan/Gnjilane passed through K-Serb enclaves. K-Serbs and some K-Albanians in these communities believed that the need to use the roads (and avoid blockages or closure) made it "in everyone's interest to keep things calm."[44]

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

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

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

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[44] Interview with K-Serbs, Drvar/Druror, October 2005.

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

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

At the same time, many communities did avoid violence in March 2004 despite the lack of bridging social capital. In so doing, they drew mainly on *intra-ethnic* "bonding social capital" at the local level – the intra-ethnic social networks and norms of reciprocity, trust, shared values that arise from them[45] – to resist violence or provocations to violence. This is counterintuitive, as the literature and experience predominantly stress the role of inter-ethnic engagement and trust in prevention of violence, while intra-ethnic engagement and bonding is said to heighten divisions and tension.[46] A comparison of communities that avoided violence with those that did not in March 2004 suggests several elements of *intra-communal* engagement that helped prevent escalation of a tense situation in March 2004 to violence.

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

The role and influence of "newcomers" and "outsiders" was a consistent theme in all of the cases. The stability of the population in Fushë/Livadje, Ujë/Voda and Boksic/Bokaj and Butan left social networks and trust intact. To be sure, many people had left these communities, either for economic reasons or as a result of the events of 1998-99 or 2000,

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

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

and the communities themselves had changed as a result. Yet there had been no equivalent influx of "newcomers." In addition, most of these communities were either homogenous politically, or reported "mild intolerance for political affiliation."[47] This allowed these communities to develop effective processes for speedy dissemination of information in the community in times of crisis, and for taking and implementing decisions about refraining from violence.

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

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

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

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[47] Interview with resident of Boksic/Bokaj, September, 2005. Some communities, including Fushë/Livadje and Dom/Dhomi, did have serious internal divisions, but they were not along political party lines. In Fushë/Livadje, for example, lines of division were between young and old, while political parties agreed on the central issues for that village: return and inter-ethnic relations.

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

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

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

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

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

In all the cases of successful avoidance of or resistance to violence in the case studies, one or more individual leaders took a clear stand and mobilised community action, or in

the case of communities that did not react prematurely to reports of violence, sent a clear message to stay calm and not to provoke. Yet timeliness and clarity of message were not the only elements of leadership effective in avoiding violence. In some communities, such as Gjilan/Gnjilane, leaders also took clear, public stands against the violence, but failed. Several additional dimensions leadership facilitated success in resisting violence.

Effective leaders anticipated the arrival of violence in their communities during the course of the two days of riots and prepared for how to handle it. Specifically, they took steps to mobilise the entire community to refrain from provocative or preemptive action until direct threats to the community were confirmed. In several cases, they established implicit early warning mechanisms, identifying specific indicators or triggers that would provoke a response, such as blocking of the road or departure of K-Albanians from the village, and were able to prevent premature reactions based on rumors.

Leaders' ability to secure community agreement or collective action to refrain from violence rested on their credibility with their own ethnic constituencies. Leadership that was listened to was credible and connected to the community, and therefore could command attention as well as disseminate information quickly within their communities. For K-Albanians, having participated or been a victim of the 1998-99 war made leaders' calls for non-participation in violence more persuasive. In Gjilan/Gnjilane, for example, the Kosovo Protection Corps (TMK) played a significant role in dispersing the crowds and restoring order, deploying troops to protect the Serbian Orthodox church, among other things. They were effective, a KFOR officer noted, "because they are war heroes [and] people listened to them."[48] The municipal president, however, had less success. He was respected in his party and the municipality, and had been known to take initiatives without international community prodding to reach out to minorities. But when he and the PDK leader in Gjilan/Gnjilane went out to stop people before the violence broke out, "people would not listen to them at all."[49] Gestures by leaders to reach out to K-Serbs appear not to have been comprehended or appreciated in the K-Serb community itself,[50] while at the same time undermining the leaders' credibility with their own ethnic community in calling for restraint.

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

[49] Interview with K-Albanian resident of Gjilan/Gnjilane, September 2005.

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

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

It should be noted that while "bonding" social capital was a significant resource for preventing violence in Kosovo, it has also been used to prevent cooperation and preserve tension. Communities' willingness and ability to mobilise action against violence did not mean they were willing to cooperate with the other. Ujë/Voda in Klinë/Klina municipality is the most dramatic example, as even the intervention of KLA leaders and the Prime Minister himself in 2004 could not persuade the villagers to engage with the K-Serb returnees of neighbouring Avala/Avallë and Borac/Borishtë.

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

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Motivations for avoidance of violence were pragmatic
In Fushë/Livadje, local youth leaders prevented local demonstrators from going to a nearby K-Serb village by telling them that K-Serbs were most probably armed, and if anything happened they would start a conflict between the communities.

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

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VIII. PRESENCE OF SECURITY SECTORS: NECESSARY, BUT NOT SUFFICIENT

Consistently, in the areas where violence occurred, KFOR had withdrawn (Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje), were outside the area (Gjilan/Gnjilane) or were slow to respond (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica).[51] More interesting is the role of the security actors in the areas in which violence did not occur, both before March 2004 and during the crisis. In these communities, there is no consistent pattern in communities that avoided violence regarding KFOR presence and response during the March 2004 events. Action or threat of action by security forces varied from airlifting minorities out of the village, to positioning of troops at the entrance to the Serb village, to no presence at all.

However, there are common patterns in the history and nature of KFOR involvement in those places. In several communities, previous KFOR decisiveness in responding to violence with action that had caused hardship with respect to key interests of communities, e.g., closing needed roads for extended periods of time. At least in one place, the memory of this action made the K-Albanian communities, whose main route to Pejë/Peć was through the K-Serb village of Dom/Dhomi, more cautious about participating in violence.[52]

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

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

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

> **KFOR seen as peacebuilding actor**
> KFOR's mission does not include promotion of positive inter-ethnic relations. Yet many people count KFOR among the significant peacebuilding actors in Gjilan/Gnjilane, Dom/Dhomi and Boksic/Bokaj.

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

PART 3
THE ROLE OF PEACEBUILDING IN PREVENTING INTER-ETHNIC VIOLENCE

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

> **NGOs have opened space for inter-ethnic interaction**
> "If there were no NGOs," one participant in multi-ethnic trainings explained, "things would be very different in Gjilan town. There would be no communication and people would not be as close as they are now."

other, but was not after the training. Another realised he could work with Serbs. Still another learned that it is necessary "to know different sides of stories to know the truth." These are typical comments or participants in training programmes especially.

> **Powerful personal impacts of peacebuilding**
> "The training showed me I can work with Serbs. Before there wasn't hatred, just no relationship. If there had been no projects, then we wouldn't work with Serbs and there would be no meetings."
>   -- Participant in youth trainings, Gjilan/Gnjilane

The joint projects in the economic and social realm also helped build some lasting ties across conflict lines. "The relationships are better. There was much more business, a higher frequency," one beneficiary of a greenhouse project that created linkages with other ethnicities commented.[53] In some cases, the programmes helped minorities feel safer traveling into town from rural areas.

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

Some important small steps in creating space for inter-ethnic relations as well as action against inter-ethnic polarisation were also taken by some of these programmes. A Women's Center in the Miner's Hill/Microsettlement area of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica north survived despite opposition and threats, and has been creating space for interaction. NGO-facilitated dialogues led to agreements that allowed K-Serbs to begin working their fields again; in several of the case sites, K-Serb IDPs began increasingly to go to their fields unescorted by KFOR. In Butan, NGO mediation diffused a conflict between Serb and Albanian residents about water supply, while in Gjilan/Gnjilane NGO efforts contributed significantly to the establishment of the multi-ethnic market in town. Some programmes have been sustained in spite of very adverse circumstances; several programmes – such as a women's business programme in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica and the Municipal Infrastructure Support Initiative (MISI) in Gjilan/Gnjilane – were amongst the first to resume activities after the March 2004 violence. The scale of multi-ethnic participation in public events, such as festivals, especially in the Gjilan/Gnjilane area, suggests that there is interest in cross-community contact beyond the participants in inter-ethnic projects.

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

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

> *"There are no informal, not-NGO-organised multi-ethnic activities."*

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

The clear vision put forth by the United Nations and its international partners is that of a "multi-ethnic society,"[54]or, in the Contact Group's words, "multi-ethnicity that is sustainable."[55] The implementation of this policy of "multi-ethnicity," however, in several respects inadvertently undermined the potential of peacebuilding programming to build real "bridging social capital."

A. Multi-Ethnicity Viewed as "Conditionality" and Increased Distrust

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

However, it has not built sustainable "bridging social capital." There is significant evidence that "multi-ethnicity" is not a vision fully shared by people in both K-Albanian and K-Serbian communities, especially after March 2004, even if co-existence and "co-ethnicity" might be. As Larry Minear and his co-authors suggest in their study on perceptions of local communities, assistance agencies and peace operations, "[t]he reestablishment of a multi-ethnic society runs at odds with the desires of large sections of the population, and efforts to establish it can, and do, lead to a rise in tensions."[56]

> Many Serbs in Boksic/Bokaj and Butan feel that especially after the March 2004 riots, they can live "side by side" but not together.

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

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

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

As a result, the emphasis on multi-ethnicity was perceived in communities not as a "carrot" or reward for cooperation, but as "conditionality." The way in which multi-ethnicity has been promoted in internationally-sponsored programmes did not inspire greater internalization of multi-ethnicity as a goal and principle. Rather, it had the unintended negative impact of generating greater cynicism and reinforcing (even if not exacerbating) distrust.

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

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

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

- A Youth Centre in Gjilan/Gnjilane town started by an international NGO "has not managed to become multi-ethnic."

- An internet centre offered to K-Serbs to come for training and to use the facilities, but because of the location of the centre, K-Serbs were concerned about safety and still have not come.

- A school clean-up was organised in which youth cleaned one K-Albanian and one K-Serb school and planted the gardens of the school. Because, as one person commented, "the situation is quite tricky on the ground," they split the funds for this to do two separate projects, K-Serbs cleaning K-Serb schools and K-Albanians cleaning K-Albanian schools.

- A multi-ethnic milk station had two jobs – one for a K-Serb and one for a K-Albanian. The Serb post is still vacant.

- A documentary film on freedom of movement and multi-ethnic communities was done in the OSCE-sponsored Youth Assemblies. K-Serb and K-Albanian youth conducted interviews in multi-ethnic environments and in one location where K-Serbs and K-Albanians live together. They made the film together for two days, and later the K-Albanians continued on their own. A K-Serb member of the filming team said he had not yet seen the film.

- A municipality employed a number of minority (both Serb and non-Serb), and the municipality and international community claim that they had been "fully integrated" with K-Albanian staff. Yet K-Serb employees were all located together in a separate office and were doing nothing when researchers visited; they said they were not assigned any substantive tasks or given specific responsibilities, but allowed to carry on private affairs (usually project development or fundraising for their own NGOs).

- A multi-ethnic radio station broadcasting news, music and educational programmes in Albanian, Serbian, Roma and Ashkali had a multi-ethnic staff. It was intended to "promote mutual respect and values of multi-cultural society" and "enable the efficient communication and cooperation between different ethnic groups." Both K-Serbs and K-Albanians talked of a climate of 'censorship' within the station, because different news was read in Albanian and Serbian. Although one employee explained that this is because the station does not want to broadcast unconfirmed news, a K-Serb interviewee saw this as censorship of the Serb point of view. The K-Serb employee left, and programming in Serbian was cancelled for lack of money, while the station continued to be praised as a successful multi-ethnic institution.

- An agricultural cooperative created a board of K-Albanian and K-Serb members from the villages in the area. The Director is K-Albanian and the manager is K-Serb. Funding was raised to purchase equipment. K-Albanian and K-Serb members decided to split it. As one farmer stated, "being a member of the coop does not mean I have to work with Serbs, they are only on the board."

International agencies – from the United Nations and the OSCE to NGOs – fueled this dynamic by tacitly accepting the kind of *pro forma* cooperation and multi-ethnicity

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

There are, of course, good reasons in some instances for the failure of meaningful multi-ethnicity to develop in programmes, ranging from expectations around language use amongst multi-ethnic staff to disagreements about the content of programmes. However, these difficult issues were rarely addressed systematically in programme implementation or follow-up, leaving many participants disillusioned about the possibilities of meaningful cooperation across ethnic lines. The associational forms of inter-ethnic engagement – such as business associations, professional associations, NGOs, etc. – that agencies were trying to promote, and that could act as an effective civic constraint on politicians' efforts to polarise communities along ethnic lines,[57] existed mostly in form only. This has created a great deal of opportunism and cynicism about multi-ethnicity, rather than increased trust, interdependence and information sharing.

B. Returns programming has increased divisions

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

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[57] Varshney, "Ethnic Conflict & Civil Society," pp. 388, 393.

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

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

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

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

Decisions about who gets aid and jobs. Staffing and contracting decisions commonly worsen divisions as they often feed perceptions of bias.[58] Kosovo is no exception. Greater attention, however, to the polarised and politicised context in which these decisions were being made – including communities' perceptions of the international community – might have helped mitigate some of these effects. For example, amongst returnees, we heard complaints of unfinished work or poor construction. While complaints were heard equally from K-Serbs and K-Albanians, the poor or unfinished work exacerbated K-Serbs' feelings of distrust and ill-will towards K-Albanians and the international community because the contractors were almost exclusively K-Albanian. The allegations, of course, may or may not have been true, but the perceptions were strong and uniform, and heightened resentment among K-Serbs.

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

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Inadvertent negative impacts of staffing and contracting decisions

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

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

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Inadvertent negative impacts of beneficiary decisions

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

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

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

> "It's a political act to cross the bridge so why should Serbs be asked to do it unilaterally? They won't. Not in big enough numbers to have any impact. They don't feel safe and they don't

want to be marked as traitors by hardliners on their way back. And
then they get accused by the internationals of not cooperating.[59]

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

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[59] OSCE, p.46.

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

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

The evidence gathered in this research suggests that this did not happen, at least not automatically, and that such "spillover" cannot be assumed. Motivations reported by participants for their participation in inter-ethnic programming – whether dialogue and training or economic activity – were consistently unrelated to peace or conflict.

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

Participants in dialogue, training, education and joint activities programming reported feeling powerless to change anything. "Feelings of hatred are too strong," some noted, while others believed they "can hardly influence the positions of [their] community, since people are closed from within," and "whatever we do or decide to do, much remains in the hands of the older generations."

> **Why did participants take part in dialogue and training?**
> "Friends got interested because it sounded fun and the topic was interesting."
>
> "Because I was interested in learning something and wanted to meet new people."
>
> "I would happily attend next year – it was fun."
>
> In these seminars, participants are "awarded diplomas," and "believe some of them can help get new employment with international organisations."
>
> "Interesting to meet new people and to have mastered communication skills which I find useful in everyday activities."

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

A. Activity remained at the entry point

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

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

Resources were also withdrawn or reduced when initial "success" was achieved; agencies either left to move on to other areas or programmes, or were unable to obtain funding for follow-up. Thus, in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, a school-based youth programme said it could not obtain funding to bring school principals from schools in the north and south who had asked the NGO to help them meet. Funding for programming in the Gjilan/Gnjilane region to build inter-ethnic linkages was directed to new areas for replication of the programme after a year, then later stopped completely once returns began to happen. In Pejë/Pec municipality, K-Serbs and K-Albanians alike mentioned that international NGO activities were short-lived, and that NGOs tended to leave shortly after they begin work. As a result, initial cooperative relationships remained vulnerable and in some cases did not survive. Where they did survive, participants continued to interact or do business together, and sometimes took initiatives to involve some others in the activity, but they did not take an active stand against violence or influence their communities significantly in other ways toward peace.

Yet even with sufficient allocation of resources over a long-enough time period, fragmentation of peacebuilding programming would likely still have undermined its cumulative impact on inter-ethnic ties. The events-based nature of many (though not all) dialogues and trainings often led to repetition and duplication rather than deepening or

expanding inter-ethnic interaction. Agencies that had identified participants for dialogues and trainings through referrals from other agencies engaged in similar programming or from school officials, did not build on what the other agencies have done. Often they presented the same content. A participant in a youth camp may have had an opportunity to engage with people from other ethnicities in a social event, a festival or another youth camp, but often not to deepen his or her experience with the same participants on more difficult issues. Indeed, one NGO in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica attributed the drop-off in interest in programmes to the fact that the programmes had nothing new to add. Another in Pejë/Pec municipality suggested dialogue participants get bored because they have been through trainings already. Even where programmes worked consistently with communities or participants over a longer period of time, as had many returns projects, many did not succeed in deepening the work they have done with existing participants or beneficiaries – whether through advanced workshops, or engagement on more difficult issues. Dialogues facilitated as part of returns or economic development programmes frequently ended once concrete objectives became realisable, and opportunities to deepen relationships were missed.

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

Joint projects-type programming in the economic and infrastructure realm was no more successful in moving beyond individual-level interactions. Many business relationships did withstand the pressure of the violence of March 2004. Many participants in these enterprises helped their counterparts and continued to conduct their business throughout the periods of high tension and violence. An evaluation of the international NGO Mercy Corps' stabilization programme in eastern Kosovo, for example, observed that all of the multi-ethnic business linkages created from 2000-2004 survived the March riots. In several cases, K-Albanians and K-Serbs continued even through the riots to deliver goods to their customers from the other ethnicity. Others called each other during the riots to make sure they were alright.[60]

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

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[60] D. Schlemmer, *Building Peace in Kosovo*.

this form met with resistance or disinterest from participants themselves and were subsequently abandoned.

The expectation of spillover from working together into increased interdependence, better relationships and increased trust therefore did not materialise. As a result, the economic cooperation that took place in Kosovo appears not to have involved enough key businesspeople, been big enough in scale and importance for the interests of both ethnicities, or been sufficiently institutionalised to create the kind of interdependence that could constrain politicians. Particularly in urban areas, where the violence was most pronounced in March 2004, more robust associational forms of inter-ethnic engagement would be essential, because with everyday, social engagement, it is harder to connect everyone individually in larger communities than it is in villages.[61]

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

Particularly problematic for building real bridging social capital was the social pressure and "rules of the inter-ethnic game" that inhibited people from developing relationships outside the bounds of the permissible. Issues of intra-community resistance to inter-ethnic contact and cooperation were been recognised as a problem by most agencies, which often had done a significant amount of what has been termed "single identity" work *within* ethnic communities to prepare people for inter-ethnic contact and dialogue.[62] This could sometimes take a lot of time, up to two years in some of the programmes in the communities in this study. Many agencies also made great efforts to be responsive to practical constraints and concerns of participants once they engaged in inter-ethnic interaction, and to assist them in overcoming obstacles to cooperation, not the least of which were concerns about security. Agencies provided logistics and an umbrella for inter-ethnic action to ensure safety, and kept programming low-key and quiet to protect participants from censure by their own communities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

A. Driving Factors of Conflict from the Community Perspective

The outbreak of violence in 2004 was widely attributed to the poor economic situation in Kosovo – high levels of unemployment, lack of investment (in part stemming from the difficulties of privatisation), youth desperation and lack of economic prospects, etc. Indeed, Kosovo has the poorest economy in the Balkans and the worst unemployment in the region, with the burden falling particularly on youth and women.[63] The dire economy, as the ICG reports, was by 2005 rivaling status as the most important question for both communities.[64]

Yet the evidence showed that while socio-economic deprivation increased general frustration and anger, it was not, and is not, a direct cause of IEV. No neat patterns relating poverty and unemployment to levels of inter-ethnic violence emerged from an initial cross-referencing of levels of inter-ethnic violence with the 2003 Kosovo Human Development Index (HDI) and the World Bank's Kosovo Poverty Assessment (2005). Several extremely poor municipalities with minority populations, such as Novobërdë/Novo Brdo, Dragash/Dragaš, Klinë/Klina and Rahovec/Orahovac, have maintained low (or lower) levels of IEV, while HDI municipalities with minorities (such as Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Lipjan/Lipljan, Viti/Vitina) were amongst those with the highest IEV in Kosovo over the 2002-2005 period. The relationship between poverty and IEV seems equally indirect. While poor municipalities would have been expected to have higher rates of IEV if economic deprivation were a cause of violence, the evidence showed no neat patterns; municipalities with the highest or medium Human Poverty Index (HPI) are amongst both those with high and low levels of IEV.[65]

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

[64] International Crisis Group, *Bridging Mitrovica's Divide*, Europe Report No. 165 (Prishtina and Brussels: ICG, 13 September 1005), pp. 11-12.

[65] See UNDP, *Human Development Report*, pp. 38-39.

This does not mean that economic issues, and socio-economic deprivation in particular, are not connected to inter-ethnic violence or tension in Kosovo. Significant horizontal inequalities exist between K-Albanians and K-Serbs and may play a role in perpetuating resentment. Municipalities with the highest human development rating on UNDP's human development index were nearly all Serb-majority municipalities (with the exception of Prishtinë/Priština). The three northern Serb-majority municipalities also had amongst the lowest human poverty indices. By contrast, the municipalities with the lowest HDI were (and are) predominantly nearly mono-ethnic K-Albanian and were heavily affected by the war (Novo Brdo/Novoberde with nearly 38% Serbs and Shtime/Stimlje with nearly 3% other minorities are exceptions). K-Albanians also have tended to experience the factors associated with extreme poverty more than K-Serbs, such as joblessness, income sources from borrowed money, remittances, help from relatives, sold property, greater numbers of children, households with disabled members or female heads. [66]

K-Albanians resented this differentiation along ethnic lines. In many communities, they commented on the injustice of K-Serbs' taking "double salaries" and generally receiving support from Belgrade as well as the international community. Local officials – principals and teachers especially – were also resentful of the pressure on public services. Space was (and is) a big problem for K-Albanians in schools, where, as some teachers commented, many students do not continue to secondary education because of lack of space. K-Albanian schools regularly housed five times as many students in the same space as their K-Serb counterparts.[67]

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

K-Albanians in all the communities in this study believed that the poor economic situation was caused by delays in addressing the political situation,[68] and that the resolution of issues that affect investment, economic development and livelihoods (e.g., privatisation and pensions) had been stymied by the lack of resolution of the status question. In this sense, the economy and frustration with the lack of development went gone hand in hand with political frustration, and attribution of inter-ethnic violence to economic factors is difficult.

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[66] UNDP, *Human Development Report 2004*; World Bank, *Kosovo Poverty Assessment 2005.*

[67] International Crisis Group, *Bridging Mitrovica's Divide*, p. 11.

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

For K-Serbs, property issues were important; pressure to sell, illegal occupation of K-Serb property, theft and other pressures on livelihoods were seen as part of a strategy to push them out of Kosovo. Most people, especially in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica north, depended on the social institutions (health, education, university, etc.) financed mainly by Belgrade for employment. This resulted in a drift in loyalties to the hardline Serbian National Council, as ICG reports, because of their growing control of limited budget resources and jobs.[69] Vested economic interests also developed; it was an "open secret," several interviewees remarked, that some people controlled economic cooperation with Albanians over the bridge (in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica), and the prohibition of cooperation with Albanians helped them preserve this monopoly on economic ties.

Economic factors thus became forces for conflict because of the inextricable connection of this important problem for quality of life to politics and the status question. Community members agreed. Many people in communities believed that improvements in the economy – in livelihoods, employment and quality of life in particular – would bring about peace, either because they "cannot think about cooperation with others if they are hungry,"[70] or because people will "stay busy and have no time to make war."[71]
However, although K-Albanians and K-Serbs widely considered the economy one of the biggest problems they faced, they consistently mentioned missing persons, war crimes and Serbian refusal to accept "new realities" (K-Albanians), and security and justice related in particular to prosecution of perpetrators of IEV (K-Serbs) when asked about key obstacles to peace.

> **K-Serbs: key issues related to their security not being addressed**
> Serbs believe that "attacks are not taken seriously in the police. They are just registered and no one tries to solve these cases; not one such case has been resolved." What creates a sense of insecurity is "the fact that no one is held responsible for ethnically motivated crimes."

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

The uncertainty of the resolution of the status of Kosovo weighed on and in many ways drove all interactions, even when not mentioned explicitly, from K-Albanian resentment

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[69] International Crisis Group, *Bridging Mitrovica's Divide*, p. 12.
[70] Interview with K-Albanian from Pejë/Peč municipality, July 2005.
[71] Interview with K-Serb from Pejë/Peč municipality, July 2005.

of Serbian "parallel institutions" to K-Serb reluctance to participate in the provisional institutions of self-government in Kosovo.

B. Programmes avoided addressing key driving factors directly

Few programmes addressed these key driving forces of conflict adequately and many not at all. The majority of programmes pursued peacebuilding through promotion of practical cooperation on common interests, positive social interaction, general attitudes of tolerance, explicitly avoiding dealing with the issues mentioned by people in communities as obstacles to co-existence. In some cases, participants signed formal memoranda that they would not discuss the past or politics. In others, the agreement was less formal. Programmes such as the OSCE's Youth Assembly were described as working "brilliantly" when youth were brought together across ethnic lines, "but there are no efforts to make them talk about the conflict or the issues behind it."[72] Agency staff and participants feared that discussion of what were acknowledged to be central, yet politically sensitive, issues would threaten nascent inter-ethnic relationships. "We never discuss politics because it always leads to quarrels," many people commented. The avoidance of politically and emotionally charged issues reflects participants' own motivations for participating in these programmes (and their resulting lack of interest in talking about the conflict) and their feelings of powerlessness to address the conflict. It also reflects the capacities and skills of staff that are facilitating these programmes, who often (especially among development-oriented NGOs) did not have sufficient training and experience to manage such difficult conversations, or who themselves have not been given an opportunity to deal with these issues themselves before being asked to facilitate inter-ethnic dialogue in the communities.

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

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

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

C. Limitations of Programmes Dealing with Causes of Conflict

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

In addition, there was recognition at the highest levels of the United Nations of the "grim picture" with regard to the "foundation for a multi-society" and the role of impunity, low-level, unreported IEV and the continuing illegal occupation of property to this picture.[73] Central-level programmes for capacity building and institutional development, especially in the justice and police sectors, and in local governance, were designed to lay the institutional foundations for addressing those conditions. Because of its community-based evidence gathering, this study did not explore these central-level programmes extensively, except insofar as to understand how they were perceived and experienced by community members and whether they were addressing issues *communities* considered to be important for violence, peace and security. At this level, the cases suggest that policies and programmes to build democratic institutions and rule of law as the main mechanisms for mitigating the causes of K-Serb—K-Albanian conflict missed several key driving forces of the conflict.

     1. Lack of attention to relationships. The approach to achieving "multi-ethnicity" has involved, as Ambassador Kai Eide enumerates, "a number of components – providing security, ensuring property rights, promoting return, and protecting the identity of minority communities."[74] This enumeration of types of activities does not incorporate a strategy for improving relationships between K-Albanians and K-Serbs. Here the mandates of the international organisations responsible for managing the transition are vague. UNMIK's mandate does not directly address the issue of coexistence or reconciliation; in the words of a Swedish evaluation of international assistance for reconciliation in Kosovo, "return of refugees and the establishment of human rights and the rule of law are the closest explicit components."[75] The OSCE's mandate does mention inter-ethnic respect and reconciliation explicitly[76] but then gives no guidance on how to bring it about. Compared with the issue of democratisation, which is outlined in

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[73] K. Eide, *A Comprehensive Review of the Situation in Kosovo*, p. 9.

[74] *Id.*

[75] Johnson, *International Assistance to Democratisation and Reconciliation in Kosovo*.

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

detail, reconciliation is apparently seen as a part of establishing human rights and a viable multi-ethnic society, not a distinct area of work. "On the whole," the same Swedish evaluation notes, "there is an apparent lack of interest and understanding of reconciliation tools and mechanisms."[77]

The implications of the vagueness of mandate and thinking about reconciliation (or coexistence) can be seen on the ground. Concretely, the strategies articulated by many agencies, including the United Nations, the OSCE and many NGOs, for transforming the inter-ethnic relations included "anything that brings people together," "anything that gets them talking," promoting "collaboration," "good neighbour" behavior, or "Serbs and Albanians talking and laughing together." While these may be potential approaches or results of activities, they constitute neither a vision nor a strategy.[78] The result was fragmentation of programming and lack of sustainable follow-up to promising initial contacts that reinforces *pro forma* relationships across ethnic lines and cynicism about multi-ethnicity.

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

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[77] *Id.* at 28.

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

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

None of these issues are easy. Broader institutional and political weaknesses limit how much progress can be made on these issues in the short term, including: the continuing uncertainty surrounding resolution of the status question, general institutional weaknesses in the justice system that affect both K-Albanians and K-Serbs, difficulties collecting evidence and persuading witnesses to step forward, among others. The more perceptual, emotional aspects of these issues could, however, be addressed more directly in the shorter term and enhance the capacity of the longer term institution-strengthening reforms to mitigate inter-ethnic tension. The lack of a common understanding of the problems needing attention and a demonstrated willingness to take the other's concerns seriously has ensured that these issues linger as obstacles to improved co-existence. Support for dialogue aimed at developing a shared definition amongst K-Albanians and K-Serbs of the problem that addresses directly the concerns of both sides could facilitate resolution of issues of freedom of movement and transitional justice.

In addition, improvements in transparency of police and justice processes, and communication with KPS, KFOR and UNMIK Police especially, could help reduce the resentments and feelings of injustice that have resulted from failures to deal adequately with war crimes, war victims and impunity for perpetrators of IEV. The evidence gathered in this study is consistent with the findings of the UNDP report on public perceptions of security and police performance that there is "limited citizen-initiated contact with the police or other security providers" and "little police-initiated contact with the public." [79] Communities did not understand the procedures for dealing with claims – both complaints about criminal actions and complaints about war crimes – and, consequently, could not tell whether the police or justice system was being responsive. In two of the communities visited for this research, K-Albanians opposed to return of Serb IDPs submitted lists of alleged war criminals to KFOR. KFOR and KPS reported that they had investigated and found no or insufficient evidence to proceed any further. Communication mechanisms, however, did not appear to work effectively, as community members said they had gotten no response and did not know what had happened with

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[79] UNDP, *Light Blue*, pp. 24-26.

their claims. This contributed to increasing fear, resentment and hostility toward potential returnees.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Indicative criteria for participant selection mentioned by agencies and participants

- People who say they want to live together in the future.

- People who previously received training

- People who have a "sense of compromise and tolerance."

- "First criteria" are knowledge of English, open-mindedness and school success.

- Recruitment through high schools, where old participants interview new ones.

- Identify existing ethnic linkages and support them.

- Desire to participate, interests, and readiness to change.

- People with experience in NGO sector work.

These are, of course, important people to mobilise for peace and against violence (even if, in this case, the mobilisation process has not yet been effective, as described above). Yet the "harder to reach," especially key people and groups who might undermine any

potential agreement such as KLA and war veterans, the Serbian Orthodox Church, less moderate Serbian parties in Kosovo, etc., only recently began to receive some attention. Outreach to the Serb community had been weak, as the frameworks for engaging with Serbs through returns and integration of Serbs into Kosovo structures reinforced alienation of more "key" constituencies connected to Belgrade. The international community, one international official noted, "did not speak to the SNC until three to four months before [October 2005] yet it is the *de facto* leadership." Of the twenty programmes explored in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica in this study, we identified only one non-governmental programme that worked with the SNC. Only a few more were working with the Serbian Orthodox Church. Although there appeared to be greater contact with the KLA and war veterans, either through cooperation with the TMK or through informal contacts with them on the sidelines of programmes, they too were generally not part of programming. Failure to reach the "harder to reach" who could undermine progress toward co-existence threatens both the sustainability of projects that are being implemented and their ability to affect the wider environment.

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

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

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

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

Finally, there is a question about the geographical targets of programming. The areas that are more extreme in terms of the political situation and positions on status, such as the Drenica region, are those that were affected by the war and are largely mono-ethnic now. These areas, formerly also a center for KLA activity, have had higher levels of activity of the associations that emerged from the war (of veterans, of invalids, and of families of martyrs) also are believed to have played an important role as organisers and as travelers ("outsiders") in the March 2004 unrest.[80] Yet these areas received relatively little aid compared to other areas, and nearly no peacebuilding assistance. Similarly, "Belgrade" was mentioned consistently in all communities as key to the evolution of the situation and of inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo. Yet aside from high level talks and working groups, there had been little cross-border or coordinated programming with Serbia. If a main driving force of conflict is in Serbia, however, failure to address it will keep relations in Kosovo vulnerable to escalation and violence.

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[80] *See*, e.g., International Crisis Group, *Collapse in Kosovo.*

XII. Conclusion and Recommendations

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

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

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

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

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

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

b. *Develop a strategy for building bridging social capital.* In addition to strengthening democracy and economic development in Kosovo, a strategy for transforming the *relationship* between K-Albanians and K-Serbs is needed, both within Kosovo and in the broader region. Elements of a strategy should include development of a vision of what the relationship between K-Serbs and K-Albanians will be in the future, one that is shared locally. "Multi-ethnicity" currently is not a vision that is shared, and while "side-by-side" living is mentioned almost universally as the current reality and realistic goal, there is fear that accepting this could feed calls for cantonization, division and further conflict. Possible pieces of a more compelling and realistic vision might include "coexistence"[81] and "European development." A vision should be discussed and developed openly.

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

d. *Invest in follow-up and linkages.* Strategies are needed for moving beyond individual-personal impacts to affect the socio-political environment. Funding for "soft" elements of porgrammes should be expanded and sustained over longer periods of time. In addition, much more can be done to encourage greater synergy between different efforts so that they can build on rather than duplicate each other. At the programme level, event-based programming should be discouraged, while follow-up

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

to programming and linkages among programmes to move beyond individual-personal impacts to generate socio-political impacts. Single identity work – work within one community on issues and dynamics in conflict – should also be considered and supported not just as a preparatory step to cross-ethnic interaction, but also as a follow-up process to address the "rules of the inter-ethnic game" and deal with intra-community resistance to inter-ethnic cooperation.

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

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

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

a. *Deemphasise refugee and IDP return.* Already there has been some de-emphasis of returns in peacebuilding programming as issues related to status have taken front stage. However, further consideration of the relationship of returns to peacebuilding may be warranted at this time. Refugee and IDP returns are important, but to mitigate the negative conflict impacts of returns programming and to support local capacities for peace, *peacebuilding* programming should focus on inter-ethnic relations holistically, including working with remainees.

b. *Shift from emphasis on the "easy to reach" to promotion of leadership, local capacities for peace and connectors.* Reaching and mobilizing the moderate voices on both sides to have a voice in policy and public debate is important for building a peace constituency. Peacebuildilng programming should focus not

only on including and targeting more open people, but facilitating their evolution or organisation into a peace constituency. The process of selection or partners, participants, and beneficiaries could include additional criteria for targeting of participants could improve programme effectiveness in building "bridging social capital:"

- Identify and support "innovators" and "early adopters" who are will take or have taken public action for peace or in support of inter-ethnic cooperation.
- Identify and support *existing* "connectors" – people, institutions or systems, actions and attitudes, and interests that already bring people together across conflict lines rather than attempting to create new connectors. Areas such as economic development, employment, environment, health, or public services are common concerns of people in Kosovo, but do not necessarily already act as a connector across ethnic lines. By contrast, in some places, youth concerns with lack of recreation facilities has led them to reach out across ethnic lines and share space or play sports together on their own initiative. This could be supported. K-Albanian and K-Serb concern about the quality of education, especially in science and math, for example, could also be built on to bring people together to develop a common curriculum in those areas.
- Identify and support local capacities for peace. Leadership by example might open some space for interaction. People and processes that currently mitigate conflict should be identified and supported. Greater rigor could be exercised in identifying people who exercise informal leadership and authority in communities, in addition to community leaders. Teachers and educational officials emerged from the study as one such group.
- Conduct more rigorous analysis of youth and women is warranted to identify and support those that are "key" for violence or non-violence.
- Identify and link together participants in geographic and/or sectoral areas to avoid isolation.

c. *Address the "hard to reach."* The general, if not always purposeful, exclusion of "key" people leaves programmes vulnerable and undermines the overall impact of peacebuilding work. Steps could be taken to find ways to include, engage, or address key actors more systematically: KLA veterans and war victims, Kosovo Serb political and community leaders across the spectrum of opinion, less moderate Albanian organisations such as Albin Kurti's "Vetevendosje," and the Serbian Orthodox Church.

d. *De-"localize" programming.* Support programming that cross geographical boundaries – either between municipalities or communities, or between Kosovo and Serbia. Programmes that focus on individual communities (either for returns, or because they have mixed populations) or Kosovo-wide policy miss important factors of conflict. Areas for programming that have been largely overlooked but should receive greater attention include:

- Mono-ethnic areas that were most affected by the war and/or that are the cradle of the KLA, such as Gjakova/Đakovica or Decan/Decani. People comment that hard-line opinion prevails there and that "outsider" perpetrators of violence throughout Kosovo came from those areas.
- Interaction between people from these mono-ethnic areas with people (K-Serbs and K-Albanians) from more mixed areas. This occurs in Kosovo-wide programmes such as youth camps but could be increased and focused more systematically with the necessary follow-up to support re-entry back into the mono-ethnic areas.
- Cross-border and/or coordinated work with Serbia outside the IDP realm, especially with areas that are critical to the Serb-Albanian relationship in Kosovo. After status talks conclude, this will likely become more important, as the line of confrontation will likely shift to the Kosovo-Serbia border in relation to the northern municipalities.

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

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

a. Transitional justice: Develop more transparent and fair procedures for dealing with claims of war crimes, and encourage NGO parallel processes. Issues related to lustration will also need to be considered carefully in this context, as concerns (of Albanians and Serbs) related to individuals' involvement with the war continue to exacerbate tensions from the community level in places like villages in Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality at the Kosovo-wide level.

b. Security and impunity: Action might be taken in several arenas. First, in light of starkly different perceptions about the problem of freedom of movement, greater dialogue at all levels between K-Serbs and K-Albanians about the nature of the problem and what to do about it would be useful. In this context, a broadening or reframing of the issue from "freedom of movement" to address minorities' "sense of security" might be helpful, as the terminology of "freedom of movement" – associated closely with the Standards for Kosovo – may have the unintended consequence of polarizing discussion on what the current reality is and future actions ought to be. Second, issues of impunity and *perceptions* of impunity need to be addressed. This issue is, of course, is a long-term problem related to the weakness of the justice system that affects K-Albanians as well. The need to strengthen the justice system has been underlined by many,[82] and efforts to strengthen the justice system are already underway. However, they could be supplemented in the short- to medium-term by efforts – both official (government and international agency) and civil society – to deal with the factors that motivate witnesses not to come forward and to deal with the link between impunity and K-Serb feelings of insecurity specifically. Promotion of greater contact between police and communities and greater transparency about the status of investigations might be considered, as well as strengthening and expansion of community policing.

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

2. ***Incorporate conflict sensitivity into all programming and policy making.*** Decisions about staffing and contracting, about location of programmes and centers, and post-programme sustainability planning especially should analyse and take into account potential impacts on K-Serb—K-Albanian tensions. In addition, programming needs to be sensitive to the complex role of economic factors in exacerbating conflict in Kosovo. Economic development is both highly important to all communities in Kosovo, but has contributed to violent conflict primarily through its connection to disappointed political aspirations and horizontal inequalities amongst ethnic groups. Future economic policy and development aid – from privatisation to job creation policies to practical

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

implementation of income-generation projects on the ground – should   identify concretely potential "winners" and "losers" and the impact on K-Albanian—K-Serb (and other minorities) divisions.

PART 4: CASE STUDIES

The conclusions of this study are based on the experiences of people in communities, international and local NGOs, and local and international organisations working in communities. Their reflections on those experiences of violence, prevention of violence and peacebuilding programming have contributed to the findings.

The cases represent a range of communities with comparable experiences, from which the practitioners and agency staff who were consulted in the first phase of the research thought there would be much to be learned. The cases were chosen to include sites that were urban and rural, sites with higher levels of minority returnees and those with higher numbers of remainees, and sites that had different experiences of the 1998-1999 conflict. Participants in Phase I of the study considered these factors significant.

The cases include communities that experienced violence in March 2004, such as Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje and Gjilan/Gnjilane, as well as communities that avoided violence. Several "counterintuitive" cases were chosen. One village had a history of tension and violence but did not experience violence in March 2004. Similarly, Gjilan/Gnjilane was reputed to be less violent than other parts of Kosovo, which made the violence that occurred there surprising. While it was difficult to find communities that had received *no* peacebuilding support, we chose cases that demonstrated a variety of types and intensity of peacebuilding programming.

In this Part, we present summaries of the seven case studies that formed the basis for identifying themes, patterns, problems and opportunities for peacebuilding work in relation to prevention of violence. The cases have been edited and shortened to bring out the main narratives. As a result, many details have been omitted, as well as information about the community that was not directly related to the conclusions of the study. At the same time, consistent with our inductive approach to the research, the cases were designed to be descriptive, not analytical; the analysis was performed on a comparative basis from the evidence in the case studies. As in the full original cases, the edited case studies reflect what people said, rather than our own analysis.

As mentioned in the Introduction above, the real names of the villages and communities have been changed with the exception of those of the larger towns and municipalities such as Gjilan/Gnjilane, Klinë/Klina, Pejë/Peć, Štrpce/Shtërpcë, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje and Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. In addition, names of people and of organisations have generally been omitted to protect the confidentiality of the interviewees. The lack of reference to particular organisations' names is also consistent with the focus of the study, which was not an evaluation, but rather focused on communities' perceptions and experience of the programmes. With some exceptions, many community members did

not refer to organisations' names, and often did not refer to specific programmes. While we spoke extensively with agencies implementing peacebuilding programmes, our goal was to understand the interaction of peacebuilding programming with people's experience of violence generally, not to analyse each programme or to judge which programmes individually were better than others. Our aim was not to judge organisations, programmes or people, but to explore the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of peacebuilding work in the aggregate.

Finally, in the course of the development and analysis of the case studies, we gained insights concerning the impact of peacebuilding programming more generally on inter-ethnic relations and coexistence – from the research team itself as well as from the wide variety of practitioners and residents who participated in feedback workshops. The case studies and the conclusions drawn from them reflect these insights.

XIII. No Violence, No Returns in Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality

Fushë/Livadje and Drvar/Druror[83] are villages in Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality. Fushë/Livadje was a mixed village before the war, with about 750 houses – 630 K-Albanian and 121 K-Serb. It is about 12 kilometres from Gjilan/Gnjilane town, and currently, with about 5,000 residents, it is the largest village in the municipality. Before the war, K-Serbs in Fushë/Livadje lived in four neighbourhoods, three of which were concentrated around the village centre. There are no more K-Serbs in the village. Of the 121 households, 35 remained in Kosovo, and the rest are IDPs in Serbia proper.

Fushë/Livadje is surrounded by three of the nine mono-ethnic K-Serb villages in the municipality: Put/Pat and Setva/Sejfi to the northeast, Drvar/Druror to the north. Drvar/Druror is about five kilometres from Fushë/Livadje and has always been mono-ethnic. It currently hosts about one-third of the K-Serb population of Fushë/Livadje that fled in 1999-2000 following the war. The main road to Gjilan/Gnjilane town from Fushë/Livadje passes through Drvar/Druror; alternatively, travelers need to go on back roads and through Put/Pat to reach Gjilan/Gnjilane town.

War and immediate post-war experience

Gjilan/Gnjilane as a municipality suffered less than other parts of Kosovo before and during the 1998-1999 war. The OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission noted that "it is difficult to give a specific reason for the relatively calm situation in Gnjilane during the pre-deployment and deployment period." They surmised that because of the relatively high proportion of Serbs (10-30%) and the existence of many mono-ethnic Serbian villages around the town and in the northern part of the municipality, the KLA had difficulties penetrating the area through the normal method of using rural areas as a base. In addition, "a delicate system of mutual economic dependence had been developed between the different national communities, the breakdown of which would have been damaging for the larger part of the municipality's population. Gnjilane was considered to be one of the wealthiest parts of Kosovo, and there were also rumors of extensive activities of a criminal mafia character."[84]

Fushë/Livadje, along with Era/Vetar and Malsi/Planine, were the exceptions. The war experience there was harsh, and the fact that people had "extraordinary good neighbour relations" before the war made the post-war experience especially bitter, as K-Albanians felt betrayed by their K-Serb neighbours. Before the war, the relations were so good that

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[83] The real names of all the villages and communities have been changed.

[84] OSCE, *Kosovo/Kosova As Seen, As Told*, Part V (The municipalities), Gnjilane/Gjilan, p. 1.

Serbs and Albanians served as godparents to each other's children. Many Serbs also spoke fluent Albanian, a rare occurrence in Kosovo.

But during the 1998-1999 period, Fushë/Livadje became more tense than other parts of Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality. Fushë/Livadje was attacked on 27 March 1999, according to OSCE KVM. Six or seven buses with Serb "paramilitaries" arrived in the afternoon. Police and armed civilians were also seen. K-Albanians were forced out of the village, and almost all their houses were destroyed. Some people were killed.[85] Among these were the parents of the local PDK leader.

K-Albanians believe that K-Serbs from the village helped the paramilitaries. "They marked their houses with a white cloth. It resembled a fascist genocide," said K-Albanian former schoolteacher Qamil Shabani as he described how Serbian residents hung white sheets on their houses to deter attack.[86] K-Serbs interviewed did not want to talk about this, and said they did not know what happened. Informally, people confirmed that paramilitary soldiers committed some murders in the process of robbery. K-Serbs said they could not protect their neighbours because they were too afraid of these units. They sent their own children to a nearby Serbian village, where there were no such units.

When the bombing ended, French KFOR came to the village, and Albanians started coming back. While the French were there, K-Serbs say, there was no communication, but no violence. When American KFOR replaced the French troops, physical violence and attacks began. American soldiers then said they could not guarantee security to Serbs when their houses started burning. Serbs left the village on 23 and 24 June 1999 with KFOR escort to Drvar/Druror. A further convoy of Serbs left the village for Presevo under KFOR escort when Serb houses in Fushë/Livadje were burnt down on July 2.[87] All K-Serbs eventually left the village – one-third to Drvar/Druror and two-thirds to Serbia proper.[88]

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[85] According to OSCE KVM (*Kosovo/Kosova As Seen As Told 1998-1999*, Part V (The municipalities, Gnjilane/Gjilan, p. 6), two elderly people who had stayed in the village were found by their son with gunshot wounds to the forehead and neck. A witness at the trial of Milosevic also refers to killings of several others. In November 1999, six bodies were found.

[86] Testimony of Qamil Shabani, Trial of Slobodan Milosevic, 6 March 2002, p. 1514, 78/105, available at http://mitglied.lycos.de/desarea.

[87] OSCE-KVM, *Kosovo/Kosova As Seen As Told*, Part II, 14 June 1999-31 October 1999, pp. 25-26.

[88] K-Serbs feel US KFOR could have protected them but chose not to. Some interviewees think that the KFOR translator, an Albanian, did not translate correctly for the Serb negotiation with KFOR. However, some think KFOR actually could not protect Serbs in Fushë/Livadje, because of the uneven and dispersed distribution of Serbian houses in the village.

Inter-ethnic relations and returns

Violence affected the area intermittently for some time after July, resulting in the deaths of some K-Serbs and the destruction of the Serbian Orthodox church and graveyard in the village.[89]   Since then, the area of Fushë/Livadje and Drvar/Druror experienced little violence. Although they are only five kilometres apart, there have been essentially no relations between the people of Fushë/Livadje and those of Drvar/Druror. Contact is limited to commercial dealings (e.g., trade, property sales and rentals) and some organised peace activities.

Relations, however, have remained tense. In 2002, Serbs blocked the road through Drvar/Druror for a long time, and only when KFOR intervened to force the road open was the stand-off resolved. In 2003, Albanians stoned Serbs on a go-and-see-visit to Fushë/Livadje to visit their graveyard. The road generally remained calm since then, partly, some interviewees explained, "because Albanians need to use the road that drives through Drvar/Druror and it is in everyone's interest to keep things calm." Nonetheless, even for commercial dealings, K-Serbs we talked with reported that these meetings were discreet, because they believed K-Albanians have been intimidated by extremists and could not maintain public contact with K-Serbs. K-Albanians, on the other hand, while admitting that groups engaging in inter-ethnic activities "might have received threats in the beginning," believed that the environment had changed, and that there was no longer any fear of engaging openly in inter-ethnic contacts or work. K-Albanians mentioned the multi-ethnic police station as a positive development and an indication that Serbs were safe working in the village. Small incidents have continued to happen, a KPS officer (Albanian) in Gjilan/Gnjilane commented, such as verbal abuse and harassment, but these incidents did not escalate further.

Peacebuilding and returns

The two main efforts mentioned consistently by community residents as active and effective peacebuilding were KFOR and an INGO-supported dialogue on returns. People claimed that UNMIK was "insincere" or "completely invisible" in Fushë/Livadje, and while the OSCE said it had many activities in the village, residents said they were not very visible. In Drvar/Drurorproper, there were fewer activities; one NGO implemented an indirect peacebuilding project in Drvar/Druror itself, helping to renovate a school, using K-Albanian contractors from outside the area and establishing a direct line of communication between the municipality and the community.[90] This was because, as one

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[89] R. Berisha, "The Kosovo Exodus Continues," *Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Balkan Crisis Report* No. 110, January 25, 2000.

[90] As a member of the community working group of that project noted, "We are very encouraged as we have been able to make contacts with the Municipality, which until recently we could only contact through the Municipal Community Officer. But now with the support of [NGO] we are

NGO staff put it, Drvar/Druror was considered a "fully stabilised site," and there was "no need for an intervention. There are no problems between the people of Drvar/Druror and the Albanians in Fushë/Livadje."

KFOR
KFOR cannot, by mandate, initiate inter-ethnic activities, but they actively supported multi-ethnicity in the activities they undertook within their mandate. For example, they hosted a joint sports event organised by a local (Fushë/Livadje) NGO. As a KFOR representative noted, "access to the base is an honour," and access is granted as a kind of reward for multi-ethnic cooperation. K-Albanians believe the presence of KFOR has made a great difference in the conflict because KFOR did not hesitate to get involved in tense situations, such as intervening to unblock the road in 2002. As a result, they had the "full respect" (as one interviewee put it) of the K-Albanian community. Municipal officials also credited KFOR, along with UNMIK, with decreasing tensions because they insisted on a "continuity of meetings and contacts." K-Serbs felt less positive about KFOR, and US KFOR specifically, as it was under US KFOR watch that they were driven from their homes in 1999.

Dialogue to Promote Returns
Dialogue, facilitated by a string of international organisations and INGOs to prepare the ground for sustainable returns, has been the main activity, beginning in 2000 and continuing to this day. Initial efforts by the OSCE, UNHCR and others failed. A few meetings were held but there were "accusations between the communities and non-acceptance of guilt, especially by Serbs," a municipal official stated, and they failed.

The K-Albanian leadership in Fushë/Livadje was very opposed to return. They have been supported by most people in the village, though a significant group of people, mostly youth, have supported return and have publicly opposed the leadership in the village. People in this group believed (and publicly stated) that the political leaders were not addressing the needs of the residents of the village – school, returns, street lights, water distribution, sewage, infrastructure for youth, etc. Some people believed the leadership took a hardline stance against return for fear of losing votes to the PDK in one of the largest and strategically located villages in Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality. Others believed that they were trying to rehabilitate themselves after having worked in the pre-war (Serb) structures, trying to prove they were patriots by blocking returns. K-Serbs are also divided on the issue of return. Some, including the IDP leadership, would prefer to obtain permanent housing in Drvar/Druror, while others have indicated their desire to return to their homes and work the land.

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organising meetings and have the opportunity to directly ask questions about issues which are tormenting us."

In 2003, an international NGO began a new dialogue process to prepare the ground for potential returns to Fushë/Livadje. The INGO worked closely with two local NGOs that were independently active in promoting inter-ethnic cooperation.[91] Failing initially to bring K-Serbs and K-Albanians together in dialogue, the INGO worked separately with Fushë/Livadje residents (K-Albanians) and IDPs in Drvar/Druror. In this process, one of the problems emphasised by IDPs was land usurpation by K-Albanian residents of Fushë/Livadje, and the INGO decided to initiate a dialogue on agriculture, focusing on access to land.

Progress was made after March 2004, with the help of the municipal president, who pushed leadership of Fushë/Livadje to enter into the dialogue. Within 1 ½ months after the March events, 45 agreements on land use were reached that, in the words of one K-Serb, gave them "for the first time, access to their land." K-Serbs began to cultivate their land shortly thereafter, at first with KFOR escort, but gradually alone.[92] The INGO tried to build on these positive developments to facilitate further confidence building and dialogue on returns. A successful "go-and-see-visit" in July 2004, in which nine displaced Serbs visited Fushë/Livadje, with KFOR, KPS and UNHCR escort. A UNHCR report observed that at a house occupied by Albanians, the Serbs "were greeted by two friendly Albanian women with children, who offered them coffee."[93]

The K-Albanian leadership, however, balked. When the list of potential returnees was released, the village leadership produced a list of Serb war criminals and given it to various agencies, including UNMIK and municipal authorities, KFOR and KPS. The list contained 35 names; 32 of the families had indicated a desire to return to Fushë/Livadje. KFOR gave the list unofficially to KPS, which investigated it unofficially and told KFOR there was no justification to the claims. This did not deter the village. The head of the village said they were preparing an indictment against 94 Serbs who they have evidence committed war crimes. The indictment was for murder of 13 victims in the village committed the day Serb paramilitaries from Niš entered the village, as local K-Serbs, he believed, had prepared the liquidation lists. K-Albanians claimed that some of the youth from the village took part in the fighting in Drenica and used to shoot their guns in the air to scare villagers when they returned home. Yet another, it is claimed, stole cattle.

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[91] In 2000, the head of one of the NGOs, supported by only three other people, tried to stop the destruction of the Serbian Orthodox church in 2000. As he said, there was a chance he would be hurt for standing up to the community, which "said things" to his family, but he was not afraid because he knew he was right.

[92] One member of the Council appears to have taken a lead role in brokering this agreement, largely, people we interviewed said, because of his rivalry with the villager president.

[93] "Cultivating old relationships in a Kosovo village," UNCHR News Stories, 8 September 2004, http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/news/opendoc.htm?tbl=NEWS&id=413f06064,   accessed 28 November 2005.

With dialogue stymied at the leadership level, the INGO decided to engage the youth who had consistently been more favourable to returns and more readily accepted dialogue with their Serb IDP counterparts in Drvar/Druror. A Focus Group was created in 2005 as an alternative forum to discuss returns, becoming a quasi-competitive structure with the Council in the village on this issue. It obtained the support of the municipality, which considered them people of "good will" and in the fall of 2005 showed that support by convening two village meetings to push the village to accept the returns.[94] Interestingly, some people noted, the youth were *allowed* by the leaders to participate (i.e. they were not forbidden or harassed); people believed that this was a way for the leaders to engage in dialogue without themselves having to participate directly.

In order to "relax relations," as one interviewee put it, a small group of youth continued to meet on a regular basis (about once a month) and come together for social and sport activities, including all the K-Serb youth IDPs from Fushë/Livadje. These youth were already connected in part by the fact that the leaders of the groups from both sides worked for Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality; many also knew each other and played together as children. The youth dialogue organised several activities: a joint outing to Kamenicë/Kamenica to see a movie; a joint sports tournament in Camp Monteith (US KFOR base); joint trainings in conflict resolution, and participation in a Kosovo-wide "peace project" in Brezovica, among others.

The INGO also provided financial support to the local NGOs. One NGO received money for agriculture projects to benefit both K-Albanians and K-Serbs in the area, while another received a coffee machine from the INGO for its internet café. The money used from selling coffee was to be used to buy a computer for the K-Serb youth organisation Fushë/Livadje, which still lacked an office and equipment. The youth NGO also offered IDPs in Drvar/Druror computer training at the centre, but concerns about safety prevented them from coming.

These events, according to participants, helped reduce tensions and change participants' views of each other. But it is not clear how much support the cooperation had in the community, or whether the increased understanding extended beyond the thirty participants. For the group, participation in the meetings continued to be circumscribed. Meetings were still held in Gjilan/Gnjilane or Kamenicë/Kamenica towns, because the local NGO organiser "was facing big problems from the Albanian community." In town, both K-Serbs and K-Albanians say they always shook hands and said hello, yet no one greeted each other as they passed through the villages. The K-Serb youth also mentioned that "there is some fear of what the neighbours will say" if they made contact on their own initiative. Thus the group members did not meet outside the meetings organised by the INGO, except for some phone contact. Participants also doubted their own ability to influence their elders; some noted they "can hardly influence the positions of [their]

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[94] The municipality also has a "Fushë/Livadje group" within the Municipal Returns group.

community, since people are closed from within" and "whatever we do or decide to do, much remains in the hands of the older generations."

March 2004

Fushë/Livadje and Drvar/Druror experienced no violence in March 2004. Indeed, both Serbs and Albanians did not refer to the March events at length in their interviews; the intermittent negotiation process over returns dominated the conversation.

Nonetheless, they did offer some explanations of why no violence occurred in March 2004. First, Albanians interviewed stressed that there was not much movement in or out of Fushë/Livadje. K-Serbs in Drvar/Druror (both IDPs and natives) expected an assault, and kept unarmed guards around the village to warn of attack. But they did not block the road to Gjilan/Gnjilane. K-Albanians appreciated K-Serbs not blocking the road, as the road is the main route to Gjilan/Gnjilane town, and going via side roads is very inconvenient. Effectively, it seems there was no reason for Fushë/Livadje Albanians to attack, as the road was open and the village already is "fighting" Serb return.

Some people did participate in the demonstrations – but it seems they traveled to Gjilan/Gnjilane town to do so. Twenty to thirty young people had also staged a small demonstration in Fushë/Livadje, intending to go to another K-Serb village to protest, but were easily dispersed. They "gave up" when local NGO staff told the crowd that Serbs were most probably armed, and that if anything happened they would start a conflict between the communities.[95]

As in other parts of Kosovo, Serbs in Drvar/Druror understood March 17 as a message to Serbs to leave Kosovo, that they "do not not belong to today's Kosovan society." IDP leaders report that March 17 was also a turning point in the return process; before March 17, they were pressured from Belgrade to push for return to Fushë/Livadje, but after the riots, the tables turned, and it was UNMIK that was applying pressure for return.

Did peacebuilding help? An analysis of impacts

Did the peacebuilding work in Fushë/Livadje help prevent violence in March, 2004? Community members made no direct connection between the two. It is possible, however, that agencies' support for local actors that did help restrain violence, and their

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[95] It is not clear why the protesters did not contemplate attacking Drvar/Druror, but another Serb village which is on the back route to Gjilan/Gnjilane; perhaps they did not want to provoke a roadblock and cut themselves off from Gjilan/Gnjilane town. Drvar/Druror residents learned only later about the attempted protest intended for the other K-Serb village.

work within each community, including political parties and war veterans, did facilitate restraint.

The political climate that prevailed *after* March 17-18 contributed to overcoming the stalemate in the dialogue – from the signing of the land agreements to increased contacts among youth and municipality support for returns. Within that environment, the peacebuilding work was credited by everyone we spoke with having contributed significantly to progress in Fushë/Livadje. Even those opposed to return and suspicious of the Focus Group had praise for the INGO's and the local NGOs' peacebuilding efforts.

At the same time, the effectiveness of the dialogue/peacebuilding effort, to date, is limited. Communication between K-Serbs and K-Albanians continues to be difficult, requiring organisation by the INGO, and while the dialogues do address key issues of conflict (return, land use), participants avoid discussing politics, because, as one staff member noted, "it *always* breeds severe arguments." As one participant commented: "Both sides have a mental blockage when they are asked to understand the arguments of the other." In addition, although the INGO made efforts to identify and engage key people, including families of war victims, more extreme youth and Drvar/Druror youth (non-IDP) did not participate; the groups comprised primarily those who were, in the words of one participant, "alternative" and "more open-minded." At the same time, many non-IDP residents of Drvar/Drurorresent their exclusion from the programme.

The dialogue through the Focus Group progressed better than previous dialogues, but may again be stymied. In 2005, the (reconstructed) fence surrounding the Serbian Orthodox church and graveyard in Fushë/Livadje was vandalised by what K-Albanians interviewees called "extremists." This provoked a strong reaction among K-Serbs. As one interviewee commented, "When they cannot accept the graveyard of our forefathers, i.e. the dead, how are they to accept us, the living, to return there". Some K-Serbs thus began to see the dialogues as a "waste of time, and there are still no conditions for return." In the words of the IDP leadership, "the situation regarding the return has not changed a bit. Not a single problem has been jointly solved." Since September, 2005, the Serbs decided they would not go back under "these" conditions. They demanded that the graveyard vandals be caught and punished before they will return to the dialogue.

Nonetheless, the municipality and the INGO hoped to begin returns in 2006, rebuilding twenty-five houses mainly in the two neighbourhoods in the centre of the village that had had the largest concentrations of Serbs. As a "balancing project" they would provide street lights and some agricultural mechanisation to increase the welfare of the villagers, something the youth in Fushë/Livadje especially have advocated for.

XIV. Resisting Violence in Klinë/Klina municipality

The municipality of Klinë/Klina is in west central Kosovo, on the edge of the Drenica region – one of the hardest hit regions during the 1998-99 war and the cradle of the KLA. Ujë/Voda, Avala/Avallë and Borac/Borishtë[96] are within 10 km northeast of Kline/Klina town. Ujë/Voda's population used to be 90% Muslim Albanian, 10% others (including 20 Serb families); now it is nearly entirely Muslim Albanians, with a few Catholic and Ashkali families. Borac/Borishtë is majority Serb, but 20% of its population are K-Albanians who returned to their part of the village immediately after the war, while Avala/Avallë is, and has been, nearly 100% mono-ethnic Serbian. While people have left the villages, there have been no newcomers for nearly a generation; the most recent arrival occurred more than 20 years ago

War and immediate post-war experience

Before 1990, K-Serbs noted that there were a number of cultural similarities and rituals. There was no multi-ethnic marriage, but people attended each other's celebrations and there were a lot of informal contacts. Whatever joined the communities appears to have been lost in the 1990s and in the 1998-1999 war. During the 1990s K-Albanians reported that house raids, beatings, tortures and detainments began. K-Serbs also apparently began leaving Avala/Avallëand other villages in the late 1990s as the KLA began making its presence known. One Avala/Avallëreturnee in 2002 claimed that 60% of the village had emigrated by the time the Serb police arrived in 1997.[97]

Klinë/Klina municipality as a whole was heavily affected by the fighting between the KLA and Serbian forces in 1998, especially in southern parts around the then KLA-held areas bordering Gjakove/Đakovica municipality and in eastern parts bordering Skenderaj/Srbica municipality. Ujë/Voda, Borac/Borishtë and Avala/Avallë were not spared violence; there were several reports of Serbian police shooting Albanian residents of Ujë/Voda,[98] and reports of gunfire in Borac/Borishtë and Avala/Avallë in June 1998, where apparently heavily-armed Serb forces had been deployed, and which appears to have been a staging ground for attacks on nearby villages of Tare and Skela.[99] Local residents and the Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms reported that local Serbs from Borac/Borishtë, Avala/Avallë and Ujë/Voda joined regular forces in attacking the villages in the area. The war experience was so harsh and accusations so grave that the communities seem to have grown worlds apart. In the Sub-Municipal Unit

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[96] The real names of all the villages and communities have been changed.
[97] RFE/RL, www.gvnews.net/htl/DailyNews/alert2175.html, Sept. 10, 2002.
[98] OSCE, *As Seen-As Told*, October 1998-June 1999.
[99] Kosova Daily Report #1468, 6/22/98.

of Ujë/Voda (in the villages of Ujë/Voda, Borac/Borishtë and Kërnicë), 29 were killed during the war, 4 missing and 23 wounded. Damage in the rural Klinë/Klina municipality was estimated to include 54% of the buildings, while damage to Klinë/Klina town was 30%.[100]

K-Albanians claimed that K-Serbs from Avala/Avallë commanded the police and territorial defense of the area, as well as the secret police, and committed atrocities and massacres against K-Albanians. One family in particular in the village of Ujë/Voda suffered greatly, with losses; a prominent family in Ujë/Voda lost many members, including teenage children, in the 1998 fighting.

Most of the K-Serbs in the area left during or immediately after the war in 1999. The post-war situation was one of fear or retaliation. The OSCE Mission reported:

> From witness statements it appeared that at least one member of the UCK [KLA] "police" took an active part in rounding up Kosovo Serbs from Ujë/Voda. These people subsequently disappeared. Known members of the UCK were also connected to intimidation of the Roma. Pervasive fear was evident everywhere.[101]

The entire village of Avala/Avallë was abandoned, and in October 1999, after the departure of the last Roma residents, the village was looted and burned. "The Roma had reportedly been 'hired' by a Kosovo Albanian gang to destroy the Kosovo Serb property. That done, the Kosovo Albanian gang then turned on the 'hired' Roma and threatened them with automatic weapons and stated that they now deserved the same treatment."[102] The general environment of intimidation prevented many people from giving statements or evidence.

Inter-ethnic relations and violence before 2004

Relations between the communities were tense, but there was no serious violence before March 2004, despite the fact that there are still large numbers of weapons in the area (and frequent KFOR raids). K-Serbs generally felt insecure because their villages are on the boundary of the Drenica valley, where the war started and was the cruelest. The majority of residents of Avala/Avallë and Borac/Borishtë did not move anywhere without a KFOR escort.

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[100] OSCE, *As Seen-As Told*, Part II, June 1999-October 1999, p. 47.

[101] OSCE, *As Seen-As Told*, Part II, p. 59.

[102] *Id.* at 61.

None of the 20 Serb families that had lived in Ujë/Voda returned, due to K-Albanian resistance. Klinë/Klina municipality, however, implemented the first *organised* returns to Avala/Avallë and Borac/Borishtë in 2002. This was met with strong resistance by Albanians from Ujë/Voda, who demanded that the local Serbs they accuse of war crimes – listed in the document presented to the government and UNMIK – be arrested and tried before they agree to have any contact with Serbs, no less support their return to their homes. A Go-and-See Visit organised by the UN and implemented by an NGO was met with protests and slogans that "Avala/Avallë has killed Albanians" and "There can be no welcome for criminals."

The village presidency compiled a document with the indictment against the perpetrators of the crimes and gave it to the UNMIK, the PISG, the Municipal Administrator, Municipal Assembly, Public Prosecutor, Courts, KPC, media, etc. The list presented no evidence implicating Avala/Avallë residents in war crimes, and the villagers did not appear to have pursued the matter with the KPS,[103] but they still suspect them of having participated in the war and atrocities. Some believed that the people of Avala/Avallë knew about the dead and missing. Most K-Serbs in the villages were not very willing to talk even to each other about the crimes of the past; they claimed they did not know who committed them, and that the criminals have not come back, while the K-Serbs are the victims of the Albanians.

The UN continued to insist on returns to Avala/Avallë and Borac/Borishtë returns over K-Albanian objections. This led to a very strained relationship with UNMIK, which, in turn, was quite surprised by the strong reaction of the villagers. The president of the village and the UNMIK Regional Returns Officer nearly ended in physical confrontation as the village president urged UNMIK to abort the visit and the returns. The Ujë/Voda president complained that he was denied the right of speech at a meeting of UNMIK, DRC and Klinë/Klina municipal assembly members; they silenced him because he was talking only about war crimes. UN staff, on the other hand, said they told the village leader that he had to take the list to the KPS along with supporting evidence, and that the list alone was not sufficient for action to be taken to stop the visit; if an initial police investigation found the claims should be pursued, it would be turned over to the UNMIK body responsible for this.

Ultimately, forty new houses in Avala/Avallë were built by a German NGO and the Serbian Government to house eighty returnees, and twenty-eight in Borac/Borishtë to house twenty-eight returning families. Fifty-one K-Serb families returned in June and

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[103] The villagers were told by UNMIK that they needed to take this matter to the KPS along with evidence of wrongdoing. It appears that they have not done this – perhaps, one person told us, because of a lack of faith in the system and a lack of understanding of how the system works. A case would nonetheless be quite difficult; it is unlikely that witnesses could be found who would be willing to testify.

September 2002 to the villages under heavy protection from KFOR, which established their base in Avala/Avallë after K-Serbs returned there. There was also a KFOR checkpoint in front of Borac/Borishtë.

The families of victims have been an especially strong voice against any contact or reconciliation with Avala/Avallë or Borac/Borishtë Serbs. Their mantra of keeping the memory of the dead alive and of fulfilling an obligation to the families of the dead to bring the Serbs who killed them to justice strongly influenced public opinion in Ujë/Voda, where the strength of the KLA veterans made people fear doing anything that could differentiate them from the rest of the community and make their lives difficult. In addition, with the status of war veterans unresolved, their families received no support, adding to the sense of grievance of the veterans and families of dead combatants.

K-Serb and K-Albanian political representatives have met twice a month in Klinë/Klina to discuss security and returnees, but Ujë/Voda villagers refuse to participate. Interviewees from Avala/Avallë and Borac/Borishtë say that these meetings take place with bitter debate. The topic of the missing and killed always dominates the meetings, and because of this "not a single issue was solved using joint forces." For the K-Serbs who returned, access to agricultural land was a particularly important issue and a source of tension with K-Albanians. Interviewees from both Serb villages reported that they did not cultivate their fields out of fear of attack by K-Albanians. K-Serbs, especially those from Borac/Borishtë, mentioned that when they tried to work their lands earlier they were cursed and attacked with stones. They also complained of thefts of cattle, tractors and other machinery. An Avala/Avallë resident reported his tractor was stolen; he found it in a stream not far from the house, broken. The same man reported that four of his bulls were driven away from the stable. He did eventually get all back, but as soon as he sells them, he said, he will no longer keep cattle, as "all this is too stressful." Avala/Avallë seems to have been an easy target, as the village is very spread out, and the houses are not close to each other; the man who was robbed lives at the far end of the village.

Borac/Borishtë Albanians countered that their cows were grazing the Serb lands left aside, not working or usurping Serb lands. They noted they had enough land to sustain themselves, and did not need Serb land. One international NGO did intervene in this situation to facilitate an agreement between the K-Albanian village council in Ujë/Voda and village councils in Avala/Avallë and Borac/Borishtë. This mediation resulted in the only document signed jointly by Serbs and Albanians in the villages: an agreement, signed days before the March 2004 riots, to confirm that K-Albanians were not usurping K-Serb-owned land and that K-Serbs would be able to work their land for the 2004 harvest. Nonetheless, Ujë/Voda villagers did not refer to this as an agreement, but as a condition for obtaining aid. The NGO had provided fertilizer to the villages as a response to this expression of good will, as they noted. When the K-Serbs received eight bags each, and the K-Albanians two bags (because there were more K-Albanians, and they received less per capita), the K-Albanians were not happy.

Divisions within the K-Serb community have contributed to the high level of tension and insecurity as well. There have been problems with the leadership in both Avala/Avallë and Borac/Borishtë.   Both villages had leaders more willing to engage with the international community and with the K-Albanians in the municipality; in both villages more extreme people have replaced them. In Borac/Borishtë, internal divisions have led to physical violence. One Klinë/Klina municipal employee was physically attacked and beaten up by the leader's family in September 2005, apparently in the presence of Italian KFOR who, she claims, prevented her and her husband from running away from her attackers.[104] Consequently, although after March 2004 the situation eased a bit, and Avala/Avallë residents reported that they went to Klinë/Klina town on a daily basis (in a van provided by the municipality) to shop and could walk freely in town, the villagers from Borac/Borishtë still had not done this. One non-resident commented that they still have an extremist leader who frightens them, telling them K-Albanians will attack them on the way. No one visits Ujë/Voda.

At the same time, some Serbs from report that some K-Albanians had tried to initiate informal contacts, but that they were very afraid of their own community's reaction. They said that K-Albanians, especially Albanian Catholics, with whom they felt they had better relations, sometimes visited K-Serb villages, but only in the dead of night when they could not be seen and when they needed to obtain documents from Serbia. "They came, and we exchanged phone numbers. Then they left quickly and said that it is better if we don't tell anyone about their visits," one K-Serb commented. Interviewees in Borac/Borishtë reported that K-Albanians used to supply a market with goods, but that this stopped recently, because, the interviewees supposed, they were afraid of their own community.

March 2004

While riots broke out all over Kosovo, in Ujë/Voda, Avala/Avallë and Borac/Borishtë, K-Serbs reported that they heard shots fired from the surrounding villages, but did not expect any attack, as they were unaware of what was going on in the other parts of Kosovo.

K-Albanians in Ujë/Voda, however, mobilised to stop the crowds. As KFOR prepared to evacuate the Avala/Avallë Serbs, crowds of protesters proceeded from Klinë/Klina town towards the two Serb villages. When they arrived at the centre of Ujë/Voda, a line of local leaders – including KPS members, important individuals such as KPC members, war veterans from the two veterans' organisations, and political activists – stood in front of them and stopped them from continuing to Avala/Avallë and Borac/Borishtë. The municipal leadership played a significant role as well. They were on the phone early on with the village leadership (something that surprised outsiders, given the history of non-

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[104] She is now trying to sue KFOR for this.

cooperation between the village and the municipality), and claimed they had infiltrated the crowds to make it easier to influence them to go back.

The veterans claimed they did this because they were afraid that the situation would have escalated; if a single rioter would have been shot, fighting would have broken out between KFOR and the people, who were still largely armed. The village presidency, who stood with the veterans, explained that they needed to fulfill "standards," which they saw as the only path to independence for Kosovo. K-Serbs also believed that the K-Albanians from Ujë/Voda stood up to the crowds not because they cared about the Serbs, but because they wanted to give a good impression of Kosovo to internationals.

K-Serbs were eventually evacuated by Italian KFOR during the night of 17/18 March: Avala/Avallë Serbs to the Italian KFOR base in Gjakove/Đakovica and Borac/Borishtë Serbs by helicopter to another village in the municipality. The President of the municipality had called on KFOR not to evacuate K-Serbs, as this would have left the villages vulnerable to destruction and looting, but the risk was perceived to be too large. K-Serbs remained at the KFOR bases eight days, until March 25.   When they came back, they discovered that one house in Avala/Avallë had been burned, and three badly damaged and looted, but the other houses were left untouched. The village leadership stopped any further destruction.   The Klinë/Klina mayor visited Avala/Avallë soon thereafter, and promised to reconstruct the four houses. A Serb returnee interviewed by the Humanitarian Law Centre after the events of March commented: "I think he really meant it."[105]

Peacebuilding activities: Little progress, little influence on violence

There were many efforts by the international community to engage the Ujë/Voda villagers and to build bridges between them and Avala/Avallë and Borac/Borishtë, but to 2005 they had yielded few results.

- In the reconstruction, an attempt was made to create bridges by having K-Albanians rebuild the Serb returnees' houses. Some K-Albanians did assist, but as the Ujë/Voda residents refused, K-Albanians were brought in from Rahovec/Orahovac. Villagers complained that the only real investment in their village occurred during the emergency phase of reconstruction, when a NGO rebuilt the kindergarten, the school, and rebuilt 61 damaged houses.[106] Because of sensitivity to reinforcing resentments regarding the amount of aid Serbian returnees are receiving, the NGO reconstructed a Bosniak house in Ujë/Voda as a "balancing project."

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[105] HLC, *March 2004: Ethnic Violence in Kosovo*, July 2004, p. 49.
[106] Interestingly, the NGO that rebuilt the kindergarten describes its project as a peace education project, but this aspect of the project is not mentioned by any of the people that were interviewed.

- An NGO attempted to reopen the candle and wax factory in the village of Novište with a multi-ethnic workforce. Two women from Borac/Borishtë went to the factory when it was opened; they reported having received 100 Euros and never set foot again in the factory. The women did not feel safe traveling to the factory, and no transport was provided. The factory ultimately closed; most people we talked to believed it was not productive.

- A similar project was initiated by a Danish organisation in Ujë/Voda. The agreement was to involve Serbs in a milk factory, including as deputy director of the factory. The Ujë/Voda villagers believed he was not appropriate and did not allow the Serb to go to the factory. Ultimately, like the candle factory, this factory proved to be not viable economically; there were insufficient numbers of cows in the area, and prices for milk were too low. The factory was moved to Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje seven months later.

- A project sought to connect K-Serbs in the villages with Klinë/Klina town. An aid organisation gave flour for breadmaking, and the community was expected to make bread. With UN urging, a few local bakeries in Klinë/Klina had expressed willingness to deal with K-Serbs at the time, and for a few months, the bakery in Klinë/Klina town delivered bread to the K-Serbs. However, they were under pressure, and all connections stopped.

The most sustained effort was a dialogue initiative by an international NGO that tried to bring Serbs and Albanians from the villages together for dialogue forty times. The agreement on land use did come out of this effort, but K-Albanians from Ujë/Voda rejected any other engagement, despite the fact that the NGO has engaged very influential and credible Albanians to persuade the K-Albanians to participate. According to the NGO, the youth showed some interest in participating, but were prevented from doing so by the elders. Ujë/Voda residents participated in Kosovo-wide multi-ethnic seminars and were willing to talk with representatives of other Serbian communities (or in the case of the youth, play football in a tournament with Serbs and Albanians from Fushë/Livadje), but not with Avala/Avallë and Borac/Borishtë Serbs. By 2005, the NGO was planning to give up further attempts to establish dialogue in these villages.

The K-Albanian community saw most of the efforts by internationals to encourage the communities to cooperate and talk with each other as coercive and unwanted conditioning. They praised one NGO's project that brought electricity to parts of the village and helped improve the existing distribution network. This was one of the few projects, they commented, in which inter-ethnic cooperation was not a condition.

XV. Contradicting History: Absence of Violence in Pejë/Pec municipality

Dom/Dhomi[107] is a Serbian village in the Pejë/Pec municipality, the western-most region in Kosovo. It is seen as one of the more hard-line regions. Although the minority population is significantly less than prior to the war, the municipality currently has a minority population of about 10%, mostly non-Serb. The majority of the K-Serb population lives in Dom/Dhomi, a nearly mono-ethnic enclave with about nine hundred inhabitants, including six Albanian and two Roma families. A KFOR base is located at the entrance to the village. Joint patrols operate from the KPS station, and there is a UNMIK police sub-station located at the centre of the village.

Lying to the east are six previously mixed population villages that are now mono-ethnic K-Albanian with about 1600 people. Brum, the first village after Dom/Dhomi to the southeast, is home to the primary school (grades 1-9) as well as the largest shop and the only petrol station in the subunit.[108] The shop cum petrol station is a space to gather for people of Brum and in times of trouble for the other villages as well. Many of the Brum residents' land abuts Dom/Dhomi land, with each ethnic group working side-by-side on property with a mutual fence line or border. Devon is the next village located further down the road from Brum. It is smaller than its neighbour and is important for local Serbs and Albanians alike because it hosts an NGO-sponsored agricultural co-operative.

Before Milosevic rose to power, Dom/Dhomi and the six neighbouring villages were organised into an unofficial, territorial community with an inter-ethnic village council that managed local affairs. After the 1999 war ended, UNMIK decided to build on the notion of this unofficial organisational structure and created an official subunit consisting of Dom/Dhomi and the six neighbouring villages.

War and immediate post-war experience

The experience of the 1999 war for the members was unique in that there was a very low death toll for Albanians with 2- 4 lives lost. This was attributed to the fact that there was no KLA in the subunit. The villages refused to be armed by them because before 1999, they were mixed and people were very connected to their Serb neighbours. Every second or third house was owned by a Serb family and there were many instances of inter-ethnic godparents. People also believed there would be nowhere to escape when attacked by

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[107] The real names of all the villages and communities have been changed.
[108] The other four villages at the end of the subunit have their own primary school through grade 4.

Serb security forces as there were Serb villages surrounding the area.[109] The two furthest villages, Ram and Haraq, suffered more during the war. Ram had one of the highest death tolls in all of Kosovo, all from one incident in May 1999, when masked Serb policemen entered the village at seven in the morning and killed 51 men.

In 1999, 95% of the Albanian villagers fled, returning later to find their homes destroyed and their livelihoods stolen. K-Albanians report that when they returned, they found fewer than four of the 400 cattle that they had had in the subunit before the war. They blamed Serbs in general, though in some instances specifically named K-Serb neighbours and policemen as perpetrators.

All but fifty of the K-Serb inhabitants of Dom/Dhomi moved to Serbia and abroad. Those who stayed behind guarded the village against the Albanian paramilitary units of KLA that operated in the area. At the time, nineteen inhabitants of Dom/Dhomi were reportedly killed in KLA ambushes and bomb explosions, and one Albanian from the area was reported missing. The Albanian community claims that Dom/Dhomi was a headquarters of paramilitaries during the war.

Shortly after the war ended, K-Serb inhabitants of Dom/Dhomi who had left during the war returned to the village. Local Serbs argued that their return indicated they were not "guilty", that is, that they were not involved in war crimes against Albanians in the region: "I have done nothing wrong, so I have nothing to fear", many said.

In addition, about one hundred Serbs (especially teachers, doctors and nurses) who used to work and live in the cities also moved to the village. They relocated, they explain, because their apartments had been taken over by K-Albanians, they had lost their jobs, and they were concerned about safety in the cities. In many cases, these K-Serb professionals relocated to the village alone with the purpose of financially supporting close family members that joined existing relatives in parts of Serbia outside Kosovo.

The enclave was protected after the war by KFOR. Nonetheless, K-Serbs recall that between 1999 and 2000 over two hundred missiles were fired into Dom/Dhomi with a mortar. On August 13, 1999, one woman died and at least one more suffered injuries. Because of the kind of attack, i.e. with mortars, many K-Serbs suspect that K-Albanians from neighbouring villages were involved. The frequency of mortar fire, and also the fact that the perpetrators remained at large, perpetuated fear and distress among K-Serbs.

Inter-ethnic relations and violence to 2004

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[109] It should be noted, however, that the KLA headquarters for the area was in a nearby village of Lloxha.

K-Serb inhabitants of Dom/Dhomi claimed that social interactions with Albanians from neighbouring villages used to take place before the 1999 war; people played football together and visited with each other. After the war, K-Serbs said, communication across ethnic borders diminished significantly because of the Albanian national policy that prohibits K-Albanian individuals from contacting K-Serbs. K-Albanians whose friendships with K-Serbs in Dom/Dhomi predated the 1999 war visited their friends but only at home and in the evening so that other K-Albanians, mainly extremists opposed to the presence of Serbs in Kosovo, did not see them. In town, K-Serbs reported that K-Albanians would speak with them in an office (for example, in meetings initiated by UNMIK or KFOR), but never in the street, and would never go out with K-Serb friends to a café or restaurant. Business and trade across ethnic borders, such as selling groceries to K-Serbs or purchasing cattle from K-Serbs, did take place in public and in broad daylight in Dom/Dhomi, but most interactions, even business transactions, took place at night or in secret.

At the same time, there is significant pressure within the K-Serb community to refrain from contact with K-Albanians. K-Serbs who *initiated* activities across ethnic borders were often stigmatised by other members of their ethnic community as "spies" (*spiuni*). Those who *participated* were not necessarily stigmatised as such since participation in inter-ethic activities is oftentimes interpreted as a unique way to make some profit, acquire new skills or travel outside Serbia.

For most K-Serbs in Dom/Dhomi, daily life did not resemble peace. They underlined that fear regarding movement outside the village should be seen in the context of acts of violence perpetrated by Albanian individuals. K-Serb insecurity is heightened by a history of significant incidents of inter-ethnic violence in Dom/Dhomi. For example, in April 2003, an Albanian man in a vehicle with the initials KEK (Kosovo Electricity Company) pulled in the village, and stabbed a Serb man with a screwdriver.[110] Although he was caught and punished, most inhabitants of Dom/Dhomi argued that the punishment should have been harsher to discourage K-Albanians from harassing Serbs in the future. The brutality of the attack and the perceived mild punishment raised K-Serb doubts about the willingness of ordinary K-Albanians and officials to integrate K-Serbs in present-day Kosovo.

In August of that same year, K-Albanians shot K-Serb children who were swimming in the river Reka. About one hundred shots were allegedly fired at the children; two died and four were severely wounded. Many K-Albanians referred to the deaths of the

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[110] K-Albanians explained that the Albanian man in the KEK truck was a bill collector who was assigned to collect bill payments from a Serb judge who resided in the enclave of Dom/Dhomi. The Serb swore at the bill collector in response to the request for payment and in reaction KEK employee stabbed him in the face with a screwdriver in the middle of the village. The bill collector received a year long sentence for assault.

children with remorse. One individual said "this incident affected everyone in Kosovo". The village presidents and two Serb representatives met and jointly denounced the murders. KFOR immediately closed the road that runs through Dom/Dhomi and kept it closed for 40 days. This caused tremendous hardship for K-Albanians traveling outside the subunit.

Until then, most Dom/Dhomi Serbs had thought they were safe, but felt after the incident that the safety situation in the area remained extremely volatile, especially as the municipal leadership of Pejë/Peć did not explicitly condemn the violence and instead tried to excuse it by referring to past incidents of ethnic violence.

K-Albanians from the 6 villages were also victims of inter-ethnic violence. Again in 2003, a Brum resident received a severe head wound from a large stone thrown at his car when driving through Dom/Dhomi. These April events caused great fear in all six villages, as "an incident in Dom/Dhomi affects all of us".

Besides the major incidents of violence, K-Serbs complained of acts of intimidation and provocation that occur regularly, such as swearing, loud nationalist music, victory signs, and spitting as K-Albanians drove through the enclave. Stoning of the bus that takes Serbs to Mitrovica (in KFOR presence) was also frequent. K-Serbs believed K-Albanians engaged in such acts out of hatred in order to kill them or frighten them off and turn Dom/Dhomi into an Albanian village. K-Albanians dismissed these incidents as insignificant, but also countered that their experience was similar; stoning, swearing and insults too were a concern for K-Albanians driving through the enclave and created fear.

As a result, K-Serbs' sense of insecurity has remained high. Most locals who owned cars, even with Kosovo registration plates (KS), said that they *could* get out of the village but there was absolutely no guarantee regarding their safety since K-Albanians could recognise them from their faces. As a local K-Serb put it, "you can get out of the village one hundred times but maybe the hundred and first you get killed." Those (mainly men) who were willing to take the risk pretended they are not Serbs but Bosniaks who spoke Serbian when traveling to Pejë/Pec town.

Land usurpation created tension and resentment in K-Serbs. After the 1999 war ended, K-Albanians appropriated the land surrounding Dom/Dhomi that used to belong to Serb inhabitants of the village. Many locals argued that they were the legal owners of fields but could not visit, let alone cultivate, them because they were afraid of K-Albanians. The latter allegedly destroyed the fields: cut trees down, made holes on the ground, and dug up the fine soil and sold it; in addition, they threatened to kill Serbs who dare to take legal action against them. Although KPS and municipal authorities reported and fined violators, K-Serbs complained, the behavior did not change.

K-Albanians countered that less than half of the K-Serb owned land in both villages (Haraq and Ram) had been sold, with the remainder lying idle, leased to K-Albanians or

traded for other land with people from Dom/Dhomi. They acknowledged that immediately after the war (1999-2000) there had been some illegal use of Serb land, but it had stopped, and the land was under the control of the police which also oversaw the work of the gravel company to which K-Serbs had leased the land.

Since the war, the majority of K-Albanians felt the situation had improved significantly. A few of the interviewees made statements like, "there is no fear [of Serbs] or tension now." Any remnants of intimidation were carried out by teenage boys. K-Albanians could not afford to alienate the K-Serb enclave, they noted, as the Serbs would retaliate by closing the road. The KFOR representative agreed; there was no longer any intimidation. When asked if a cute Serb woman walked through Brum a group of young men responded that there would be no problem if they went and spoke to her. However, they all felt that their friends and family would give them a hard time if they did so. One older man listening to the conversation interjected that the young men would be called traitors by the community.

March 2004 and post-March relations

On March 17, 2004, a few hundred individuals of Albanian ethnic background gathered at the centre of Pejë/ Pec and, using megaphones, urged Albanians to go to the villages of Dom/Dhomi and Faron and attack all Serbs. Thereafter they proceeded to Faron where they set houses of Serbs on fire. Some locals reckoned that their village was about to be attacked because Albanians fired shots at the wall of the school building and attacked KFOR soldiers near the base before KFOR stopped them. Soon, rumors spread in the village that about two thousand Albanians were on their way to assail Dom/Dhomi. Afraid that their village would be under attack and overwhelmed by the fact that they could not escape, the heads of families gathered at the centre of the village.

Violence, however, did not come to Dom/Dhomi and the surrounding villages. UNMIK was extremely concerned about the course of developments. The KFOR checkpoint, the KFOR military base and the KPS substation in Dom/Dhomi all prepared for the worst: police and army forces flooded into the centre of the village and KFOR suggested that villagers go inside the military base for maximum protection. Despite deep political divisions between those following Belgrade's line and those willing to work with UNMIK structures, both rival leaders —the (UNMIK) municipal liaison and the mayor of the village – were against the suggestion of KFOR, albeit for slightly different reasons.[111] Both political figures appealed to people to keep calm and not to react or provoke.

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[111] For the former, people should stay home as a way of deterring rioters from occupying property, while for the latter people should stay home to give rioters a picture of resolution on the part of Serbs to stay and fight. Defense seemed the best strategy for the first leader and his followers; the second leader and his followers were ready for the possibility of attack against Albanian invaders.

In the K-Albanian villages, men and youth (all male) of the villages of Devon and Brum spontaneously gathered at the petrol station to discuss what was happening and gather more information. Many were scared they were going to be attacked by the Serbs, particularly as the most distant houses within the village of Brum lie within 100 meters of the border of Dom/Dhomi.

After many hours, the subunit representative returned from Pejë/Pec. He had been there on business and returned home promptly upon hearing on the radio that there was "big trouble brewing in Dom/Dhomi." Despite KFOR and the Serb villagers' concern, traffic was permitted to pass through the enclave throughout March 17 and 18. He told the group that there had been no trouble at all and that there was no need to do anything

The people gathered at the station returned home. Simultaneously the local leadership in Devon was also working to keep things calm. They went out in the village and, as they met people, quietly told them to stay calm and not act against Dom/Dhomi, because if something started it would get out of control.

People offered a number of explanations for why no violence occurred in Dom/Dhomi, even as the houses in Faron, the other K-Serb enclave, burned down. First, for most K-Serbs and K-Albanians, the heavy KFOR presence played a significant role. After a police officer shot and killed a former KLA leader as demonstrators were attacking Faron, Dom/Dhomi residents were also assured that UNMIK was ready to interfere.

A few K-Serbs (usually those with ethnically mixed heritage) pointed to the goodwill of Albanians from neighbouring villages. Others were more sceptical and suggested that it was in the interest of K-Albanians to keep the main road open for travel. In this context, several people mentioned that the uninterrupted flow of traffic deterred violence, since K-Albanians driving on the main road through Dom/Dhomi could see the heavily armed KFOR units that UNMIK had brought in. Some K-Serbs believed Dom/Dhomi was not an easy village to attack due to its large size and small population; K-Albanians, some K-Serbs argued, were only interested in forcing large populations of Serbs out of their homes. Finally, for a few locals (mainly pro-Belgrade), the resolution of K-Serbs to stay put and protect their village acted as a deterrent to violence.

Many K-Albanians agreed with K-Serb explanations. They had the sense that Albanians could not afford to provoke the Serbs of Dom/Dhomi. One man stated "Albanians are very careful when they travel now [so as] to not provoke them [Serbs]." One resident of Brum surmised that the villagers did not attack the Serb enclave due to the potential consequences. He said, "If the road was closed for 40 days due to the kids death in 2003 what would happen to them if the enclave was attacked?"

Finally, few of the spokespeople of local NGOs referred to their programmes and activities (such as conferences and children's excursions) that allow people to cooperate

and build up trust in each other. One women active in an NGO project stated, "Joint projects have decreased tension."

After March 2004, tensions decreased significantly. The Municipal Working Group on Returns, which had had a rocky history, started to meet monthly with the Municipal President as chair. The atmosphere became more relaxed, and issues that had previously caused walk-outs were handled constructively. Several international officials attributed the about-face in attitude to political pressure from Prishtina.

K-Serbs attributed the relative calmness to the ongoing evaluation of the democratic standards in Kosovo. From their viewpoint, K-Albanians demonstrated "proper" behavior, and were careful not to engage in provocations and intimidations in order to generate a false picture of peace. K-Albanians also underlined the importance of European standards. In a story typical of those we heard from K-Albanians from all the villages in the subunit, a group of young men explained that if a Serb had walked into the subunit in the years immediately following the war it would have been perceived as a provocation and insult and they would have reacted aggressively. They felt this would no longer occur because Kosovo was becoming more European and the importance of future membership in the European Union.

K-Serbs remained wary of the sustainability of these improvements. Dom/Dhomi residents gauged that they would probably be safe temporarily until the end of the year 2005 when the international community makes a decision on the future of Kosovo but were uncertain regarding their long-term safety in the village.

Peacebuilding activities and results

When asked about peace-building activities in the village, most K-Serbs replied that there were not any. While acknowledging the existence of inter-ethnic projects to bring K-Serbs and K-Albanians together, they underlined that they did not regard them as "peace-building" because there was no concrete effect on daily life: provocations and intimidations still loomed large in daily life.

K-Albanians broadly shared this feeling, reporting no or few peacebuilding projects. Most were attributed to KFOR, which, according to K-Albanians, organised a dialogue as early as 1999 between the head of the subunit, one Serb from Dom/Dhomi, KFOR and UNMIK. The K-Albanian representative accepted the invitation because K-Albanians were scared to drive through Dom/Dhomi. Despite his apprehensions about potential negative reactions from the community, he accepted, and the majority supported his involvement in these meetings so that practical things could be negotiated and tensions could be decreased. In 2002, UNMIK recreated the village council for the subunit and expanded the dialogue to involve the leaders of all the villages. They convened meetings

in the KFOR base at the entrance of Dom/Dhomi to discuss and decide on matters of common concern (e.g., safety, irrigation, and sewage, etc.).[112]   K-Serbs reported that KFOR put an end to the meetings of the village council without explaining why in the spring of 2004. Some locals suggested that KFOR possibly decided against inviting the K-Albanian village leaders back because it discerned no concrete effect on inter-ethnic cooperation.

KFOR also organised trips abroad for children of both communities. Youth also participated in inter-ethnic sports tournaments in other parts of Kosovo.   KFOR representatives noted that "the youth are more open minded than older people since the older people have seen more." One K-Albanian man stated that "KFOR helped the softening of inter-ethnic relations and nobody else. Others made indirect efforts but with little success."

Some NGO-supported projects were mentioned. Spokespeople for a K-Serb women's NGO and a youth organisation described their activities as geared toward ethnic reconciliation and cooperation, what they saw as the stepping stones for peacebuilding. Specifically, a youth NGO was active in the organisation of seminars, debates and summer camps, activities in which people of different ethnic backgrounds throughout the Balkans take part. An inter-ethnic youth group supported by an INGO (and connected to the OSCE-sponsored Pejë/Pec Youth Network) was formed and met, first separately, and then together. The goal of the youth groups was to make young leaders in the community who can cooperate and will explain to others in their community that it is not a problem to live together. There were generally twelve active participants at one time and staff estimated that 100 youth had been involved since the inception. Two youth involved with the project indicated that there was some fear in being seen to promote inter-ethnic activities. For one participant, their family was concerned that something would happen due to the involvement, while the other agreed that there can be a sense of threat though they had not heard of anything actually happening to someone.

The youth groups did several small projects, and the high demand for cooperative projects between the youth groups meant that there were many visits between Devon and Dom/Dhomi. The youth wanted to set up a joint internet café when we met them and planned to cooperate to implement the idea.

The women's NGO provided a forum for Serb women from Dom/Dhomi and Albanian women from three villages not far from Dom/Dhomi to come together, and knit and crochet. The INGO brought them together with K-Albanian women from the villages surrounding Dom/Dhomi. One staff person indicated that the women participants had stronger pre-war relationships and so the group had a stronger set of friendships holding it together than either the men or the youth groups. Apparently the women were easier to

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[112] There are differing views about who took the initiative to convene these meetings, KFOR or UNMIK.

work with because they were not directly involved in the war.[113] After two years of mono-ethnic meetings, they met together and decided that by working together, they could access local and international funds to support the establishment of a bakery that would benefit both communities. One of the INGO staff commented that one can not separate the economic incentive from the desire to cooperate between communities. "They are connected issues and one can never know which one is motivating participation in cooperative projects."

Finally, an agricultural cooperative initiated by an INGO in 2003 was mentioned by a few K-Albanian community members as a peacebuilding project. The timing worked well as it overlapped with the decline in KFOR dialogue efforts. The coop has 11 board members, 7 K-Albanians and 4 K-Serbs. The director is an Albanian and the manager is a Serb. In the process of setting up the centre for one meeting the K-Albanians traveled to Dom/Dhomi with only NGO staff and no escort because they wanted to show that escorts were not needed.

According to one leader in Dom/Dhomi, it was difficult to convince residents of the enclave to participate in the dialogue process that resulted in the cooperative because local people were not interested in participating in inter-ethnic activities unless there were immediate economic benefits. There were a few extremists in the enclave, he added, who were also actively against the project. The same sentiment was expressed by some of the Albanian leadership in the subunit.

The cooperative had its origins in a men's group led by an INGO. The majority of the men involved had agricultural backgrounds, so the staff decided that an agricultural focus would be best. With this common focus the process aimed to create a joint working environment to decrease the sense that the two communities can not cooperate.

For 1.5 years the Albanian men's group, consisting of 12 members, met every Friday with the INGO to prepare for joint meetings. They discussed the possibility of joint work, dialogue, priorities, and acceptable and unacceptable dialogue topics. Seven were selected by the broader group to represent them in joint meetings. The staff did not know when the first joint meeting would finally take place. The cooperative resulted from the joint meetings. Funding was raised to purchase equipment, which was subsequently split between the K-Albanian and K-Serb members. As each had their own equipment and drivers, little to no interaction occurred.   As one farmer stated, "being a member of the coop does not mean he has to work with Serbs, they are only on the board."

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[113] That said, one of the Serb women participants was a member of the family of one of the children killed in 2003. After this incident the woman did not want to participate in any cooperation projects and so she no longer came to the meetings.

A broadly similar process appears to have been utilised for all three groups. To begin the process informal meetings over coffee offering the opportunity for the NGO to establish credibility and for relationships to begin were hosted. Trainings and dialogue sessions then started and ran concurrently depending on the needs of the situation and group.

In determining the dialogue topics for each of the groups (men, women and youth) the INGO staff maintained that there was no need to discuss tragedies, as everyone knew what had happened. For the women and men, the topics that were not permitted to be discussed were agreed formally in a signed memorandum. Both agreed that war consequences and politics were off limits. The INGO conditioned continuation of the meetings on all sides' signed the document so that tension could be avoided. The staff believed that if they dialogued on these sensitive topics they would never get a result.

What were the results of all these efforts? The NGO staff interviewed felt there had been big changes over the past few years in these communities. They indicated that some K-Albanians passing through Dom/Dhomi stopped and talked to the Serbs that they know in the village. Other NGO staff maintained that two years ago participants would agree to dialogue only if there were immediate financial benefits as a result, or, on the K-Serb side if they had freedom of movement, but that had changed by the end of 2004. The biggest success was getting the joint groups working together. Three years ago the Albanians were scared to meet with Serbs because they might be seen as traitors by other Albanians, but now were meeting regularly.

Some K-Serb local residents commented that the few dialogue projects run by international NGOs did not address political issues and other issues of concern to Dom/Dhomi inhabitants. They did, however, appreciate the efforts of international NGOs that facilitated daily life in the enclave by bringing them things they need from town. Sentiment on the inter-ethnic value of the agricultural cooperative also seemed mixed. Some said that it was initiated purely for economic development of the area, while others believed that it had helped foster better inter-ethnic relations.

Several shortcomings community members identified may have limited the impacts of these activities. Many people claimed that INGO activities were generally short-lived because the INGOs tended to leave shortly after they began work – e.g., a kindergarten that helped children "deal with their anger with Serbs for throwing them out of their homes," that closed after three years when the municipality stopped paying the costs, several women's groups focused on development that shut down due to lack of funding. Other efforts did not seem to reach the residents of the subunit adequately. One international official commented that NGO activities had focused too much on returnees, and consequently did not affect many people or deal with other issues in need of attention. Local radio programming and print media that covered events and NGO activities promoting inter-ethnic cooperation have been overshadowed by Serbian media that highlights violence against K-Serbs. Finally, one INGO staff commented that dialogue participants get bored because they have been through the trainings already, and

in the youth initiative in particular, it is not clear how many K-Serbs participate. After the killing of the three children in 2003, it appears only one Serb youth attended meetings.

Many positive efforts also had negative impacts on inter-ethnic relations in their implementation. KFOR, for example, came to be seen more negatively. The fact that they had hired approximately 60 local K-Serb staff greatly upset K-Albanians. It was not widely known that KFOR had approached the representative of the local community about splitting these jobs equally between both communities and had not found people willing to work side-by-side with Serbs. When people changed their minds months later, it was too late. Similarly, KFOR promised that they would bring water to all of the six villages, but only ended up taking the pipeline to the petrol station in Brum. The residents then had to finance the extension themselves. This reinforced the perception that K-Serbs get all the benefits from the international community. A few people have gone so far as to say that when KFOR failed to deliver on promises, they could no longer force people to cooperate with each other. From the K-Serb side, similar negative impacts also occur. The Agency for Finance in Kosovo, (AFK), a spin-off of an internationally-sponsored micro-credit programme, had given no loans to K-Serbs, despite having a bonus programme for loan officers to encourage them to sign up minorities. The staff of AFK had not gone to Dom/Dhomi because they were concerned that the loans would not be successful in a small and isolated village, and they would not be paid back. This fed K-Serb complaints that the lack of freedom of movement increased the financial burdens and made daily life more difficult.

Conclusion

Did peacebuilding activities prevent violence in March 2004 in Dom/Dhomi? Perhaps they helped indirectly to moderate both K-Serb and K-Albanian reactiveness during the March 2004 crisis. The evidence suggests that practical considerations – the desire to avoid physical harm, the need to maintain transport routes outside of the subunit, and later the desire to demonstrate conditions for independence – were the most significant motivations constraining K-Albanians from violence, and while there have been some improvements in relationships between some K-Serbs and K-Albanians in the area, in general high levels of tension and hostility remain.

This case study raises some important issues concerning what could facilitate bridge-building and transformation in the relations. First, official reassurance that efforts to establish inter-ethnic cooperation will not jeopardise, but will instead cherish, Serbian identity, language and culture appears to be important for the sincere endorsement of such efforts on the part of Serbs. For most Serbs in Dom/Dhomi, the terms "peacebuilding" and "inter-ethnic cooperation" that INGOs and municipal authorities often use to refer to their activities were seen to justify the status quo that reportedly prevents K-Serbs from living in Pejë/Peć and enables K-Albanians to engage in

provocations. K-Serbs were clear about what would help create a sustainable future for them in Kosovo. These included measures such as bringing perpetrators of crimes against K-Serbs to justice and more generally acknowledging the seriousness of violence against K-Serbs; enforcing equality of all people in the face of the law; allowing K-Serbs to access and use their farmland around the village and creating employment opportunities.

Second, an interesting contradiction between the sentiment that hope lies with the young and the fact that the youth have never had positive relations with the "other" and do not speak the other's language or befriended a member of the other community. Many K-Albanians commented that young people had never experienced positive interaction with K-Serbs, as older people had decades before. "My grandchildren only know that Serbs burned their houses and sent them away," one man described.

Third, significant sources of fear and resentment remain unaddressed. K-Serbs mentioned the need to bring perpetrators of crimes against K-Serbs to justice, enforce equality before the law, allow K-Serbs access to their farmland, and more generally create employment opportunities as significant conditions for a sustainable existence in Kosovo. K-Albanians emphasised the previous discrimination and violence that Albanians suffered at the hands of Serbs, perceived favouritism of the international community towards K-Serbs and resentment that the Albanian community is receiving nothing to improve conditions of daily life and livelihoods while the Serbs get everything, and the disrespect that Serb communities showed the new Kosovo institutions.

Finally, there were a number of references to ways of controlling people such as KFOR controlled residents through promises of infrastructure. The perception of control, whether real or perceived, should be considered by NGOs who are offering benefits when they consider who and why participants are attending peacebuilding functions. If the participants perceive the interaction to be NGOs controlling them through economic benefits the authenticity of the relationship is questionable.

XVI. Managing Tension in Štrpce/Shtërpcë municipality

Štrpce/Shtërpcë is one of two K-Serbian majority municipalities in the Gjilan/Gnjilane region (along with Novo Brdo/Novobërdë), and one of five Kosovo-wide. It comprises 16 villages; before the conflict, eight were K-Serb, four K-Albanian and four mixed. The population is estimated at 13,600, of which 70% are Serbs, and 30% Albanians (and a small percentage of Roma). There is also a significant IDP population located in four collective centres in Brezovica/Brezovice and private lodging. The municipality is known for the Brezovica ski resort, which has attracted international, K-Serb and K-Albanian guests. Brezovica is also a preferred site for multi-ethnic dialogues and trainings conducted as part of peacebuilding programmes.

Since 2002, when K-Serbs participated in local elections, the Municipal Assembly has been comprised of 13 K-Serbian and four K-Albanian members. A coalition of moderate Serb parties held a majority in the Municipal Assembly, despite the fact that in the 2004 Serbian presidential election, the Radical Party (SPS) won nearly 75% of the vote in Štrpce/Shtërpcë. There was also a K-Albanian Deputy municipal president. Citizens' political initiatives gained support and were amply represented in the Municipal Assembly, suggesting that local concerns were as important as larger political interests.

The two villages included in this case study are located to the north of Štrpce/Shtërpcë town. They were both mixed villages before the war. Although they are not near each other, they used to be close as communities, as they were linked by the road, the school and other services which they shared. Their economy was based on animal husbandry before the war. After the war, K-Albanians had no animals, and although they received a few animals as assistance from NGOs, they said this was far from sufficient. K-Serbs too reported that animal husbandry had stagnated, because cattle were stolen either from their own property or when shepherds took them out to graze. K-Serbs we interviewed emphasised that they did not suspect "their Albanians" (i.e., their neighbours) of cattle theft, but rather K-Albanians from Prizren and Suhareke/Suva Reka.

400 K-Serb residents in 79 houses, and 300 K-Albanian residents in 68 (reconstructed) houses lived in Butan.[114] K-Serbs complained that before the war there were only 30 K-Albanian houses, and that more were being built for K-Albanians; it seems that family members who previously had lived together applied separately for reconstruction assistance. K-Albanians noted that the houses being rebuilt were significantly smaller than what they had had before the war. Nearly two kilometres separated the Serb neighbourhood (Provin) and the Albanian part of Butan, and the populations were quite

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[114] The real names of all the villages and communities have been changed.

segregated. Three K-Serb families had lived in the Albanian part of the village before the war, but only one remained afterwards.[115]

Boksic/Bokaj had 250 K-Serb residents in 70 houses and 30 K-Albanian families with 184 members. A small stream separated the Serbian and Albanian parts of the village. The divide was not rigid, however; several parts of the village were mixed. The community has been quite stable, in the sense that the families have been living there for many generations; with the exception of returnees who had fled the war, the last family to move to Boksic/Bokaj had come over 20 years.

The K-Albanian community in Boksic/Bokaj was more divided politically than in Butan, yet this "mild intolerance for political affiliation," as one villager called it, did not escalate into confrontation or violence, as in other parts of Kosovo. Even in cases of disagreement between the LDK and PDK, people still respected the decision of the majority. For example, when the LDK representative ousted the PDK appointed leader of the community in an election at a meeting he called without previous publicity, the result was accepted by all, including the PDK representatives.

War and immediate post-war experience

K-Serbs talked very little about the experience of the villages during the 1998-99 war, except to mention that Butan had high KLA membership and that Serbian Special Forces expelled them and burned their houses due to the high numbers of KLA fighters there. K-Albanians from Butan, unlike their kin in Boksic/Bokaj, had at least one family member in the KLA, and many had joined fighters from Tejec/Tegel. Many continued to be members of the veterans' association in Ferizaj/Urosevac, though there was no association in Butan or Boksic/Bokaj.

The war experience of the villages here is pieced together mostly from our interviews with K-Albanians. Butan and Boksic/Bokaj suffered less in the 1998-1999 war than other parts of Kosovo. As happened in many places, K-Albanians were expelled from both villages; in September 1998. In both villages K-Albanian houses were looted and burned; no houses in either village survived without damage. Albanian villagers attribute the violence to "outsider" paramilitaries, although one person commented that they were wearing masks, and it was possible that Serb villagers were part of the group that expelled them. However, there were no missing people and only two people were killed – one a KLA soldier, and the other someone trying to escape a burning haystack.

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[115] This family had a very good relationship with their neighbours, and indeed received help from the Albanian villagers in rebuilding their house; Albanians from the village gave material as they cleaned the rubble from their houses, and helped to rebuild the road to the Serbian house.

Most of the K-Albanian families moved into empty apartments in Ferizaj/Urosevac and to the mixed villages of Cernje/Cërv and Kovac/Kovq when they returned. At the same time K-Serb families left for Serbia proper or for Serbian-majority areas, including Štrpce/Shtërpcë. K-Albanian families did not return to Boksic/Bokaj until May 2002.

Inter-community relations and violence: 2002 to present

The return of K-Albanians to both villages has been the focal point of tension. K-Albanian returns to Boksic/Bokaj in 2002 were spontaneous, triggered (according to KFOR) by humanitarian problems in Ferizaj/Urosevac, by debt accumulated by IDPs, and by the lack of availability of houses and apartments in Ferizaj/Urosevac town. There was organised Serb resistance to these returns. Serbs had allowed Albanian IDPs to come to the village to clean their houses and leave in the evening, but when the K-Albanian heads of household decided to remain and sleep in the village, K-Serbs went to their houses to protest. The Albanians, frightened, phoned the authorities of Ferizaj/Urosevac, prompting KFOR to send in two helicopters. In the meanwhile, Albanian elders moved to the front of the crowd, pushing younger men back in order to prevent escalation of violence. When the helicopters arrived, the crowd dispersed. K-Albanians permanently returned with their families in 2003.

In Butan a "spontaneous organised return" driven by UNHCR took place in 2003 and also met with K-Serb resistance. There was a stand-off at the entrance to the village (by the school) when K-Serbs blocked the road, putting women and children at the front. They protested for two days and two nights, with 60 KFOR vehicles present, as one K-Serb village leader told us. This villager feared the return would endanger them, due to the K-Albanians' militant past. Other Serbian news accounts cited one local member of the K-Serb Return Coalition's explanation for the resistance: "We are not opposed to the return of Albanians, but we demand the reciprocal return of displaced Serbs."[116]

According to some K-Albanian interviewees, the returnees' show of commitment moved the situation to resolution. K-Albanians we talked with believed that a bonfire they had lit that evening indicated to the K-Serbs that they were committed to return, and would not turn back. K-Serbs came forward spontaneously with a proposal for an agreement of mutual protection: K-Serbs would not oppose K-Albanian return, and K-Albanians would protect K-Serbs from attacks from other K-Albanians. This mutual protection refers to K-Serb fears of attacks (especially if something had happened to any Albanian) from the nearby village over the the mountain in Suhareke/Suva Reka municipality, which had strong support for and involvement in the KLA during the war.

K-Albanians also believed that internationals exerted pressure on the K-Serbs, and may have promised to work for K-Serb return to Ferizaj/Urosevac. K-Serbs reported that they

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[116] ERP KIM Newsletter, 23-05-03.

were "promised a lot of infrastructure for the village and better living conditions." The Serb leadership in the village saw (and sees) acceptance of K-Albanian return as key to the community's ability to obtain donations for infrastructure and as necessary for a better life for Serbs in the area. In addition, if they were tolerant vis-à-vis K-Albanians, K-Albanians too would be tolerant with K-Serbs. But, the Serb village leader says, many promises were not implemented, as the people who had promised the benefits were replaced by others who were "not sensitive" to their pleas. He was therefore quite aggressive with NGOs, the UN, and other international representatives.

Once the agreement was signed and K-Albanians began to return, the villagers accepted the returnees. There were even some claims that K-Serbs used their own tractors to help returning K-Albanians move into their houses, as the bridge to Butan was too narrow for the UNHCR trucks.

Initially after their return, K-Albanians kept some distance from K-Serbs because of the damage they had inflicted (burned houses and stolen livestock). But this did not last long, according to nearly all people we talked with, and relations improved greatly. There was little or no physical violence; the only form of intimidation was verbal (e.g., swearing at people while they are passing by, shouts from cars and some defacing of ethnic symbols.[117] Nonetheless, K-Serbs still felt insecure, especially outside of Štrpce/Shtërpcë. After a shepherd was found dead (under "suspicious circumstances" as KFOR stated) outside the village of Garip after disappearing while tending his cow, Serbs were afraid to take their cattle to pasture.[118]

Relations in the Municipal Working Group (for return) were good. K-Serb and K-Albanian representatives from return sites met with international representatives (NGOs, UNHCR, UNDP, UNMIK, KFOR) to discuss common problems, primarily infrastructure. People described the atmosphere between the communities in these meetings as "tolerant." According to one municipal official, this was because both communities had tolerant leaders. K-Serb leadership from Butan also noted that they needed to find donors ready to invest in the village, and they knew that "environments in which returnees are accepted are always in a position to get an infrastructural donation or two for themselves." At the same time, no K-Serb from Butan had agreed to work for UN institutions or KFOR, and the villagers were very proud of that.

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[117] For example, Serbs in Butan took down Albanian-language signs. In return, Albanians took down signs in Serbian in the Albanian part of the village.

[118] The shepherd disappeared while tending his cow, and was found five days later outside the village of Garip, apparently beaten to death in June 2000. This incident prompted a riot by Serbs angry after KFOR peacekeepers refused Serbs' request for a helicopter to search for the elderly farmer. Over 500 Serbs subsequently mounted a peaceful demonstration before the UN police station.

While the communities co-existed peacefully in both villages, there was more interaction in Boksic/Bokaj than in Butan. In Boksic/Bokaj Serbs and Albanians helped each other in the fields and borrowed equipment from each other, as they did before the war. K-Serbs and K-Albanians supplied and shopped in each other's shops, as well as in the main market in Štrpce/Shtërpcë town. As a K-Albanian teacher (a PDK member) commented: "I was stupid. I was being careful. I went to the market and saw lots of Albanians selling. It was stupid to be so stand-offish."

There was even some significant social contact in Boksic/Bokaj. People started to visit each other's homes – reviving old friendships from before the war. They were, however, still cautious about this, and preferred secret places or nighttime for visits. Nonetheless, we saw and heard of more public interaction than in many other parts of Kosovo. In Boksic/Bokaj, both Albanians and Serbs walked together the "corso," a 150 meter strip between the road and the bridge, though some people said that K-Serbs walked on one side of the road and K-Albanians on the other. We saw K-Serbs greet K-Albanian villagers in Albanian on the streets, and K-Albanians respond in Serb.

In Butan, relations were colder and more distant. Nonetheless, even in Butan, people claimed that relations had improved with time. People started to meet in the one shop (in Provin, owned by a Serb) and drink beer. In both Butan and Boksic/Bokaj, people emphasised that they never spoke of politics "because we always fight when we do."

March 2004

The violence of March, 2004 did not reach Boksic/Bokaj and Butan, except for some shouting. K-Serbs from the villages believed that violence was avoided because there were a lot of Serbs, and it was not easy to attack them. K-Albanian members of the municipal government had asked the Albanian villagers to be vigilant and not do anything that could start violence. K-Albanians in the village said the local news they watched was quite moderate, but that the Belgrade-based RTS had reported that Albanians had killed three people in nearby Kovac/Kovq, and was sounding the alarm that an attack on Boksic/Bokaj and Butan was imminent.

K-Serbs in Boksic/Bokaj watched to see what K-Albanians would do; if K-Albanians stayed, they thought, this was a sign that nothing bad would happen. Panic began when they saw K-Albanians leaving the villages. In town, municipal employees knew something was afoot because K-Albanian co-workers seemed nervous and left before the end of the working day. Some K-Albanians called their Serbian friends in Butan to warn that something bad might happen. Some K-Serbs from Boksic/Bokaj went to Štrpce/Shtërpcë (where there is a large Serb population that could defend itself), and K-Serbs from the village organised a guard around the village, as they did not trust that KFOR or KPS would protect them. KFOR evacuated K-Albanians from Butan.

Despite the minimal violence, the events of March 2004 profoundly affected people psychologically, and seriously harmed inter-ethnic relations. The municipal assembly and other municipal bodies ceased functioning, as Serbs asked for decentralisation and division of the municipality, while Albanians asked to restore the previous state. Serbs serving in the KPS refused to work with their Albanian colleagues. This effective boycott lasted one month, and after the UN threatened suspension if they did not return to work, it ended. Although tensions have subsided since then, people from both communities have felt more insecure and uncertain. Small incidents provoked inter-ethnic tension. In one incident, a Boksic/Bokaj resident said, the KPS was patrolling the villages and came to his home to ask if everything was fine. The villager (Albanian) felt this was a provocation, since the police had become mono-ethnic Serb at the time. In another incident, when the water distribution system in Butan, funded and constructed by an NGO to supply both the Albanian and Serbian population in the area,[119] broke down, K-Serbs accused K-Albanians of turning off the tap.

A more serious instance of confrontation in the two villages occurred several months later, in September, 2004. As the school year was beginning, K-Albanians from the villages sought to have their children go to school in the one school that previously served both villages (and both ethnicities). K-Serb parents refused to accept the K-Albanian children. They said they feared children would (or could) be manipulated by adults to fight. K-Albanians from the villages, parents and children, came to the school and attempted to force their way in.

A similar incident had occurred over ten years earlier, when, in 1992, K-Albanians were told to vacate the school that they and K-Serb children from both villages attended together, in accordance with orders from Belgrade. Unlike in many other parts of Kosovo, this only lasted for one semester. After the K-Albanian deputy director of the school had insisted that K-Albanian students return to the school, the K-Serb director did not oppose K-Albanians using the school in a separate shift (even though he was aware that the K-Albanian deputy was using the stamp of the "Republic of Kosovo" for the documents).

As in 1992, the situation also did not escalate further, but in 2004 it was resolved differently. With the help of the UNMIK administrator, and KFOR, OSCE and KPS who were also on the scene, the situation was diffused when the K-Albanian group was told that the municipality was prepared to build two small schools (one in each village) for K-Albanian children. The municipal assembly voted to have the K-Albanian students attend a private school in Butan in the meanwhile. Interestingly, all K-Serb municipal assembly members voted for the decision, while four K-Albanian members opposed it. The school in Butan opened for 31 students in January, 2005. US KFOR donated three

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[119] Serbs from Butan had initially refused to participate, and the project was done without them. The catch base and reservoir were located in the Albanian part of the village.

mini-buses to Štrpce/Shtërpcë municipality to transport students to the school from Boksic/Bokaj.

Peacebuilding programming: Challenges and missed opportunities

The two activities identified as peacebuilding in the villages were a KFOR-organised football match and an NGO-organised dialogue programme in Butan. KFOR was the first to organise football games between youth from the neighbouring municipality of Kacanik and Štrpce/Shtërpcë at the one field accessible to both K-Albanians and K-Serbs in Boksic/Bokaj. This led youth from Boksic/Bokaj regularly to organise sports games together without any assistance. Parents (mostly Serb) said they were nervous about their children participating in matches, because they were afraid of possible fights, but they did not forbid their children from going. And indeed, no fights broke out, and the games – mostly Serbs vs. Albanians – have been played normally.

The NGO programme in Butan brought K-Serb residents and K-Albanian returnees together for dialogue in connection with the returns and reconstruction programme being implemented by UN agencies and INGO partners there. The dialogue faced several obstacles. The process in Butan "happened backwards," as one agency staff member commented; dialogue should have happened first, not a year after reconstruction had started. The agency implementing reconstruction provided unconditional assistance (irrespective of whether beneficiaries cooperated with the other side), while the NGO facilitating dialogue, in order to discourage participation in dialogue solely for the "goodies," offered to help find assistance for community infrastructural priorities only after there was real cooperation across ethnicities. As a result, K-Serb residents immediately asked for assistance from the NGO as a reward for agreeing to participate in the dialogue, and when the NGO did not accept the condition, they obstructed the dialogue.[120]

Nonetheless, the dialogue progressed. Nine months after Butan K-Serbs pulled out of the dialogue process, K-Serb youth, disregarding their leaders, entered into dialogue with their K-Albanian counterparts and came together in the summer of 2005. Several K-Serb youth from Butan had attended a multi-ethnic youth camp with youth from other areas of Kosovo and decided to meet after they saw youth from other parts of Kosovo cooperating with each other. At the first meeting in August 2005, K-Serbs and K-Albanians did not communicate directly with each other, but they did shake hands with each other at the end of the meeting; NGO staff noted that in other places where they had facilitated this

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[120] In addition, because dialogue started well into the reconstruction process, it was driven by and focused on the technical aspects of the reconstruction. As a result, agency staff believed, it was less effective in addressing the relationship and common interests of the community.

kind of dialogue, K-Serbs and K-Albanians had had conversations for over a year before shaking hands.

The dialogue process facilitated by the NGO also appears to have been helpful in diffusing tensions that had arisen due to the failure of the water supply system. The NGO convened a meeting for local villagers, NGOs involved with the water supply system and municipal representatives to discuss the water system and K-Serb accusations that K-Albanians had purposely cut off supply to Serbs. The meeting brought to light that the municipality's failure to maintain the system caused it to break down.[121]

Aside from these two programmes, assistance activity has been focused on (and in) returns and reconstruction in both villages, where there has been considerable activity by the UN and several INGOs. The returns process in Butan was driven from outside and encountered problems that heightened tensions. Staff of the implementing agency noted that the "reality of partial funding imposed on the returns site of Butan not only failed to address the multi-sectoral approach, but also created tensions and confusions among beneficiaries." The tensions stemmed from a number of implementation decisions and practices.

The phasing of funding created considerable tension among beneficiaries, as they had to prioritise who would get assistance in 2003 and who would have to wait until 2004. K-Serbs refused to support a list of K-Serb beneficiaries, insisting on assistance for all, or none. Second, as mentioned earlier, K-Serbs complained that the reconstruction resulted in 50 more houses than had existed prior to the war. It appears that some K-Albanians in the village understood the tension and took the initiative themselves to request reconstruction of the house of a Serbian neighbour (situated in the Albanian part of the village) that had nearly been destroyed. Still, even in the reconstruction of the three K-Serb homes, a villager said, assistance was not given to the poorest, but to "those who had some strings to pull." K-Serbs also felt "international NGOs take a lot of money for the peacebuilding programmes they give for communities, but all things they construct are of very bad quality.[122]

There is a question whether opportunities to support genuine peacebuilding efforts were missed. In Boksic/Bokaj, where the communities were more ready for dialogue, an effort to build a youth centre, initiated by the youth of Boksic/Bokaj, had hoped for funding from an INGO, but the effort failed because they could not find a proper place for the

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[121] The municipal representative who had signed the document with the NGO obligating the municipality to maintain the system after it was built apparently put the agreement in a drawer and forgot about it; no other municipal authorities knew about it. Upon learning this, the municipality assumed the responsibility of maintenance.

[122] Albanians, too, complained about the quality of construction in these programmes, but did not accuse the internationals of stealing money.

centre, and the municipality told them there was no suitable public property into which the centre could go. The municipality also blocked implementation of two priorities identified in the NGO-facilitated dialogue in Butan: a community health station and a milk purchasing station. The two projects had also been discussed extensively in the Municipal Working Group.[123] Although the INGO facilitating the dialogue was prepared to help the community obtain funding for these projects, neither came through, as the municipality rejected the proposal or did not follow up on implementation. One wonders whether further engagement by international agencies or INGOs with the municipality to remove obstacles might have provided an impetus for more robust peacebuilding in the villages. Similarly, the readiness of the international community to support separate infrastructure and social services for K-Serbs and K-Albanians in the villages may have undermined a significant opportunity to negotiate a less segregated arrangement building on historical capacities for peace and patterns of negotiation.

Conclusion

Compared with other areas, relations are more relaxed in these villages. Yet in many ways the situation in Boksic/Bokaj and Butan does not differ from that in other parts of Kosovo. K-Serbs, although prepared to accept Albanian returns after initial resistance, are less positive or favourable to integration than the Albanians. Many K-Serbs felt that especially after the March 2004 riots, K-Serbs and K-Albanians could live "side by side" but not together. International organisation staff (NGO and UNMIK) agreed and commented that, as in other areas of Kosovo, the communities participated in dialogue because of the benefits, not because of a desire to improve relations. Some also believed that the K-Serb hardline attitude was a tactical move to pressure the international community to give them more. One incident reflects what we saw more generally in the villages. While we were talking to a group of K-Serbs in a café by the road in Štrpce/Shtërpcë town, an Albanian wedding procession passed by with flags and a loud siren. K-Serbs commented that they did not mind the wedding passing by their neighbourhood, but where dissatisfied because a Serbian wedding could not move through Ferizaj/Urosevac.

At least among some K-Serbs, the hardline attitude may be real; when asked what might be done that could help in the future, many responded: return of Serbian military and police forces, freedom of movement, return to jobs where they worked. Most K-Serbs we spoke to were quite practical; they saw that cooperation and coexistence (but not integration) would benefit both their security and their quality of life in Štrpce/Shtërpcë, and they looked to future decentralisation as the key to their survival in the area.

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[123] Boksic/Bokaj villagers do not participate to Municipal Working Group meetings, UN staff note, perhaps because, with a successful returns process having occurred spontaneously, the village is no longer interested in return-oriented donors.

With the very specific conditions and coexistence that exists in the two villages, and to a large extent in Štrpce/Shtërpcë municipality as a whole, the rare but high-profile murders that have occurred in the municipality generated a lot of fear and concern. The level of inter-ethnic violence may be low, but only a few dramatic incidents are needed to maintain fear and further radicalise the Serb community.

XVII. Less Tension, More Violence? The Paradox of Gjilan/Gnjilane Town

Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality is located 47 km southeast of Pristina in a fertile area with good agricultural conditions. Before 1999, Gjilan/Gnjilane town had a population of about 45,000, with about 13,000-15,000 Serbs and nearly 5,000 Roma.[124] Since 1999, the K-Albanian population of the town has nearly doubled, with people from rural areas moving to town, while the K-Serb and Roma population diminished. By 2004, 200 Serbs and about 350 Roma lived in town; these figures declined further after March 17, 2004, when people fled the violence.

This population growth put tremendous pressure on public services, schools and healthcare in particular. The five primary schools in town worked in three shifts to be able to accommodate the overall number of students. The director of one of the schools said that "instead of working with 600 pupils we are working with 3000." Teachers said that not all that finish primary education continued to secondary because of lack of space.

War and immediate post-war experience

Gjilan/Gnjilane as a municipality suffered less just before and during the war. The OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission noted that, "it is difficult to give a specific reason for the relatively calm situation in Gnjilane during the pre-deployment and deployment period." They surmised that due to the relatively high proportion of Serbs (10-30%) and the presence of many mono-ethnic Serbian villages, the KLA had difficulties penetrating the area through their normal method of using rural areas as a base. The municipality was also far from KLA weapons supply routes.

In 1998-1999, the OSCE KVM assessed that in Gjilan/Gnjilane "the Kosovo Albanian population was affected mainly by discrimination in administrative matters, in education, work, health and social welfare provision, and also in regard to violation of the rights to free expression and association."[125] There was sporadic violence in town, which increased from the middle of April 1999, including frequent raids on houses, extortion and robbery by various Serb forces. The forced expulsion carried out elsewhere in

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[124] The Gjilan/Gnjilane Roma claim over 7,000 Roma lived there before 1999. *Kosovo Roma Oral Histories Project,* http://www.csdbalkans.org/roma/gnjilane.shtml (accessed January 15, 2006). According to the OSCE, there were 4,825. OSCE, *Kosovo/Kosova As Seen, As Told Part II (14 June – 31 October 1999)*, p. 27.

[125] *Id.*, p. 1.

Kosovo also occurred in Gjilan/Gnjilane, although the physical destruction from the war was not as great.

Post-war violence was widespread and intense. Unlike in other parts of Kosovo, K-Serbs in Gjilan/Gnjilane did not leave with the Yugoslav army, and consequently became the target of revenge. When the OSCE returned to Gjilan/Gnjilane on 20 June, only one house in the town had been destroyed. By the end of October 280 houses had been burned or destroyed, 150 belonging to Serbs and 130 to Roma families.[126] Most K-Serbs and Roma left the town, leaving only 1,300 Serbs by 2000. Fighting in 2001 in the Presevo Valley in Southern Serbia also caused about 8,000 IDPs to come to the area, while 65,000 Macedonians came across the border to escape fighting there. Minorities (Serbs especially) experienced a surge of violence during that time.

As a result of the post-war violence, most K-Serbs in Gjilan/Gnjilane sold their property. Some moved to mono-ethnic Serbian villages just out of town (such as Silovo), while others went to Serbia proper. Those K-Serbs who remained were mostly elderly, living in a ghetto with little freedom of movement. According to the K-Serb leadership, they had stayed to sell their property and move to the villages, as living in the villages was easier than in town. KFOR set up checkpoints at vulnerable points in town in order to protect minorities. K-Serbs did not feel comfortable sharing the town market with Albanians, so they created a small market near the church, to which villagers came (initially bused by UNHCR) to sell their produce twice a week. An "improvised" school, clinic, shop and café were also created there and still exist.

Post-war inter-community relations and violence: 2002 - 2005

Despite statistics that suggest that Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality has one of the highest levels of inter-ethnic violence, it has been considered by locals, other Kosovans and internationals alike to be one of the "best" places in terms of inter-ethnic relations. People said they felt safer there than in other municipalities.[127] In one K-Albanian interviewee's words, there was "tolerance here that does not exist elsewhere." K-Serbs agreed that the

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[126] *Id. See also* ICG, *Return to Uncertainty: Kosovo's Internally Displaced and the Return Process*, Balkans Report No. 139, 13 December 2002, p. 14.

[127] The (admittedly not fully reliable) statistics on inter-ethnic violence point to a more complicated picture. In the 2002-2005 timeframe, Gjilan/Gnjilane emerges consistently as having one of the *highest* incidences of inter-ethnic violence in Kosovo, both on the basis of total incidents and incidents per capita. It saw a significant decrease in inter-ethnic violence in 2003, but still remained amongst the highest in Kosovo. At the same time, the nature of inter-ethnic violence appears to have shifted over the 2002-2004 timeframe: intimidation and assault, the predominant form of IEV in Gjilan/Gnjilane, decreased while property-related crimes (property and theft) increased. A KPS officer interviewed also noted this trend, commenting that ethnically-*motivated* incidents were rare, as inter-ethnic crime more often involves stealing or criminal damages.

situation in Gjilan/Gnjilane regarding freedom of movement for Serbs "is the best in all Kosovo."

Most K-Albanians, and some KFOR interviewees, believed there was little inter-ethnic violence before March 2004. There were few intimidations, people said, and no crime against K-Serbs; K-Serbs complaints were of K-Albanians not speaking to them or of "dirty looks" or swearing from drunken people. The implication was that these should not really be seen as inter-ethnic. K-Albanian interviewees emphasised improvements in freedom of movement, as evidenced by K-Serbs moving freely through the town, and coming to the centre of town to shop, collect pensions or take necessary documents from the municipality. One interviewee underlined how the situation in Gjilan/Gnjilane had changed. He remembered a 2001 incident in which an old Serb with a traditional Serb hat (sajkaca) was walking through the centre of the town, and young Albanian boys had topped it off his head onto the ground. This, he said, could not happen anymore, as people had become used to seeing them in the town, and there was no reason for fear.

People attributed this good climate to a number of factors:

- Connectors binding the communities in Gjilan/Gnjilane were stronger than in other parts of Kosovo because socially and economically, Gjilan/Gnjilane, and Presevo and Bujanovac in south Serbia, had more in common with each other than with other parts of Kosovo. The presence of a significant Albanian community in Southern Serbia, and constant travel and trade by both Albanians and Serbs across the border was also a factor.

- The Albanian leadership in the municipality proactively reached out to minorities. K-Albanians consistently mentioned the role of the former municipal president, who became Minister for Local Government in 2004, in promoting good relations in Gjilan/Gnjilane. Described as inclusive and open (by K-Albanians especially), he was seen to have negotiated actively and invited Serbs to join in municipal structures from the time he was elected in 2002, when he chose a K-Serb as his deputy. One person noted that he went to places where minorities lived without the prodding of the international community. The police in the municipality also made efforts to reach out to minorities. Gjilan/Gnjilane station was one of the first in Kosovo to introduce ethnically mixed KPS patrols, and the station was handed over to the KPS in autumn of 2003. The Regional Police Station in Gjilan/Gnjilane was also the first in Kosovo to be transferred from International Police to KPS in March 2005, and the first to be headed by a K-Serb (who assumed duties as Regional Commander in September 2005). In 2005, the percentage of K-Serb police officers was twice their proportion of the population in the municipality (19% of the force, compared to 8% of the population). The presence of a larger number of Serb police officers reportedly made K-Serbs more comfortable with KPS.

- Although Gjilan/Gnjilane municipal officials opposed the parallel structures, there was a silent, informal agreement between the municipal and parallel institutions to coexist. K-Serbs openly worked in both the parallel structures and municipal institutions. For example, principals of schools were appointed by the municipal coordinator, but were also senior staff of the CCK; the local community officer himself was CCK as well. One person noted that the municipal president felt he could work with the parallel structures because they were not a security threat, except in Silovo; Serbian security forces were not present in Gjilan/Gnjilane as they were in other places. At the same time, K-Serb leaders in Gjilan/Gnjilane underlined that they maintained contact with "all representatives of power structures in Gnjilane" and saw their functions as "help[ing] the Gnjilane Serbian community exercise their rights as citizens of Kosovo" by mediating between the community and the institutions.

- There was a broad consensus on the need to coexist. Although both K-Albanians and K-Serbs said that the other is subject to intimidation by their own community for cooperating with the other, they all noted that their own community was not extreme and was accepting of the need to cooperate. K-Albanians commented on the small number of extreme youth in Gjilan/Gnjilane. K-Serbs underlined that they understood that they depended on K-Albanians and saw their position realistically, expecting less and less from Belgrade as time goes on. The Council for the Serbian Community, whose leadership was neither part of the parallel institutions nor the UNMIK structures, was highly respected. The Council helped citizens obtain documents, find and distribute aid for education and healthcare, and was highly regarded by Serbs in Gjilan/Gnjilane as open, helpful in solving problems, and accessible.[128]

- There have been many opportunities to do inter-ethnic activities. One young person noted that the majority of her friends were involved in multi-ethnic activities organised by NGOs. Many people were working together in the municipality and in NGOs. "If there were no NGOs," one participant in multi-ethnic trainings said, "things would be very different in Gjilan town. There would be no communication and people would not be as close as they are now."

Despite these positive factors, K-Serbs' sense of insecurity remained high. The K-Serb leadership noted that 60% of the attacks Serbs experience on people or property are not reported, because people fear that the situation will become worse and bring on more attacks. K-Serb leaders also believed that "attacks are not taken seriously in the police. They are just registered and no one tries to solve these cases; not one such case has been resolved." What creates a sense of insecurity, several Serbs noted, is "the fact that no one is held responsible for ethnically motivated crimes." It did not help, another person noted, that the Serb KPS Commander was attacked shortly after he assumed his position.

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[128] The leader of the Council owned a store in Gjilan/Gnjilane near the multi-ethnic market. He was there every day, so that K-Serbs coming to town for any business could stop in and meet him.

The lack of trust vis-à-vis the police, one interviewee noted, was not unique to K-Serbs; it was shared by Albanians.

The sense of insecurity led K-Serbs to move as little as possible. K-Serbs said they felt secure in the central zone of town (near the Serbian Orthodox church) because it was in the KFOR "red zone" – where KFOR is authorised to fire immediately in case of unrest. They shunned inter-ethnic situations, as they felt vulnerable, spoke Serbian quietly in the streets, if they spoke at all, so as to remain inconspicuous (even if this is difficult as people who have lived in the town all their lives were known). They would shop outside the centre only if they had to, but would not go to cafes, restaurants, cinemas, theatres and other venues of social life. Urban areas have been considered more difficult than rural areas in the region; with some exceptions, people still used the UNHCR bus to come from the villages to market in the town twice a week. Other places in the region, local and international staff of an international agency noted, were more inter-ethnic than Gjilan/Gnjilane town.

The higher level of interaction in Gjilan/Gnjilane was also highly circumscribed. The same people who said there were "no problems to meet up with anyone" also said they did not keep private or informal contacts outside organised multi-ethnic activities. Some phoned their friends from the other ethnicity, but did not meet unless an NGO or international agency organised activities. K-Serbs noted that there were "rules of engagement" similar to those in other parts of Kosovo: contacts for personal interest were permitted, but not for friendship or non-economic cooperation. This is in part because, they said, K-Albanians had a "policy" of ignoring, or not communicating with Serbs. As one international agency staff member observed, K-Serbs and K-Albanian who remained friends would speak to each other on the street if they were alone, but would pretend not to know each other if others were around. K-Serbs argued that their friends were intimidated by "radical structures" in their own community and told them they could no longer come to have coffee with them "because they will be punished by their community." Most Albanians we spoke to denied this is the case, but some who participated for a long time in multi-ethnic activities said they were "threatened" by their community "almost constantly" before March 2004. K-Albanians noted the same thing about their K-Serb friends and colleagues; "when you speak to one Serb and when you speak to two it is completely different. They are afraid of one another." Like K-Albanians, some Serbs who are participating in organised multi-ethnic activities reported they were accused of "collaboration with Albanians" or criticized by their community when something bad happened ("see what your friends have done to us?").

Violence in March 2004

March 17 in Gjilan/Gnjilane began as a normal day. It was market day in the multi-ethnic market. The media then did what one K-Albanian called "the worst thing:" In the late morning, one of the three national media reported that from the whole region, only in Gjilan/Gnjilane was nothing happening, i.e. people were not protesting. This made

people take to the streets, starting with primary school children. An UNMIK official said that a peaceful demonstration took place outside the Ministry of Education to protest the current conditions and problems, such as unemployment. No one had expected it to become violent; there had been two or three demonstrations prior to March 2004 and they had all been peaceful. Serbs in the market also said that although some people had seen groups of K-Albanians with "national symbols" and speakers wearing KLA emblems the day before, they had seen no crowd at the previous rally and did not expect anything would happen.

The demonstrators moved to a new location downtown (near the K-Serb neighbourhood and church), one interviewee said, and this is when violence began. The violence, he continued, was organised. All the windows in the UNMIK municipal building were broken, and two or three cars burned in the square. Demonstrators burned UNMIK vehicles and Serb cars, even those with "KS" plates. "There were no mistakes," one K-Serb said. "Not a single vehicle owned by an Albanian was burnt down." K-Serbs who were in the market said they saw individuals among the demonstrators signaling which cars and houses to attack. The houses reportedly were "first pelted with stones brought to the scene in a tractor with trailer, after which the demonstrators stormed into the houses, beat the people inside, and stole and broke furniture and other belongings."[129]

The mayor went out to try to stop people before the violence broke out, as did the leader of the PDK in Gjilan/Gnjilane, but, according to one interviewee, "people would not listen to any of them at all." The municipal leaders failed in part because the demonstrators (and the violence) moved from place to place in town, and it was hard to get the demonstrators' attention. This, according to several interviewees, also made it difficult for KPS and KFOR to stop the demonstrators.

Nonetheless, several people, including a KFOR interviewee, noted that the KPC took the initiative to protect the Orthodox Church in the centre of town. [130] The KPC positioned itself near the exit of town near the bus station and tried to prevent the crowds from entering town, but the demonstrators broke the barricade. They also helped KFOR disperse the crowds – effectively, as a KFOR officer noted, because "they are war heroes [and] the people listened to them."

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[129] *Ibid.*

[130] There are conflicting accounts of how the KPC came to play this role. Some people said that KFOR, which had been patrolling outside of town, came back in time to prevent the burning of the church, deploying eventually 10 troops to guard the church. The ICG report (*Collapse in Kosovo*, Report. No. 155, 22 April 2004, p. 23) also notes that KPC was "detailed to guard the Serb Orthodox church." KFOR representatives say it was the TMK general's initiative; TMK was not invited by KFOR to protect the church. Serbs said they "heard of this [TMK protecting church with help of KFOR] but do not think it is true."

All in all, over 20 Serbs, mainly elderly, were beaten, and one person, a schoolteacher, was killed. Eighteen Serb-owned houses were burned, seventy houses looted and severely damaged, while 20 Serb-owned and a number of UNMIK vehicles were destroyed.[131] There was, however, no violence in the surrounding (Serb) villages, including the largest, Silovo/Shillovë. According to one person, this was because "the municipality had asked the people and the whole human potential was activated to stop violence." Another noted that the crowds "couldn't" because they did not dare to attack such a high concentration of Serbs.

The bulk of the demonstrators, nearly all people agreed, were young people, with some "criminals involved," as one youth put it. K-Serb witnesses said that "kids" (15–16 year-olds) were in the front lines with bags of stones they threw at Serbs, or at the windows of houses and cars. Behind them were individuals "with Molotov cocktails who burnt down Serbian houses." K-Albanians and internationals we interviewed agreed. "Things changed quickly, and it was mostly students and young people out on the streets". A KFOR officer blamed teachers: "March was done by kids and told by teachers to go out and do it."[132] Youth, one Albanian teacher commented, were angry and frustrated with the institutions because they wanted jobs, and they saw the institutions as doing nothing.

K-Serbs, and a number of internationals, believed that the motivation behind the violence was to cleanse Gjilan/Gnjilane of Serbs. An international staff person noted that the violence in town was about keeping urban areas "pure", while rural areas tolerated return and multi-ethnicity. A K-Albanian interviewee, however, attributed the high level of violence to the changed population – specifically, the large numbers of current residents who were not native to Gjilan/Gnjilane before 1999.

Nonetheless, nearly everyone interviewed brought up instances of K-Albanians helping K-Serbs during the March riots, but, as one K-Albanian interviewee noted, these were individual cases. One K-Albanian saved the house of his K-Serb neighbour but telling the crowd that he had bought the house from the K-Serb. A common story was that Albanians told the crowds that the Serb in a house they were attacking "was a good man." However, according to some internationals and K-Serbs, the K-Albanians who did protect their Serb friends "do not want this information spread as they are scared of the consequences." A K-Serb interviewee said the Albanian who had helped him was beaten up "by extremists" and warned not to "do such things" anymore.

In some ways, despite the severity of the violence, relations quickly returned to their pre-March level and in some cases better. Both K-Serbs and K-Albanians reported that since

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[131] Humanitarian Law Centre, *March 2004: Ethnic Violence in Kosovo.* July 2004, p. 36.
[132] A leader in the Serb community broadly agrees on the role of the education system in promoting hatred. He noted that the "greatest danger" lies in the teachers who hold extreme nationalist views and disseminate them to their students.

March 2004 there was no inter-ethnic violence – although Serbs noted that "constant harassment" continued in the form of cursing and humiliation. K-Albanians involved in multi-ethnic activities noted that they no longer received threats from their own community. Progress was also made in the prosecution of crimes related to the March violence.

However, while all 19 houses destroyed during the March riots have been rebuilt, only two families (elderly) returned.[133] A latent fear of a recurrence of violence remains. K-Serbs took the message from March that they are not welcome, and prepared themselves to leave in the event of a crisis. One family, for example, placed their more valuable business assets in a safe location when former Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj was indicted in case unrest forced them to flee and their business was looted. Serbs were moving freely, one international commented, but "in limited areas and with fear."

Peacebuilding programming and activities

Gjilan/Gnjilane has had a great deal of peacebuilding programming since very early on after the war. Consequently, there were many agencies and programmes, international and local, in Gjilan/Gnjilane, and, having begun much earlier than in other places in Kosovo, they were more developed than in other parts of Kosovo. Gjilan/Gnjilane town was where most agencies had offices to service the entire Gjilan/Gnjilane region. Some of these agencies did not have programming specifically in town, but brought people from villages to town for activities, or joint technical training programmes. The funds for these kinds of projects, the agencies claim, were not very big, and have become "all but nonexistent" now. The focus is much more on physical returns.

We could not talk with all the myriad organisations that are doing work in Gjilan/Gnjilane, nor did we capture all programmes that involved some people from Gjilan/Gnjilane but were Kosovo-wide. We talked with some of the more long-term established agencies in town that focused their activities in town (even if participants were not just from town).

Multi-ethnic training, in conflict resolution as well as technical topics or skills (e.g., proposal writing, advocacy, elections), and social and cultural activities comprised the bulk of peacebuilding programming in Gjilan/Gnjilane. One local NGO, for example organised youth conferences, youth camps in Macedonia, training of trainers for youth, multi-ethnic sports events (such as a football tournament at the US KFOR base, Camp Monteith, in connection with a local NGO from Fushë/Livadje) with Albanian and Serb

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[133] The mayor claims that return has become a problem because the IDPs are being "cared for" by Belgrade. Others note that the people who suffered most during March are those most reluctant to return, and that there are further complaints about the quality and extent of rebuilding. Some families are requesting reimbursement for damaged and lost property.

teams. Over 2,000 youth ages 14-25 were trained. Another multi-ethnic local NGO had trained 2,138 members and participants in their activities (including the former municipal president) and did trainings at different levels on a variety of topics, targeting more than just grassroots. Other projects to promote integration of minorities included language training, recruitment of minorities to serve in government institutions, promotion of economic development and business transactions across ethnic lines, among others.

The OSCE-founded and supported a Youth Assembly, which aimed to familiarise the young (ages 15-18) with the work of governmental agencies through simulations of assembly sessions. The youth received training in a range of skills – from running meetings to public speaking and understanding how the municipality runs to non-violent conflict resolution and organised a number of multi-ethnic events:

- A 5-day multi-ethnic sports tournament in 2003.
- A public debate held with youth from different ethnicities on violations of human rights, held together with Global Motion and the Red Cross in December 2004.
- A school clean-up, in which youth cleaned and planted the gardens of two schools – because, as one member said, "the situation is quite tricky on the ground," they split the funds for this to do two separate projects, Serbs cleaning the Serb schools and Albanians the Albanian schools.
- A documentary film on freedom of movement and multi-ethnic communities. This is being done in all the Youth Assemblies. Serb and Albanian youth conducted interviews in multi-ethnic environments and in one location where Serbs and Albanians live together. They made the film together for two days, and later the Albanians continued on their own. The film was not for public use, just for the Youth Assembly.

The OSCE encouraged and supported cooperation between Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality in south-eastern Kosovo with a locally-established Civic Education Centre for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians on an International Roma Day celebration at the town theatre in May 2005. They also sponsored many multi-ethnic events. In 2003, together with the Kosovo Centre for International Cooperation (KCIC), OSCE led the organisation of a multi-ethnic sports tournament, which was a big event, people we talked to commented, and was widely covered by the media. The hope was to begin to involve local authorities in the projects.

Many programmes focused on youth and targeted participants who said they wanted to live together in the future, or, as one NGO representative put it, had "a sense of compromise and tolerance." Schools were consulted and requested to identify "active" youth who might like to participate. Some training programmes did result in ongoing projects, such as a project to raise public discussion of important social issues through traveling theater. Many, however, had no specific follow-up activities.

Many of these programmes were organised by local NGOs that were spun off from programmes of international agencies (NGO and governmental) that had worked intensively in the region just after the war. Two of the local NGOs mentioned by people as significant players in peacebuilding were created in that way. They continued the programming of their international sponsor (mostly training), but have also shifted to new priorities. One of the organisations commented that training was becoming a smaller part of their work, as other projects were becoming priorities, especially an advocacy project that has brought together experienced NGOs (with the help of the OSCE) into a network to push projects to the municipal assembly.

Programming designed to promote and facilitate integration of minorities into Kosovo governance, economic and social life was also significant. The Youth Assembly in Gjilan/Gnjilane had its own statute, very much akin to that of the local assembly, with 25 seats, including 15 K-Albanians, three K-Serbs and two Roma, and met twice a week.[134] It was interrupted, a member said, only for a couple of months after the events of March 17. Some civic, peacebuilding or joint technical training programmes in connection with returns have been held in town. One agency, in the first years after the war, opened a resource centre adjacent to its office in the centre of town; people from the villages could come to get information there, inquire about credits and grants available, and participate in training (jointly). The funds for these kinds of projects, the agencies claim, were not very big, and have become "all but nonexistent" now. The focus is much more on physical returns.

More recently, governance programming also focused on improving the functioning of local government in promoting return and reintegration of minorities, mostly to places outside the town. One programme implemented by an INGO worked with the municipality to create an action plan defining obstacles to return and reintegration locally, and activities that it would undertake to address them. As the municipality completed activities, funds were made available to implement infrastructure projects designed to benefit people from different communities and engage all in a common endeavour in the construction stages.   The oldest (primary) school building in town was amongst those renovated through the programme in 2005, and over 1,500 Albanian and Turkish students hosted a cultural show to celebrate. It was at this school, one person told us, that in March 2004, a teacher told students preparing to go out and demonstrate to go home.

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[134] We received conflicting information from different sources concerning the membership. One Assembly member said there were 14 K-Albanians, 7 K-Serbs, 2 Roma and 2 Turks, while another said there were only 5 K-Serbs. The figures cited in the text are those on the Youth Assembly's website. By 2005 the OSCE was trying to help the Assemblies become self-sustaining – either by becoming an NGO or obtaining municipal funding – but this had not yet happened.   They were also hoping, one participant commented, to improve the level of engagement of the participants, so that the main point was not just relations between the youth, but joint activities and close connection to the municipality.

Finally, KFOR does not fit neatly into any "kind" of programming or activity, especially since their mission does not include, as one officer told us, promotion of positive inter-ethnic relations. Yet many people did count KFOR among the significant peacebuilding actors in Gjilan/Gnjilane, not just for its role in providing security. KFOR has provided support for peacebuilding activities. KFOR helped diffuse problems in multi-ethnic schools. They opened access to Camp Monteith for groups of youth – for example, the multi-ethnic sports/football tournament organised by the OSCE and local NGOs in 2003.

Impacts of peacebuilding programming

It is clear that the various trainings and activities offered by OSCE, KCIC, and others had tremendous personal impact on participants, at least in breaking down enemy images. Participants in these programmes stated quite clearly (and consistently), "If there had not been projects then they [Albanian youth] wouldn't work with Serbs, and there would be no meetings."

Participants in these trainings, especially youth, established relationships across ethnic lines that were not just transitory; participants said they maintained the friendships they established – they were "close." The trainings also changed participants' perceptions of the "other." One participant said he "used to be very prejudicial" toward the other, but now was not. Another said the training "showed he can work with Serbs." In this sense, the trainings broadly meet the goals many of the organisers said they had: to show that K-Serbs and K-Albanians "can live together." Participants also gained practical skills from the trainings, such as chairing a meeting and writing a project proposal, as well as more conflict-related skills, such as "look[ing] at more than one side before coming to a conclusion." Some people also reported using the skills to help classmates and family in disputes.

Participants also had praise for the non-training (infrastructure and governance) types of projects; multi-ethnic groups were discussing common priorities and problems (sewage, water system, schools) were being addressed through the programme. One municipal official reflected that it had opened doors for the municipality to villages it had had no access to in the past. This programme was the first to re-engage with communities after March 2004 and to put pressure on municipal officials to visit K-Serb communities. The municipality did visit minority communities, and it went well, contributing, people believed, to speeding up the process of reconciliation in Gjilan/Gnjilane after March 2004.[135]

There are indications of broader impact as well. The scale of interest in the public events and youth participant reports of interest in the schools suggest a level of interest in such

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[135] MISI Program Internal Mid-Term Evaluation, October 2004, p. 13.

contact beyond just the participants. An (early) accompaniment programme initiated by an I NGO – to walk with Roma inhabitants of Gjilan/Gnjilane from the mahalla to a shop to get pizza or coffee – seems to have played an important role in helping Roma to access and move in the town. The cross-ethnic business linkage projects – such as those linking K-Serb suppliers and K-Albanian customers – helped minority participants feel safer traveling into town from rural areas.[136] Similarly, in 2002, a local NGO's efforts with US KFOR helped establish the current multi-ethnic market (close to the church, where Serbs sell their goods) and encourage K-Serbs to move their market from Bujanovac (where they went after the war) to Gjilan/Gnjilane.

At the same time, nearly all the participants we spoke to from the trainings commented that they had not initiated anything themselves based on their participation in the trainings or projects, and had difficulty back in their own communities. "There are no informal, not-NGO-organised multi-ethnic activities," one participant said. For youth, some (though not all) had problems with their parents, or could not persuade their parents and relatives that these contacts are helpful, and, at best, could only have indirect influence on others – this was especially true among Serbs. People we talked with had not heard of programmes with parents.

Second, the motivations people articulated for participating in these activities did not, for the most part, seem to be related to any larger peace or peacebuilding goals. For youth, the most commonly-mentioned reason for joining cross-ethnic trainings or activities was to "have fun," "meet new people" and "learn something interesting." And participants did have fun – and would participate again because it was fun. For some local NGOs created and supported by their international agency sponsors, they had a difficult time articulating how *they* thought their activities would contribute to peace; they did what they did because that is how their international sponsors had done it.

Third, people in the programmes, especially the youth trainings and projects, systematically avoided talking about "the situation and political currents," as one participant put it, although not all the programmes necessarily avoid talk about the past, and in some cases participants say they do "speak to friends about the future of Kosovo and how they should try to get European membership." While not referring to a need to engage with political issues, some people felt that the quality of cooperation needed deepening: "Now people cooperate but it is not sufficient. The way people cooperate needs to change, and people need to be more tolerant of each other and listen more to each other."

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[136] Douglas Schlemmer, *Building Peace in Kosovo: An Assessment of Mercy Corps' PRM Refugee Assistance Programs in Kosovo* (Cambridge, MA: Kennedy School of Government Policy Analysis Exercise, 2005), p. 19.

Fourth, although individual Serbs are engaged in nearly all the programmes we learned about, active participation by K-Serbs appeared to be low. On the one hand, multi-ethnicity in organisations and programming was more robust and genuine than in other parts of Kosovo; the two most significant local non-governmental peacebuilding actors were viewed as serious and committed; one of the NGOs was described by a K-Serb participant as a "serious, prejudice-free organisation." On the other hand, a Youth Centre in town started by an international NGO "has not managed to become multi-ethnic." An advocacy project "could be" multi-ethnic but is not yet. When a project did touch a sensitive and important issue – such as a film on freedom of movement made jointly by Serb and Albanian youth – the cooperation lasted for two days, and the Albanian members of the team finished the film without their Serb co-producers. The most active local NGOs in this area were K-Albanian-led. K-Serb organisations active in the peacebuilding arena were much smaller than their K-Albanian counterparts, had less significant international funding, and often were tapped by internationals to assist in election training or in the organisation of multi-ethnic events.[137] One staff member of a Serb NGO felt that international interest and support dropped after Serbs did not participate in elections in Gjilan/Gnjilane; Serb NGOs are not getting many projects now, they say.

Finally, while people mentioned positively the existence of myriad opportunities to become involved in multi-ethnic activities, some international observers noted that there is "terrible coordination." There is, for example, a UNDP-initiated Kosovo Youth Network which has some activity in Gjilan/Gnjilane, but it is not clear how this relates to the Kosovo Youth Assembly.

Conclusion

It is difficult to assess to what degree the better inter-ethnic relations that exist in Gjilan/Gnjilane led to greater openness to multi-ethnic activities, and to what extent these peacebuilding activities have created, or increased, openness to inter-ethnic interaction and cooperation. We can conclude that the good situation in Gjilan/Gnjilane has been facilitated by its less harsh experience of the war, the existence of substantial pre-war connectors between K-Albanians and K-Serbs, and the fact that peacebuilding programming has been implemented in the town over a longer period of time and with greater intensity and continuity than many other parts of Kosovo.

Yet the severity of violence in March 2004, despite this greater openness and willingness to engage across ethnic lines, suggests that the peacebuilding work, to date, has not addressed fully the factors causing violence. The individual relationships that existed before the war, and that were facilitated or expanded by peacebuilding programming, were not a factor in violence; in other words, while "hatred" and other negative

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[137] http://www.civil-dialogue.org/engleski/projekti.htm.

perceptions of the other may have fueled some of the violence, it was not the driving factor. The evidence in Gjilan/Gnjilane suggests that the drivers of conflict were not human relationships, but political factors. In this context, the emphasis of programming on integration of minorities – which lies at the very heart of the political conflict between K-Serbs and K-Albanians – may have addressed needs of minorities at the human level, but also inadvertently exacerbated political tensions at the same time.

XVIII. "Co-habitation" and Violence: The Town of Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje

Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje (FKP) is about 8 kilometres southwest of Prishtinë/Priština. It is on the main road from Prishtinë/Priština to Pejë/Peć, and lies on the main railway line to Skopje. The town was created after WWII. People claim that before 1964 there were only three Albanian families in FKP. Even in 1999, while the K-Albanian population in the entire municipality had increased to about 60% (with 25% Kosovo Serbs and the rest Roma and Ashkalia), K-Albanians were a minority in the town; the population of 16,000 was about 36% Serb, 27% Albanian and 37% from other communities.[138]

Since the 1998-1999 war, the population changed significantly, as K-Serbs increasingly sold their property to K-Albanians from southern Serbia coming to Kosovo to escape conflict there. Now it is claimed that the town itself has around 97% Albanian population. In 2005, approximately 230 Serbs lived in a large residential complex, "Masinski Park," located several blocks back from the main road. Ten families were living in other parts of town in houses reconstructed after March, 2004, and the remaining 110 residents of FKP town whose houses were also burnt during March, 2004 were living in Ugljare, Bresje or Gracanica. Bresje and Ugljare are adjacent to FKP town and on the main road to the airport. Bresje is 70% Albanian (and increasing), while Ugljare is monoethnic Serb.

War and immediate post-war experience

Politically, FKP was the bastion of the SPS in Kosovo, the political party led by Slobodan Milosevic during the 1990s. It was the political birthplace of Milosevic, as it was in FKP on April 24, 1987 that Milosevic made his now famous speech about the sacred rights of Serbs, telling Serb demonstrators: "No one should dare to beat you!"

In 1998, villagers reported that 700 K-Albanians lost their jobs in the coalmine and were replaced by Serb workers. With the KLA present on the western edge of the municipality, the Yugoslav police and army had extensive controls at checkpoints, although the local population says they did not support the KLA.[139] The situation in town was tense. In December 1998, the Serb deputy mayor of FKP was killed. He was

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[138] OSCE, *Kosovo/Kosova As Seen As Told: The human rights findings of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission Volume I, October 1998 – June 1999*, available at www.osce.org/item_11_17755.html.

[139] OSCE, *Kosovo/Kosova As Seen As Told*, Volume I.

reputed to have been moderate and to have done much to improve the conditions of K-Albanians. A Serbian military response followed, and the situation deteriorated, with a number of killings and abductions carried out in the area. The 1998-1999 war resulted in 186 deaths, 68 missing (of which forty-two have been found) and 3,551 K-Albanian houses burned in the municipality; 2,900 of the houses burned were in FKP town.

When KFOR entered FKP, most municipal functions were still operating, with the majority of K-Serb leadership still holding their positions, unlike in other municipalities.[140] The UNMIK Interim Civil Administrator tried to integrate the K-Serb and K-Albanian systems, and had made some headway despite a month-long K-Albanian boycott of meetings. Any progress was destroyed when, on September 28, 1999, a grenade attack on the (mainly Serb) market in the centre of FKP killed two people and wounded thirty-five.[141] The attack on the market was the culmination of a spate of attacks during that month, which continued, to a lesser degree, to 2002. People in both communities explain the violence at that time as a strategic move by K-Albanians to secure the main road to the airport and Pejë/Peć, which K-Serbs periodically blocked in protest to the violence, as well as to destroy a political base of the SPS in Kosovo by pushing K-Serbs to leave and sell their property to Albanians. Indeed, since 1999, all people interviewed confirm that there have been extensive inter-ethnic sales of property by K-Serbs in both FKP town and Bresje. There was a pattern to the sales; someone would be beaten up, and 2-3 days later a buyer would visit the house, telling the owner that they should consider selling because of security reasons. Key points in the neighbourhood were targeted, so that once one sold, the others in the neighbourhood would as well. By 2003, one interviewee noted, there were 160 Serbian houses in town, and most of these were far from the road, so that Serbs could not block the road.

Inter-ethnic relations and violence, 2002-2004

After an initial wave of violence immediately after the war, tensions decreased through 2003. Both K-Serb and K-Albanian interviewees consistently viewed 2003 as a good year. This contradicts the admittedly not very reliable statistics on reported inter-ethnic violence, which suggest that inter-ethnic violence was on the rise from 2002-2004, albeit from a fairly low base figure. However, people commented repeatedly that in 2003, Serbs went out without an escort, went to work on foot, sent their children to school in Bresje, went shopping and spoke their language freely in town. This gave the impression of good multi-ethnicity. In the words of one international official, the municipality "was an example of good co-habitation" in 2003. Another noted: "2003 in terms of conflict was almost happiness."

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[140] OSCE, *Kosova/Kosovo As Seen As Told*, Part II.
[141] Interestingly, none of the K-Albanians we spoke to mentioned this attack.

By 2003, the main form of inter-ethnic tension related to economic issues (thefts of livestock and machinery) and discriminatory treatment by government. Complaints that CivPol and UNMIK were unresponsive to minority petitions were common. People said CivPol was "almost never" at the place crime happened,[142] while UNMIK was perceived by both K-Serbs and K-Albanians to be, in a K-Albanian resident's words, "inert to what happens in the town and the municipality of Fushë Kosovë."

People attributed the better climate to several factors:

1. The main purpose of the violence was to break the SPS hold on FKP and to gain control of the main road by buying Serbian homes. Many Serbs in those strategic locations along the road had already sold their homes to Albanians by 2002-2003.

2. There was a feeling of momentum among the Albanian community especially. Municipal elections and parliamentary elections had occurred, and there was a great focus on institution building aiming toward independence.

3. The municipal president was sending a positive message. Already in 2000, when he assumed office, K-Serbs were invited to participate in the municipal government. Twenty-five non-Albanians (Askhali and Serbs) joined at the time, working initially in separate offices. The Deputy President was a Serb, and after his two-year rotation ended, the municipality created an alternate deputy presidency position so that he could remain in government alongside his Askhali colleague who had taken over the position.

In addition, municipal leaders and some internationals underlined the initiative of the municipal president to speak Serbian openly, in public forums, to the dismay of many K-Albanians who were listening to him.[143] The municipal president also was said to have engaged with families of the missing, who were more hard line, to encourage them not to take to the streets to demonstrate, and to have opposed violence toward minorities. For example, municipal authorities warned K-Albanians in town that they would put cameras and guards on the streets and punish anyone who was caught threatening or attacking Ashkali children going to school. After one week, the problems disappeared. Some K-Serbs working with the municipality believed the President had significant changed his views of Serbs as a result of working with them, and was responsive to pressure to solve the problems of the Serbian community.

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[142] CivPol noted that community units did patrol grazing areas, but could not keep constant watch to prevent thefts, and the fact that livestock often is not branded made catching perpetrators difficult. Some people believed these thefts were perpetrated cooperatively, with K-Serbs stealing the machines in the village and handing over to K-Albanians at the village boundary. For this reason, KPS officers explained, it is often hard to find the perpetrators.

[143] In our interviews with Serbs, no one mentioned this.

4.   KFOR protection. Most K-Albanians interviewed saw KFOR as a main generator of peace and calm in the area. Serbs did not say much about KFOR (either positively or negatively).   K-Albanian interviewees appreciated KFOR's "hands-on" help in reconstructing FKP after the war, and their participation in the meetings held between different ethnicities. KFOR also participated in (and helped organise) joint events such as football competitions, together with K-Albanian and K-Serb teams.

5.   Limited Contact between ethnicities. Although FKP was, and still is, one of the areas with a greater ethnic mix, unwritten "rules" of movement and contact enforced separation of the populations. Most K-Serbs interviewed attributed prevention or lack of inter-ethnic violence to the fact that they rarely moved about the city. They mostly moved in a "narrow circle" in their own areas.   While they would still go to the municipality and to certain shops, and referred to places (unidentified) where private trading takes place, they "know the rules" and limits of permissible contact with K-Albanians. For example, "it was ok" to conduct trade with Albanians, but "not ok" to socialise. Similarly, it was "ok" to go to the municipality, but not to cafes or the cinema. Cafes once popular and used by everyone were no longer frequented by Serbs.

Despite what was experienced as an improved climate in 2003, there were always latent tensions that people characterised as "cold relations," "a large amount of distrust," "an ambiguity of emotions," and "no sincerity" between the communities. The existence of the parallel Serb structures weighed heavily in K-Albanian minds, and K-Albanians attributed ongoing tension to these structures. Local staff of an INGO commented: "There is no confidence between the communities.   While Ashkalia have become members of the system, Serbs have not, not even 50%, and the reason for it could be high the level of unemployment and dependency on welfare, which is given by the state of Serbia."   K-Albanians felt that the K-Serbs of FKP were fighting a war of "Keeping Kosovo under Serbia" and against integration in any possible way they could.

At the same time, K-Serbs felt afraid moving in K-Albanian-populated areas, especially those who do not have cars and have to walk into town to the municipality or, for those living in FKP town, to the nearest Serbian village (about 1.5 kilometres). They did not really expect to be attacked physically, but were afraid of being recognised as Serbs, especially by groups of young men. They crossed the street when they saw groups of young men so as to avoid any possible conflict. They dressed inconspicuously, and either spoke Serbian quietly on the street or did not speak at all. One interviewee working in the UN municipality used to walk to work with a dog on a leash.

The underlying tension was exacerbated by the existence of strong internal divisions within the Serbian and Albanian communities in FKP, Bresje and Ugljare. Within the Albanian community, serious political confrontation between the LDK and PDK made town-wide decision making difficult, as did the absence of relations between old residents and newcomers from other parts of Kosovo or southern Serbia.   Old-time

residents and newcomers do not visit each other's homes, drink coffee or stop and talk together on the street. Older residents would stick together and call upon each other for help, while newcomers were seen not to be interested in what happens to the town. An older Albanian resident of Bresje explained that when Serbs were blocking the road in 2002, he called people out of town for help because he did not know most of the new residents of FKP and Bresje. On the Serb side, the divisions between those working for UN institutions (municipality, KPS, etc.) and those working for the CCK and Serbian government-financed institutions were bitter. CCK employees called UN workers "traitors" and "so-called Serbs," accusing them of working for their own personal interest and not for the people, as working for the UN legitimises institutions that are only seemingly multi-ethnic.

Peacebuilding activity: Active but fragile?

There were a number of peacebuilding initiatives that, by early 2004, appeared to have had some success in bringing people together and reducing tensions. One of the most important was the OSCE-organised multi-ethnic Community Centre, created in 2000. The Community Centre staff was 50% Albanian and 50% Serb, and played a significant positive role with NGOs, receiving uniform praise from people from both communities. It organised joint training for minorities and Albanians wanting to start NGOs, on NGO development, project drafting and management, etc. Participants (especially K-Serbs) commented that the seminars given outside FKP were most successful, because "participants communicated much better."

Additional multi-ethnic projects to promote bridges and understanding between K-Albanians and minorities ranged from the USAID/OTI-supported multi-ethnic internet centre, to the multi-ethnic radio station "Radio K" to a painting school and a more recent archaeological camp for children. "Radio K" started as a multi-ethnic radio station in 2001 with external funding to "(re)-establish and strengthen cross-cultural communication as a basic precondition for the existence and functioning of a multi-ethnic society" and to influence youth with educational programmes and discussion.[144] The OSCE also provided human rights and tolerance training in the schools.

Return and reconstruction programming constituted a large part of the programming in FKP. These programmes incorporated what staff saw as peacebuilding components through the creation of stakeholder committees to oversee implementation of returns and community projects[145] and the sponsorship of some "dialogues" among beneficiaries. A

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[144] Roland Brunner, "Interethnic Bridges: Peacebuilding by Minority Media" (Kosov@ Programme 2002), http://archiv2.medienhilfe.ch/Partner/KOS/2002/mh_KOS2002.pdf (last accessed 30 October 2006).

[145] One of the programmes created an Implementation Committee with representatives from the NGO, UNMIK, the municipality, UNHCR and the communities. The Committee was involved in

broader-based dialogue programme was undertaken in 2003 by another NGO, focusing initially on municipal officials and later working with teachers in FKP. They had found that there was almost no dialogue within the town and in the municipality, more generally. The programme sought improvement of inter-ethnic relations through joint projects, noting that people needed to understand that development was only possible when both communities are taken into account. A municipal official we interviewed specifically appreciated the help of this pilot dialogue project with the municipality, as the municipality was trying to bring in and integrate K-Serb employees. They later requested the NGO's help in returns-related dialogue, but funding was not available for that effort.

Despite these successes, the multi-ethnic relations supported by these programmes remained precarious even in 2003, either because of feelings that they were biased or insincere, or because of insufficient follow-up. The strongest opinions expressed were that the international community has "done nothing" to bring back the trust between the communities. While this seems harsh, a consistent failure to support initiatives that bridge the ethnic divide has made them difficult to sustain, especially in the face of the March 2004 violence.

The Community Centre, for example, encouraged by the OSCE to evolve into an independent multi-ethnic NGO, "collapsed," in the words of one interviewee, with the events of March 2004. But before then, some K-Albanians commented, with a change of international leadership, the Centre started excluding some organisations and became biased toward one ethnicity. Similarly, both K-Serbs and K-Albanians talked of a "climate of censorship" in the multi-ethnic radio station. One K-Albanian employee noted that this was because they did not want to broadcast unconfirmed news, but a K-Serb interviewee saw this as censorship of the Serb point of view. While K-Albanians reported that they listened to the station, K-Serbs did not, as they were dissatisfied with the "propaganda" on freedom of movement and the music played, among other things.

NGO representatives involved with returns and reconstruction reported similar feelings of bias. An imbalance in assistance, in which the proportion of K-Serb beneficiaries in relation to other minorities was small, caused tension in an Implementation Committee of community, NGO and UN representatives overseeing the programme. Funding for the dialogue-related aspects of programming was also limited, preventing sufficient follow-

all aspects of the returns project, from approving selection criteria, to identifying, reviewing and approving selection of beneficiaries, to overseeing technical aspects of the effort. Some saw this arrangement as a peacebuilding success; the representatives of the different communities and the international community had to achieve consensus, and, with a short hiatus after March 2004, when Serbs withdrew from the Committee and Municipal Working Group, the Committee continued its work as one of the few forums in which representatives of the different committees jointly take decisions.

up. In one development NGO worker's words, this is "indicative of the importance attached to the 'soft' components by UNMIK and the donor community." Another NGO member put it more bluntly: "Donors do not give money for dialogue."

While municipal leadership claimed K-Serbs had fully been integrated with the K-Albanian staff, K-Serb employees were all together in a separate office. They experienced their engagement as figurative, as they were not assigned any substantive tasks nor given any responsibility, did not receive documents in Serbian, and were allowed to carry on private affairs (usually project development and fundraising for their own NGOs) during working hours. While not all K-Serbs agreed, this situation led eight of them to leave the municipality in September 2003. One of the eight is now coordinator of the CCK in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje. And while programmes to provide incentives (in the form of support for infrastructure) for municipal leaders and officials to take a leading role in the process of return and reintegration of minority citizens[146] have had some success in improving communication between the municipality and local (K-Serb) communities, they have worked only in more remote places and established only indirect contact through the K-Serb municipal community officer.

Several local organisations said they had planned joint projects, but were unable to get funding or to attract interested partners. A Serbian women's NGO founded in 2001 had tried to create a multi-ethnic project, but their K-Albanian counterparts rejected a proposed partnership to sell coffee that would be roasted by the K-Serb NGO. The shop was looted and burned during the March 2004 events, as was the NGO leader's house. A painting class, designed to bridge the mistrust between the K-Serb and international communities in FKP, operated in Ugjlare with K-Serb children. It was also launched in the Community Centre, but although designed to be multi-ethnic, the class was primarily attended initially by K-Albanian students. K-Serb and K-Albanian participants in the painting classes did come together in workshops in Brezovica, and were preparing a joint exhibit in the Community Centre when the March 2004 events occurred, and the painting school never resumed with multi-ethnic participation.

Experiences of March 2004 and its aftermath

FKP was hit particularly hard by the riots in March, 2004, in part because, as one agency put it, it "was generally considered a stable community with no particular concerns about security and ethnic tensions." KFOR had removed its checkpoint in 2002 "in conformity with the situation," as one interviewee noted. Trouble started early in the afternoon of

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[146] Municipal Steering Committees coordinated the programme in the municipality and worked closely with the agency to develop action plans that identified local obstacles to return and reintegration and concrete strategies and steps the municipality would take to overcome them. As the municipality showed progress in addressing obstacles, it received funding for infrastructure projects.

March 17, when a group of Albanians (extremists from the Drenica region, according to the HRW report), prevented the 2:00 p.m. departure of the train from FKP station.

The crowd, which had reached several thousand by the afternoon, targeted three main Serbian institutions; the Serb hospital, the nearby Sveti Sava school, and the administrative building and post office. The church was also burned. The demonstrators then went to the nearby neighbourhoods, "carefully locating and burning the K-Serb homes that were interspersed with the homes of ethnic Albanians."[147] Witnesses cited in both the Human Rights Watch and Humanitarian Law Centre reports, as well as people interviewed for this case study (both K-Albanians and K-Serbs), noted that there were many outsiders perpetrating the violence, but that they were assisted by young people (teenagers) from FKP whom they recognised. The youth would identify the houses belonging to K-Serbs. One person also recognised some teachers among the demonstrators burning houses.

K-Serbs believe that the events were designed to intimidate as many Serbs as possible, so that they would leave the urban area and sell their property. They noted a common pattern to the attacks in March 2004. The houses targeted were largely those scattered in diverse areas and mostly belonging to "reputable" individuals, i.e., those with positions in the parallel institutions. Where KPS was present, they would first evacuate people, saying they could not guarantee their safety. Then demonstrators would enter Serbian houses, loot them then burn them. The demonstrators did not attack the "Masinski Park" complex of apartment buildings with majority Serbian population, nor the nearby villages, because, K-Serbs believe, they feared that K-Serbs were capable of resistance and might be armed. (The buildings in question had previously been occupied by army officers, and demonstrators might have feared that there were still arms inside.)

No one saw KFOR and CivPol until late in the afternoon on March 18, although one person we interviewed claimed that KFOR was present but had withdrawn deep into the mono-ethnic Serb villages. KPS performance was spotty; it was reported to have evacuated Serbs and tried to stop the crowds from attacking Serb homes in some areas, but in others, people did not see them, and in yet others, KPS was seen as providing security for Albanian demonstrators. For its part, the municipality condemned the attacks, but several people (Albanians and internationals alike) believed their reaction was weak, as no leaders came out to confront the crowds. One PDK representative did come out to stop the crowds from burning the church, but allegations have been "heard" that he participated in the riots.

The majority of people remained hidden in their houses. They were intimidated, one international said, by extremists whom they all know but "do not have the courage" to

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[147] Human Rights Watch, *Failure to Protect:Anti-Minority Violence, March 2004*, Vol. 16 No. 6 (D), July 2004, p. 43.

resist, as both an international who lives in FKP and a local human rights activist commented. Nonetheless, we heard several stories of people trying to protect Serbs or stop the crowd. Many Albanians took their neighbours in and hid them. In two instances we learned of, K-Albanians stepped forward successfully to stop the crowd by arguing that their own houses would burn along with the Serb houses or be burned in retaliation. One of the K-Albanians, an old man who had stopped the crowd from going to the end of Bresje where it borders Ugljare, believed that the Serbs were armed, and that if the crowd had gone further, open armed clashes would have occurred and "hell would break loose."

On March 18, British Grenadier Guards entered FKP and by evening had established control. All told, 106 houses were burned down on March 17-18, including the house of the deputy president of the municipality, along with the Serbian hospital, administrative building/post office, Sveti Sava School and the Orthodox Church. Many people, including elderly Serbs, men and women, were beaten. One man was beaten to death by the mob while KPS allegedly watched.

Post-March relations

Relations between Serbs and Albanians suffered heavily after March. There was little physical violence after March 2004, although Serbs reported harassment, especially being shouted or sworn at by young people. The lack of violence, K-Serbs say, is due to the fact that Serbs moved within certain restricted areas: to places they needed to go to shop or do daily business. K-Albanians and K-Serbs interviewed spoke very differently about the atmosphere. K-Albanians reported that relations were getting back to normal. A municipal official claimed that there had been great progress; K-Serbs were moving freely and going back to work in the municipality because they "feel the sincerity of the Albanians condemning the attacks." K-Serbs too reported that they were more relaxed moving in town, but also that they had retreated within their own community, and did not go to places where there were K-Albanians unless they had to meet basic needs.

But what little trust existed previously was destroyed, as K-Serbs have interpreted the March events as confirmation that K-Albanians wanted to expel all Serbs living in Kosovo. K-Serbs employees in the municipality spoke bitterly that their K-Albanian colleagues did not inform them of what was going on in March 17; K-Serbs did not know what was going on until the attacks started and other K-Serbs informed them that their houses were being plundered.

Although houses were reconstructed in town, only 10 families returned. Most IDPs were afraid to return to FKP town for fear of violence, although they had applied as potential returnees so their houses could be reconstructed. Agencies involved in the post-March reconstruction reported that many people whose houses were reconstructed have sold their properties and left. Others complained that the reconstruction was shoddy. The municipality recognised the problem and blamed it on the fact that they were forced to reconstruct during the fall and winter, when bad weather damaged wood and parquet.

But some K-Serbs interpreted the bad construction as intentional – a tactic to push K-Serbs to sell their property.

K-Serbs retreated from all multi-ethnic projects, because they "have seen through them as a cover supporting the Albanian side to present itself as tolerant and multi-ethnic, although in practice this is not so." K-Serb staff withdrew from the OSCE-supported multi-ethnic Community Centre because they "no longer want to have anything to do with it." "Multi-ethnic" became a taboo word within the community. K-Serbs strongly opposed a proposal from the municipality – one that was decided and enforced by the SRSG – to make the repaired Sveti Sava School "multi-ethnic," allowing K-Albanian students to attend the school in a separate shift. Although the decision was taken because Albanian students were in need of more space, and the Sveti Sava school had extra capacity, K-Serbs believed that they were being forced unfairly to be multi-ethnic when the same was not being asked of K-Albanians in other areas.[148]

In 2005, the OSCE began an "archaeological camp" for children, and a multi-ethnic group of children had taken field trips to Decan/Decani, Prizren and Novobërdë/Novo Brdo to visit cultural sites of historical significance together. The children were together at a "camp" just outside Gracanica when we were conducting the interviews for this case study. While the children (and their parents) did participate in what is one of the first multi-ethic projects after March, the political atmosphere still remained tense, and Serb parents are still very wary of such events being used by Albanian politicians (local or not) to support their arguments on meeting "standards." Indeed, politicisation and failure of the effort was narrowly averted in the latest camp activity after the Kosovo Prime Minister declared he wanted to visit the camp and make a speech. This may be indicative of the obstacles that remain in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje.

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[148] ERP KiM Newsletter, 16-09-05, www.kosovo.com/news/archive/2005/September_16/1.html.

XIX. The Frontline of Conflict and Peacebuilding: Mitrovicë/Mitrovica

Mitrovicë/Mitrovica has been the frontline of conflict since the NATO bombing in 1999. A microcosm of the conflict in Kosovo pitting K-Albanian desires for independence against K-Serb efforts to maintain Serbia's dominance, it has been, in one agency's words, "Kosovo's litmus test:"[149] a challenge to the future status and to the international community's vision for a multi-ethnic, undivided Kosovo. In this sense, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica is unique.

Mitrovicë/Mitrovica was included in this study because of its importance for peace in Kosovo and because it was a test for the generalisability of any comparative findings. At the same time, it could not be approached in the same way as the other cases. This is reflected in the summary below. Sources and perceptions of violence in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica had already been well documented,[150] and this study was not intended to undertake an analysis of causes of violence, but rather to understand the dynamics of violence prevention. Interviews in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica were conducted with NGO representatives, political leaders, international officials and some residents to explore the achievements, possibilities and constraints of peacebuilding in relation to violence and to the division of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica in general. This "case" therefore includes a brief summary of the situation in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, drawing heavily on existing research and focuses on insights on peacebuilding gained from interviews.

Background

The town of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica lies north of Prishtinë/Priština on the road to the border with Serbia. The town itself and two villages have both K-Albanians and K-Serbs, while the remainder of the municipality is K-Albanian. Mitrovicë/Mitrovica municipality borders on two of the five K-Serb majority municipalities (Zubin Potok and Zvecan). It is thus not an enclave and has a stronger connection, both emotional and practical, to Serbia. Indeed, people commented that they did not have much information on what is happening in enclaves in central Kosovo, as town residents were not very interested.

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[149] European Stability Initiative, *"Mitrovica: Kosovo's Litmus Test*," ESI Discussion Paper, 28 April 2006.

[150] *See* International Crisis Group, Report 155, *Collapse in Kosovo* (2004); Report 131, *UNMIK's Kosovo Albatross: Tackling Division in Mitrovica* (2002); and Report 96, *Kosovo's Linchpin: Overcoming Division in Mitrovica* (2000); European Stability Initiative, "*Mitrovica: Kosovo's Litmus Test*"; *"People or Territory? A proposal for Mitrovica"* (2004); OSCE, *Report on the Perceptions of Standards in the North of Kosovo* (2005).

Mitrovicë/Mitrovica was declared a city in 1947. It was not always considered part of Kosovo; it was not until 1954 that it became the seat of one of Kosovo's five regions.[151] Since the 1999 conflict, the city has been divided along the Ibër/Ibar River. The major landmark of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, the main bridge, became the main sign of division, both physical and political, after 1999. There is a guarded "confidence zone" around the main bridge, initially staffed by KFOR but later turned over to the Kosovo Police Service. On either side of the river, North and South Mitrovica have operated *de facto* as two different administrations, despite international insistence that there would be no partition of Kosovo. Although UNMIK's and KFOR's mandates extend to the north of the city and put it under direct international administration, in practice their authority effectively has ended at the Ibër/Ibar; their presence is tolerated but counterbalanced by Serbian institutions. In North Mitrovica, Serbian social institutions once located in Pristhinë/Priština (e.g., the university, hospital, PTT, courts, education, etc.) have operated in a parallel structure. North Mitrovica uses the Serb Dinar, rather than the Euro used in the rest of Kosovo; the telephone system has been reintegrated with Serbia's.

In 1991, the population was estimated to be 78.9% K-Albanian, 10.2% K-Serb and about 10% Bosniak and Roma. By the end of the 1990s, only the north of the city remained in rough balance, with about 20,000 K-Serbs and K-Albanians (although K-Serbs were a minority in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica as a whole).[152] Population figures after the war are not reliable, as there was significant movement of both K-Albanians and K-Serbs in and out of the city. The OSCE estimated that the population in northern Mitrovica comprised about 17,000 K-Serbs (of whom 5,000-7,000 are IDPs) and 3,000 Bosniaks, K-Albanians and Roma. Ironically, this made Mitrovicë/Mitrovica north one of the most multi-ethnic areas of Kosovo.[153] Most K-Albanians living in the north of the city are in three areas with mixed populations: the Bosniak *mahalla*, the "three towers," which are both connected to Mitrovicë/Mitrovica south by bridges, and the "miner's hill" or "micro-settlement" area deeper in the city. A significant pre-conflict Roma population (about 6,000) was displaced from the south of the city to the northern municipalities and Serbia proper; approximately 275 peopled lived in a collective centre in the north of town, and efforts were being made to facilitate their return.[154]

Once an industrialised town built around the Trepca mining complex, which employed close to 22,000 people, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica became a "dying town" after the war.[155] With Trepca essentially closed, the industrial base and employment collapsed, and the

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[151] International Crisis Group, *Bridging Kosovo's Mitrovica Divide*, p. 3.

[152] *Ibid.*

[153] International Crisis Group, *UNMIK's Kosovo Albatross*, p. 3.

[154] OSCE, Municipal Profile, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, November 2005, available at http://www.osce.org/kosovo/13982.html.

[155] Verena Knaus, *"The Mitrovica Dilemma," Chicago-Kent Law Review*, Vol. 80, No. 1 (2005), p. 71.

economy on both sides became dependent on public sector and international employment.[156]

War and immediate post-war experience

Before the war, there were "good neighbourly relations, without violence," in the words of one resident, even if punctuated by occasional incidents. In Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, people noted, there were good friendships and more inter-ethnic marriages than in other parts of Kosovo. More K-Albanians and K-Serbs spoke each other's language than in other parts of Kosovo, and there were mixed cultural and sporting events.

The "fuse was lit" in 1989, as one person put it, when five K-Albanians were killed during miners' strikes. In the early 1990s, Albanians were forced out of their jobs, and "raids and ill-treatment" and "murders" by security forces began in people's houses and in the streets.[157] By the late 1990s, the KLA had a strong presence and influence in a suburb of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, and engaged in abductions and killings. The response of the Serbian authorities – both the police and the Yugoslav army – was harsh. People were killed or displaced and their houses ransacked during security operations, and K-Albanians reported to the OSCE-KVM that they or their relatives had been stopped at random, detained and ill-treated by police, either in the police station when people were taken for questioning, or in private homes in the context of searches for weapons or for alleged KLA members, or in the form of random beatings on the street.[158] Serbian security forces expelled most K-Albanians during the NATO bombing in 1999, especially targeting, it appeared, K-Albanians who lived in mixed areas of town.[159] One K-Albanian activist summarised the damage: 9,540 burned houses, 650 people killed, 279 people missing (of only 81 have been found) and 429 wounded.

When KFOR arrived 17 June, 1999, Serb forces were withdrawing, but providing security to Serbs. "Illegal" checkpoints were formed almost immediately by K-Serbs who feared the returning K-Albanians, especially fighting men.[160] Initially, the bridge had been passable, and K-Albanians went to the north to shop for food and other necessities. Some K-Albanians returned to the north of the city, especially to the Bosniak *mahalla*. Within a few weeks, however, the "Bridge Watchers" formed and prevented K-Albanians from crossing the main bridge from the south to the north. K-Serbs explained

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[156] *Ibid.*; European Stability Initiative, *"People or Territory? A proposal for Mitrovica,"* p. 3.

[157] CDA interviews with K-Albanians, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, September 2005.

[158] OSCE-KVM, *Human Rights in Kosovo, As Seen, As Told*, Volume I, October 1998-June 1999, Part V (The Municipalities), p. 146.

[159] *Id.,* p. 150.

[160] OSCE-KVM, *Human Rights in Kosovo: As Seen, As Told*, Volume II, 14 June-31 October 1999, Part II, p. 67.

their formation in several ways.[161] Some people asserted that K-Serbs were prompted to barricade the bridge by attacks by K-Albanians (e.g., bombing of cafes, physical assaults). Others noted that K-Serbs began to feel insecure by K-Albanians coming to the north, as well as "revolted" by the "rivers of Serbian refugees" from other parts of Kosovo. The demarcation line, K-Serbs commented, was "soon accepted and boosted by KFOR," which established the zone of confidence around the central bridges and restricted movement across the bridge.

The idea of the confidence zone was originally to create a secure environment that would allow UNMIK to proceed with returns and a gradual elimination of Serbian parallel structures. But after renewed confrontations in early 2002 and the K-Serb boycott of the first municipal elections in October 2002, the SRSG (with Belgrade's agreement) created an administration for North Mitrovica led by an UNMIK official and a local advisory board consisting nearly completely by K-Serbs.

Inter-ethnic relations and violence, 2002-2005

Since 2002, the line of division has been firmly entrenched. The river Ibër/Ibar separating the north from the rest of the city has constituted a *de facto* line of partition. The lack of access to property resulting from the exodus of K-Albanians from the north of the city has continued to fuel tensions. K-Albanians feared that the ethnically divided situation in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica could lead to territorial changes, that is, partition of Kosovo. Some K-Albanians talked of "attempts at ethnic cleansing" after KFOR arrived, through physical ill-treatment and intimidation and pressure on K-Albanians to sell their houses. K-Albanians were frustrated with UNMIK's and KFOR's inability (or unwillingness) to assert their authority in the north; the international community, some people said, "has at times not helped and even prevented families going back to the northern part of Mitrovicë." There was resentment that the international community stressed returns of K-Serbs and Roma in meetings, but not K-Albanian returns to Mitrovicë/Mitrovica north. One K-Albanian complained that international police applied a "double standard" requiring K-Albanians to bring in more witnesses than K-Serbs in prosecution of crimes. Several people criticised the international community for not implementing policies against sales of minority property in the north, as they had done elsewhere in Kosovo (with K-Serb minorities). This, they claimed, had led to the CCK buying K-Albanian properties near the footbridge connecting the south to the "three towers" and heightened fears that the Bridge Watchers would move in to control movement over that bridge.

K-Serbs, by contrast, saw themselves as "jealously defending" the last urban centre for Serbs in Kosovo. As a local NGO staff member told an OSCE researcher, K-Serbs "feel

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[161] The "Bridge Watchers" were organised as a paramilitary force paid by Serbia. They were officially disbanded, but unofficially are still actively watching the bridge, and can mobilise a crowd of people in the north to prevent an attempt by K-Albanians to cross the main bridge.

that if the Albanians cross the bridge they will lose the north of Kosovo and will have nowhere to go. They feel like they've been backed into a corner. That's the reason they defend the bridge."[162] There was divided opinion on the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Bridge Watchers, with some believing they were still "protectors" and others seeing them as hired hands that never really protected the town. However, people shared a feeling of vulnerability and a sense that no one else, especially KFOR and UNMIK, would defend them and agreed on the necessity "not to let protesters into town."

Insecurity and resentment on both sides led to frequent violent confrontation across the bridge. In this context, the violence of March 2004 can be seen in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica as another incident in a pattern of confrontation since 1999. The outstanding dimension of these events were a) the key role of primary and secondary school students with the help of their teachers (although some noted that non-school youth had taken over when the demonstrations turned violent), and b) the lack of preparedness of KFOR and UNMIK, who, according to some observers, only came 1 ½ to 2 hours after the violence started. KFOR and UNMIK's own belief in a steadily improving situation, ICG noted, led them to continue to "normalise" security, handing over the main bridge to UNMIK Police and KPS and ignoring brewing signs of trouble, despite Mitrovicë/Mitrovica's history of violent confrontation at times of political crisis or in response to incidents of IEV.[163]

KFOR and UNMIK were not the only ones to perceive that the situation was improving. People in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, especially in the north, remarked that inter-ethnic relations had "seriously improved" before March 2004, and that there was "a lot of communication between the north and south." But the March 2004 violence, they noted, turned the clock back to 1999, reintroducing almost total distrust and fear between K-Serbs and K-Albanians. While the situation had improved, some K-Serbs said, there was less willingness to restore good relations, and indeed there had been a radicalisation of K–Serb opinion in the north, especially among students.

One result of the division and confrontation has been minimal freedom of movement and contact across ethnic lines. Apart from people working in international organisations, few people went into the part of the city controlled by the "other" ethnicity. Although many people retained friendships from before the war, they feared going to the other side. As one person told an OSCE researcher, "Maybe I would go to dinner in the South, but what if I'm sitting in this restaurant and a guy comes in and his three brothers were killed by Serbs in the war. He doesn't care that I didn't fight. He's just angry and he decides to beat me or shoot me. It's not worth the risk just for dinner."[164] Another noted that he picked up his K-Albanian friend by car at a crossing point at the bridge, and then they

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[162] OSCE, "Report on Perceptions of Standards in the North of Kosovo," p. 51.

[163] ICG, *Collapse in Kosovo*, p. 12.

[164] "Report on the Perceptions of Standards in the North of Kosovo," Research report commissioned by the OSCE (2005), p. 56.

would go to a café where the K-Serb was known, "so that no harm can happen to [his] Albanian friend." The same happened when the K-Serb goes to the south. "There is not a single location where young Serbs and Albanians can get together and talk about anything," one participant in a peacebuilding programme noted, except in the confidence zone in NGO offices. "We Serbs and Albanians agree on such a need, but KFOR claims it is not yet safe."

Still, the physical barriers have been less rigid than they might appear. K-Albanians living in the north traveled to the south, either by the east road bridge or by the footbridge that KFOR erected to connect Mitrovicë/Mitrovica south to the "three towers" complex. Practical considerations also prompted people to move across the north-south line. People reported, for example, that an active black market north of the river, where people traded consumables, vehicles and other property was frequented by "everybody." The area around the court in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica north was also used by both K-Albanians and K-Serbs to conclude business dealings, especially legalisation of purchases and sales of property. "There are 2,000 vehicles that cross the East Bridge every day," one international official said. "People need to move and travel, though they deny doing it." Still, K-Albanians living in the north did not go to cafes, stores, schools or other social venues in the north. There was some movement across the two bridges leading to the Bosniak *mahalla* and the "three towers" area, as these were not guarded by "Bridge Watchers." However, as soon as people appeared in the centre of town, as occurred in May 2005 when UNMIK stopped the shuttle bus that had transported people from the Miner's Hill/Micro-settlement area to the south, Serb anxieties were raised, and it was reported that at least one K-Albanian was beaten there.[165]

Both sides attributed the hard attitudes and confrontation to changes in population. K-Albanians believed that K-Serbs who moved to Mitrovicë/Mitrovica north from other parts of Kosovo constituted the "main threat" and were the ones hindering reconciliation and unification of the city. In the south, the influx not only of people from the north of the city, but from outside the town also affected prospects for reconciliation, people said. The "urban members of the community are more open-minded while the rural ones do not care what happens to the town," because they do not have property in the north (and thus do not need reconciliation), and because many left their own villages because of the destruction of the war.

Possibilities and constraints for peacebuilding

What have been the achievements of peacebuilding in this difficult context? There have been numerous efforts to bridge the divide between north and south, both by intergovernmental organisations and by local and international NGOs. Many programmes focused on youth and women: the OSCE Youth Assembly, youth councils

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[165] ICG, *Bridging Kosovo's Mitrovica Divide*, p. 15.

in schools and a city-wide youth council, dialogues, trainings and peace camps for youth, a multi-ethnic women's centre in the Miner's Hill/Micro-settlement area, a multi-ethnic women's business group, among many. Media was another area of attention – with training for journalists, multi-ethnic publications, and TV Mitrovica in the south and Radio Kontakt Plus in the north operating separately on either side of the town to provide objective information and bring perspectives of all ethnicities to programming. A Council for Peace and Tolerance brought together religious leaders and "moderates" willing to discuss the problems of their communities. Promotion and preparation of returns to the Roma *mahalla* in the south of the city was the focus of much programming, as it had been a source of tension, and Roma still lived in collective centres in the north. Much activity was being done separately in the north and south, with linkages and occasional meetings and joint projects conducted either in the confidence zone or outside the region.

As in other parts of Kosovo, people involved in peacebuilding activities – especially the dialogues and some of the trainings – reported powerful personal impacts. One NGO representative noted that she noticed a difference in participants after they went through the programmes; their relation to the work, their interests, and their cooperation with others changed. A participant in a youth programme reported that he took some people he knew to an inter-ethnic seminar, after which they changed their views.

NGO representatives, international and local officials, and participants commented on some of the limits to the effectiveness of these programmes:

1. Politicisation. "Everything that happens in Mitrovica is politicised," one analyst noted. "This is not a human conflict; this is a political conflict. It is not based on hatred," said another official. Good personal relations have co-existed easily with confrontational political relations in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.[166] As a result, nearly any peacebuilding endeavour was viewed through the lens of the unresolved question of status.

The high degree of politicisation reinforced and was reinforced by *intra-community* social controls that pressured both K-Serbs and K-Albanians not to cooperate with the other and, in the case of K-Serbs, with the UN. On the K-Serb side, people said that contact with K-Albanians was "strictly forbidden." "Strong radical groups from Serbia" in town, who wished to control the situation, in one K-Serb's words, threatened those who tried to cooperate with K-Albanians. International officials we spoke with believed there would be no problems of cooperation if there were not fear of the political fall-out. Yet the K-Serb leadership's resistance to contact with K-Albanians reflected genuine

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[166] One K-Albanian recounted how a K-Serb friend in the north participating in the events of March 2004 called him on his mobile phone to tell him that he could be seen in the building, and should get out of the way because he was likely to be shot.

popular sentiment against a relationship with Prishtinë/Priština and a feeling that both NGOs and international organisations trying to bring people together are "pro-Kosovo independence lobbies." These perceptions were stoked by daily news reports of the local Serbian-financed TV "Most"[167] and Belgrade stations, despite the existence of local media stations promoting more objective and balanced reporting. Popular acquiescence in maintaining a confrontational stance also stemmed from economic realities. As a staff of an international NGO noted, "The director of the hospital controls whether or not employees vote and who they vote for. He also controls who gathers at the bridge to protest in the afternoons. If your director tells you to stop work and go to the bridge, you'd better go or you might lose your job. In a place where jobs are hard to come by, the last thing you will do is step out of line."[168]

On the K-Albanian side, some people commented, the March riots were a good "reminder" that "arms take us nowhere and they have even set us six years back." NGO workers who in 2001 were sworn at for "cooperating with those that have oppressed us" were after March 2004 no longer seen as doing bad. Nonetheless, one teacher noted that parents still exert great influence over youth participation in these programmes, and that "political circumstances" determined whether they would support them or not. K-Albanian leaders also exerted significant pressure on people who wanted to sell their homes in the north.

The result is that there is nearly no political or physical space for cross-ethnic engagement. While some mutual recognition of shared interests and viewpoints often results from these peacebuilding programmes – such as youth's mutual interest in having access to public services and infrastructure often on the "other" side, mutual interest in improving the economic situation, improving education, etc. – people often cannot act on them. "There is still the fear to overcome of how people back home will react to this mutual recognition," commented an evaluation of one dialogue programme.[169] A young participant in another programme noted that his parents did not object to his participation, but "advised [him] not to talk of it too much, so he would not stand out and suffer criticism in his own community." Several people believed further that they had little influence even with their friends, as the "hatred is too strong" for them to change. "It is

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[167] TV "Most" retained most of the staff from the former Radio Television of Priština, and was seen as maintaining similar policies.

[168] OSCE, "Report on Perceptions of Standards in the North of Kosovo," p. 49. It was an open secret in the north, several people mentioned, that economic interests of some of the Bridge Watchers and political leaders (in the form of a monopoly on economic cooperation with K-Albanians) were an important factor in the maintenance of tension.

[169] Jesper Nielsen, Report on seminar, The Danish-German Borderland Experience and the Ethnic Divide in Kosovo, Højskolen Østersøen, Nansen Dialogue Mitrovica, Nansenskolen, and International Peace Research Institute Oslo (April 30th to May 10th 2003), available at http://www.people.hojoster.dk/uploads/Report_on_conflict_resolution_seminar_on_Kosovo.doc, p. 14.

not easy to change people's opinion in this community," noted another programme participant. People reported that they had few private contacts outside NGO activities, except by phone or text message. "It is enough for me to see them once a month on [NGO] premises," said one youth; he had met someone with similar interests and was sure they would be good friends if they "did not live in this environment."

Where action has been possible, the dangers associated with cooperative activities led most agencies to keep a low profile, as visibility often turned these projects into symbols and invited attacks. One NGO project director believed that their programme could have been more successful, but safety considerations for participants dictated that they not "point out too much of success in either of the communities." As a result, programmes could not expand or address more controversial issues.

2. *Dealing with the easy to reach.* Participant selection in peacebuilding programmes in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica mirrored participant selection processes in other parts of Kosovo; it was based on openness to multi-ethnic contact, often through institutions. Youth, for example, were often chosen from the schools, based on criteria such as desire to participate, readiness for change, and moderation. Several people mentioned that they knew each other from before the war and were happy to reconnect in the programmes. One participant noted that the participants were not always the same, but "they always call[ed]" her, suggesting the outreach was not expansive, and that the forces closing political space for inter-ethnic interaction were not effectively being engaged by peacebuiding work. "One of the mistakes" of NGOs working in peacebuilding, an NGO worker reflected, was that they failed to work with the more anti-dialogue constituencies. K-Albanian rural youth, identified by some as key in the March 2004 violence, were excluded, and no one mentioned war veterans. On the K-Serb side, as one international official commented, the Serbian National Council, the real authority in the north, was not spoken to by the international community until 2005. Only one programme we saw worked directly with the more radical SNC in the north, and equally few engaged the Serbian Orthodox Church, which has also taken a stand against dialogue. The more "radical" newcomers to town on both sides – K-Serbs from other parts of Kosovo and rural K-Albanians – which people identified as obstacles to peace, were not mentioned as participants in programming.

3. *Motivation, programme design and outcome.* We encountered many instances of courage both by local NGOs and participants in peacebuilding programmes, who continued to engage with the other side despite criticisms and threats from their own communities. Women in the Miner's Hill/Micro-settlement area who created a multi-ethnic women's centre, for example, were obstructed by "radicals" who threatened to destroy the centre (located in a K-Albanian woman's house).The women actively resisted K-Serb radicals who had threatened to destroy it. The women announced they would guard it, and two years later, it was operating without a problem. Similarly, a local radio in the south of the city that has a mixed staff (with Bosniaks and Turks) and invited K-Serb politicians and international officials on their programmes initially was opposed by

local "radicals," but after setting up a controversial public debate to garner citizen support, they were now accepted.

At the same time, many participants and NGOs commented that people participate in peacebuilding programmes, such as the Youth Assemblies, "in order to increase their chances." One person noted that youth participants improve their results in school as a result of their experience (e.g., in English). Another noted that the certificates he received for attending the seminars might help him get a job with international organisations. Still another noted that what she "likes most in her NGO experience" is that she "has had the opportunity to meet and keep friends with many different people," not always from the other side, and to travel.

Do these motivations for participating in peacebuilding programmes help explain what a few NGOs noted as dwindling interest in the programmes? Perhaps. One local NGO worker believed that, over time, the topics and presentations became less interesting, and some participants concluded that it is a waste of time. A participant in a programme related to local community development and decentralization in Kosovo similarly commented, "These are serious issues; there are not many interesting activities such as games, so that young participants are not very interested."

Still, the feeling of powerlessness expressed by nearly all participants in peacebuilding programmes may provide another explanation. One participant noted that most of the youth programmes were modeled on the same design: the young gather, develop a common priority list, familiarise themselves with the functioning of local government, and, if possible, try to influence power structures. Yet most also did not think they could do much about the common priorities, although, as one youth asserted, they were "willing to try."

4.   *Building on local capacities for peace?*   An important connector in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica has been the three mixed areas in the north of the city. K-Serbs and K-Albanians did (and do) live together in the Bosniak *mahalla*, the "three towers" and the Miner's Hill/Micro-settlement area, and "relations with neighbours are good," K-Serbs reported. In the Miner's Hill/ Micro-settlement, there has been genuine mixing between K-Serb and K-Albanian residents, whose children play together. One NGO has supported the women's centre, used extensively by women and children. Aside from the women's centre, there had been little programming in these mixed locations, which some people identified as local capacities for peace. Participants in the consultations[170] disagreed whether the connections could be built on in the Miner's Hill/Micro-settlement area, as the area was isolated geographically, and it was not clear whether expansion or replication would prompt political leaders to try to suppress it. Nonetheless, some

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[170] These included local and international NGOs, IGOs and think-tank staff with experience working in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

suggested that peacebuilding efforts in the Bosnia *mahalla* might be fruitful, as tension persisted and there were, despite coexistence, many minor attacks.

The failure of international agencies to identify and support local capacities for peace was mentioned by several people, especially K-Albanians, as problematic. Several examples were mentioned as illustrative:

- An initiative from school principals on both sides of the river to begin a dialogue and work on common problems was not funded;
- TV Mitrovica was mentioned by many as having played a positive role in efforts for reconciliation and for speaking out against the violence in March 2004, but the station was closed by KFOR during the riots because it was broadcasting live.
- A joint request from a local K-Albanian and a local K-Serb radio station that were coordinating and sharing their work to use KFOR radio equipment was accepted, but only for the K-Serb station. (The K-Serb station refused the assistance unless the K-Albanian station was helped).

Conclusion

Mitrovicë/Mitrovica has hosted a number of small-scale, but serious and productive peacebuilding activities that have, however, had little impact on the larger tensions and violence in the city. They have faced a challenge in expanding and reaching out beyond their own participants. "Open-minded" people have consistently been overwhelmed by the "radicals" (as people called them), whom peacebuilding programmes have not engaged very much.[171] Politicisation of all activities prevented the creation of any space for inter-ethnic engagement at the citizen level. The difficult environment has led many people to conclude that peacebuilding can only build capacity for improving inter-ethnic relations *after* status is decided.

At the same time, the dominance of the political agenda in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica underlines the reality that effective peacebuilding practice would need to be linked in some way to the political domain. People participating in dialogues and trainings have been quick to recognise the existence of common interests – whether in provision of electricity, improvement of school conditions, access to services and infrastructure located on the "other" side of the city, or mitigation of poverty – and have, in many cases, become open to further dialogue to deal with these interests. But most of these effort have "run into the sand"[172] on both sides due to political opposition. In this sense, it is unlikely that common interests and mutual benefit – including the primary common

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[171] Two programmes appeared to have begun to engage seriously with key players, albeit not across-ethnic lines. One prompted debate within the Orthodox Church about the church's opposition to all inter-ethnic activities. Another engaged with the SNC and the bridgewatchers.
[172] ICG, *Bridging Kosovo's Mitrovica Divide*, p. 11.

interest of reviving the economy in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica – would act as a driver of peace; rather, they could help to consolidate peace once a political solution is found.

The problems people have shared have been the consequence, rather than the cause, of conflict. In the shorter run, efforts may need to focus on dealing with the underlying fears that are driving reactions and creating political space for engagement. A point of departure for international actors supporting peace may be the recognition of the reality that the very international framework for peacebuilding – multi-ethnicity and "no partition" – has fed K-Serb fears and feelings of bias on both sides, and has contributed to the politicisation of non-political activities.

Appendices

Appendix 1: About CDA-Collaborative Learning Projects

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects is a non-profit organisation, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts (USA). We are committed to improving the effectiveness of international actors who provide humanitarian assistance, engage in peace practice, and are involved in supporting sustainable development.

CDA operates on the premise that experience is a good teacher if we can take the time to learn its lessons. To that end, we organize collaborative learning projects to gather and analise the experiences of international efforts and, from this, to identify patterns across contexts and project types. Our experience shows that this kind of learning enables us to avoid repeating mistakes of the past and to continually improve the impacts of our work.

Our learning projects have involved colleagues in humanitarian assistance agencies, development agencies, peace practice groups, and corporate enterprises.

Many individuals and agencies know of CDA through its Executive Director, Mary B. Anderson and her 1999 book: *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—Or War.* The peace and conflict impact assessment tool known as *"Do No Harm"* analysis helps humanitarian and development assistance workers to identify the impacts of their assistance on conflict and to develop options for minimizing harm and enhancing their positive support for peace.

CDA maintains a small group of core staff who have extensive experience in zones of conflict. They have worked in over ninety countries with several hundred international and local organisations, including European and North American governments, United Nations agencies, the World Bank, members of the Red Cross movement, universities and training centers, and many non-governmental organisations. In addition, CDA calls on a broad group of experts when specific regional expertise or language competence is needed.

The organisation's work is funded primarily by governments and international financial institutions which support CDA CLP because it combines rigorous analysis with pragmatic field-level work and delivers practical tools and techniques to field staff and international policy-makers alike.

The guiding principle of all work, whether with NGOs, governments or corporations, is that international actors who work with local groups should always do so in ways that promote, rather than undermine, local efforts to achieve economic and political development, peace and stability. The focus of each of CDA's projects is on systematic learning from experience to improve the impacts of international assistance.

CDAs approach:

1. Is field-based and experience-driven (rather than theory or model-based).
2. Develops a context in which organisations learn from and with each other more than they can learn from their own experience alone.
3. Produces tools and approaches that are broadly applicable and transferable across contexts.

CDA's current programmes include:

- Do No Harm (DNH): to identify the ways in which international humanitarian and/or development assistance given in conflict settings may be provided so that, rather than exacerbating and worsening the conflict

- Reflecting on Peace Practice Project (RPP): working with a broad range of agencies and contexts to analise experience at the programme level to improve the effectiveness of international peacebuilding efforts. RPP conducted 26 case studies, and consulted with over 200 agencies and over 1000 people to analise peacebuilding experience. The findings of three years of analysis and consultation are in *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners*, which sets out what is being done, what has been successful and why, and what needs to be done. CDA has been working in Kosovo for two years with a group of NGOs to reflect on the impact of their programming and priority areas and strategies for enhancing its impact. The initial analysis of NGO partners is that their individual efforts could, and should, have a more significant impact.

- Steps Toward Conflict Prevention (STEPS): a systematic and structured look at successful prevention experiences to understand better what constitutes an effective strategy and to identify ways that international development and humanitarian assistance can support, or promote, prevention strategies.

- Corporate Engagement Project (CEP): to provide managers with clear ideas about how their work with communities relates to the broader sociopolitical environment and to develop practical management tools for supporting stable and productive relations in the societies where corporations work.

Appendix 2: About the Research Team

Diana Chigas

Diana Chigas is Co-Director of the Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) project at CDA-Collaborative Learning Projects. Ms. Chigas has been working primarily in the Balkans with non-governmental agencies, inter-governmental agencies and donors to reflect on the impact of their programming and priority areas and strategies for enhancing its impact. She also teaches negotiation and conflict resolution at the Fletcher School at Tufts University. Prior to joining CDA, Diana served as Vice President, Regional Director for Europe and the former Soviet Union and Director of Research and Evaluation at Conflict Management Group, where she advised international organisations, non-governmental organisations and governments in peacebuilding, negotiation and conflict resolution. At CMG, Ms. Chigas directed programmes on Preventive Diplomacy in the OSCE, working with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and on-site missions on methods and strategies. She co-led the programme on Conflict Management in Cyprus, which brought together citizens and elites from both sides for dialogue and joint problem-solving over nearly ten years, with the aim of catalyzing a human infrastructure for peace. Ms. Chigas has facilitated "track two" discussions and provided training and advice to the negotiating teams of the government in El Salvador and the FMLN, and with negotiators in the South African constitutional negotiations an and in the Georgia/South Ossetia peace process.

Cheyanne Church

Cheyanne Church is a Resarch Fellow at the Institute for Human Security of the Fletcher School, Tufts University in the United States. She is also an independent consultant in monitoring and evaluation and is acting as CDA's liaison for the work of the Reflecting on Peace Practice Project in Liberia. Prior to joining the Fletcher School, Ms. Church was the Director of Institutional Learning and Research at the U.S.-based NGO, Search for Common Ground (2003 – 2005) and the Director of the Policy and Evaluation Unit at INCORE (United Nations University's Centre for International Conflict Resolution) (2000-2002). Ms. Church is author of several important works on evaluation in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, including: *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programmes* (Washington, DC: USIP 2006, with Mark Rogers); *Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions Part II: Emerging Practice and Theory* (Derry/Londonderry: INCORE, 2003, with J. Shouldice) and *Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions: Framing the State of Play* Derry/Londonderry: INCORE, 2002, with J. Shouldice).

Jos De La Haye

Jos De La Haye is conflict transformation officer at Pax Christi International in Brussels, Belgium. Previously, Dr. De la Haye was Ph.D Programme Coordinator Social Sciences at the Catholic University Leuven. Dr. De La Haye's research and field work has focused on conflict related issues, i.e. impact assessment, early warning, conflict analysis. He has worked as a researcher at the University of Leuven, and as PCIA project coordinator for the Field Diplomacy Initiative and International Alert, where he managed the Resource Pack on Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Peacebuilding and authored its chapter on monitoring and evaluation. He has also consulted to international organisations and NGOs, including UNDP, OSCE, Care International, Catholic Relief Services, International Foundation for Election Systems, on conflict-related issues. His field experience has been concentrated in the Balkans (Bosnia and Kosovo), Africa (Kenya and Uganda), Asia (Sri Lanka) and the Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan). Dr. De la Haye was involved in designing the methodology for the study and in conducting preliminary community studies, consultative workshops with local and international NGOs and agencies, and led the preparation of one of the case studies.

Monica Llamazares

Dr. Llamazares is currently working on capacity building of multi-ethnic grassroots community safety forums for the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. Previously, she worked as a peacebuilding and conflict resolution consultant and trainer, with extensive experience in Kosovo. Dr. Llamazares holds a PhD on post-war peacebuilding and an MA in Conflict Resolution from the Dept. of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford (UK). Her research and professional interests include the return and integration of IDPs/refugees in post-war peacebuilding missions, gender and peacebuilding, and the interface between community policing approaches and grassroots conflict resolution interventions in post-war settings. Dr. Llamazares designed and conducted the Phase I desk study research, as well as preliminary community studies.

Olivera Markovic

Ms. Markovic is the head of the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica field office of the Amsterdam-based Academic Training Association. She is finishing her master's degree in sociology at the University of Nis in Serbia, and received her B.A. in sociology at the University of Pristina. She has been a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Philosophy in Mitrovica, at the "School of Democracy and Identity" (summer school in Bujanovac, Serbia of the *Italian Consortium for Solidarity* (*ICS*) and the NGO Good Action Society) and a researcher for the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory in Belgrade. Since 1998, she has also been a researcher for the NGO Drustvo dobre akcije (Good Action Society) Niš, Serbia. Along with Mr. Venhari, Ms. Markovic was the lead case study writer for the project, preparing six of the seven case studies.

Vasiliki Neofotistos

Vasiliki Neofotistos is an Assistant Professor in Anthropology at SUNY-Buffalo. Prior to joining the faculty at SUNY, she was Visiting Assistant Professor at Catholic University in Washington, DC and a Lecturer in Social Anthropology at Harvard University. She holds a BA in Communication and Mass Media from Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens, Greece (1995), a Master of Studies in Social Anthropology from Oxford University, UK (1997) and a PhD in Social Anthropology from Harvard University. She has worked as a full-time media monitor for the project "Media Freedoms and Hate Speech" --part of an International Helsinki Federation project-- for Greek Helsinki Monitor and Minority Rights Group, Greece (09/95 - 05/96). She spent twenty months in the capital city of Skopje, Republic of Macedonia conducting her dissertation fieldwork research on the social processes of ethnic identity building and the construction of difference between the two major ethnic groups in the country, Macedonians and Albanian, and speaks fluent Macedonian and Albanian. Dr. Neofotistos was involved in the preparation of the Dom/Dhomi case study.

Artan Venhari

Artan Venhari is a Task Manager at the European Agency for Reconstruction. Prior to joining EAR, he was a researcher at IKS, a Kosovan non-profit research institute that was CDA's K-Albanian partner for this research. IKS emerged in 2004 out of the 'capacity-building' project of the Germany-based European Stability Initiative. Mr. Venhari and the IKS team brought experience in civil society, dialogue and conflict resolution. Mr. Venhari completed his post-graduate studies at SOAS, the School of Oriental and African Studies in London on a UK Chevening scholarship. Upon his return, he worked on inter-ethnic dialogue for the Kosovan Nansen Dialogue and pursued training in project cycle management in the Netherlands. Along with Ms. Markovic, Mr. Venhari was the lead case study writer.

Appendix 3: Methodology

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

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

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

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

The study was conducted in three phases.

Phase I: Mapping of violence and collaborative analysis

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

examined in order to explore the ways in which communities recovered from the 2004 violence as well as to assess the degree to which the March events were an anomaly or, alternatively, reflective of deeper tensions in the communities.

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

The mapping of inter-ethnic violence presented a number of methodological challenges. Ordinary crime and inter-ethnic crime can be difficult to distinguish, as incidents perpetrated for economic or other criminal, and not specifically inter-ethnic motives, can also have impact on inter-ethnic relations.[173] Even if there is clarity as to how to classify incidents, determining the level of IEV is difficult, because IEV is frequently not reported by victims and when it is, may be under- or over- identified as inter-ethnic due to the potential dangers of creating self-fulfilling prophecies as the information becomes public. Consequently, this research relied on inter-ethnic crime statistics only as a secondary (although initial) source of data to identify communities for further study, and to identify trends and factors to be investigated in greater depth. Further inquiry into the nature and levels of violence (both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic) was conducted through extensive interviews with members of communities in Phase II of the study. This way the indicative value of inter-ethnic violence data available was utilised, while allowing the communities involved -- whether as victims, perpetrators, observers -- to speak for themselves about the extent, nature and impacts of inter-ethnic violence to ensure a truer picture emerges from our inquiry.

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

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

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

Phase II: In-depth case studies

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

Case selection. The case studies were selected using purposive sampling based on three sets of criteria: a) the presence or absence of violence in March 2004; b) levels of IEV prior from March 2002-2004; c) degree of peacebuilding activity in the communities.
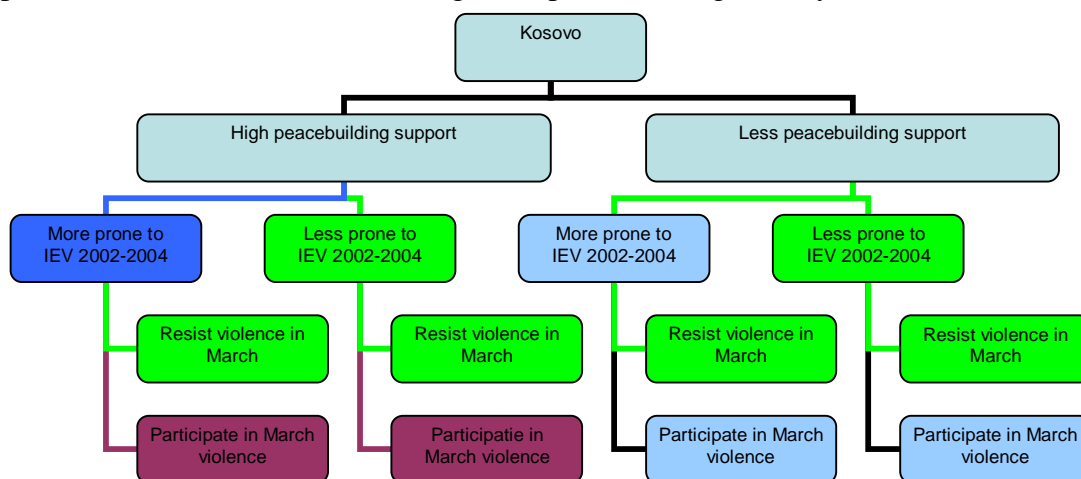
With the limited number of cases possible (seven), the selection focused on those cases that would provide insight into:

§   Why communities had higher or lower levels of violence prior to 2004?

§   Why communities avoided or resisted violence in March 2004?
§   Why communities had high levels of violence despite high levels of peacebuilding support?
§   Why communities participated in the violence of March 2004 despite high levels of peacebuilding support?

The cases were chosen also to include urban and rural sites, sites with higher levels of minority returnees and those with higher numbers of remainees, and to reflect differences in experience of the 1998-1999 conflict. These factors had been considered significant in the consultations conducted in Phase I, and we had not been able to develop any evidence-based hypotheses related to them because the inter-ethnic crime statistics were reported at the municipal level. Specific sites within municipalities were identified by participants in the consultative workshops, as well as through documentary research, based on the criteria and the participant's assessment that they could learn from the experiences in these communities in ways that could improve peacebuilding practice.

The cases chosen included:

§   A K-Albanian populated village (Ujë/Voda[174]) in Klinë/Klina municipality in an area that suffered greatly during the 1998-1999 war, that strongly resisted K-Serb returns to the two nearby villages, Avala/Avallë and Borac/Borishtë, and that continues to refuse to deal with Serb returnees, but which mobilised action to prevent crowds from attacking the Serb villages. Some, but not much, peacebuilding programming has been implemented here.

§   A K-Serb enclave (Dom/Dhomi) and surrounding villages in Pejë/Peć municipality: in a difficult region surrounded by six K-Albanian populated villages (many of which were mixed before the war) in a difficult area that had itself experienced a high level of violence in the past, but which experienced no violence in March 2004. This area has received significant attention from two NGOs, KFOR, and some international organisations in terms of peacebuilding work.

§   Two villages with K-Serb majority populations (Butan and Boksic/Bokaj) in the K-Serb majority Štrpce/Shtërpcë municipality: to which K-Albanians returned; an agreement for mutual protection against violence had been concluded after Serbs had resisted Albanian returns, and there was no violence in March 2004. Peacebuilding activities focused on mediation of the terms and conditions of return of Albanians to these villages. In Butan two NGOs began peacebuilding (dialogue) work in late 2004, while Butan, there has been relatively little peacebuilding assistance apart from United Nations and KFOR assistance for return and organisation of a few sports events.

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[174] The real names of all the villages and communities have been changed.

§ A formerly mixed village (Fushë/Livadje) in Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality: one of the few in the municipality to have had a very harsh war experience during 1998-1999; tensions remain high with significant opposition to return of K-Serb residents, who are accused of war crimes, yet violence was avoided in the village. Fushë/Livadjehad received much attention over the years, but only one agency has succeeded in implementing a longer-term peacebuilding programme.

§ Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje town in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje municipality: an urban area that was considered to be "stable" by many international actors but which had higher levels of violence in the 2002-2004 timeframe and suffered much violence on March 17-18, 2004.

§ Gjilan/Gnjilane town in Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality: an urban area in what is commonly thought to be one of the "best" areas in Kosovo in terms of inter-ethnic relations, and in which violence was severe in March 2004. Many international agencies working in the region are based there, and have conducted a significant amount of peacebuilding work in the town.

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

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

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

The fact that the interviews were conducted fully a year after the March 2004 events raised challenges to collecting accurate information about conditions and events prior to March 2004, both because of the difficulty of accurate recall of the past, and the pressure at the time of the study felt by many to demonstrate fulfillment of the Standards for Kosovo in order that status talks could begin. Indeed, in many instances, peacebuilding

programmes in the communities explored either began or began to make progress only after March 2004. We addressed these challenges in several ways. First, by emphasizing in the deep narrative focus of the interviews the need to obtain detailed stories and to understand the evidence on which interviewees based their conclusions and perceptions, we could begin to understand how the stories were affected by the passage of time. Second, by triangulating information through many interviews with different people, we could identify with some confidence which information was likely accurate. Third, by examining reactions to and participation in the March 2004 violence in historical perspective, we could identify factors that helped communities avoid or resist violence and assess whether those factors were still present a year later, and whether the peacebuilding programmes addressed them at any point before or after the March 2004 timeframe.

Case study methodology. CDA case writers do not work with questionnaires or survey instruments. This is because we do not want to pre-determine which factors or issues will turn out to be primary in the interpretations of local actors. The case study guidelines below were developed in advance to identify the broad categories of questions and information for the case studies. Within these guidelines, the interviews themselves were open-ended, exploring direction raised by the local informant.

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

Community is defined as the total site that is being explored in the case study. It may include multiple villages, one village, or a neighbourhood of a larger urban centre. Be sure to define this in your case study report and as early in the case process as possible.
§   Who is the community?
  o   Size of the community in numbers
  o   Ethnic & religious make-up
  o   Approximate gender distribution
  o   Age distribution
  o   Returnees/remainees? How long the person has been living in the community?
§   How do people live in the community?
  o   What is the economic situation? Look for information that will be comparable between cases; e.g., unemployment rates, new businesses being started, businesses being closed, means of sustaining existence such as vegetable patch etc. We are also interested in the impact of all of these on inter-ethnic relations – so it would be good to collect this information by ethnicity, and get a sense of who is doing what, who is impacted by various parts of the economic situation how, etc.
  o   Crime rates – what crime? How often/prevalent? Here we are looking to see if IEV might be related to crime.
  o   Physical make-up of the community – e.g. high density population or low-density, divided by a river, etc.
  o   Communication networks
    Ø   Messages – how are messages disseminated within each community?

> Ø Media Outlets available – language of programming, perceived bias of information, objectivity, do they fuel the conflict?

§ What are the dividers and connectors within/between the communities and how have they changed over time? Be as specific as possible – how the various things (like the economy as a connector, war experience as a divider, etc.) are actually used or experienced by people?

 o Also note dividers/connectors within each community. What are intra-group dynamics – close, tight-knit group, do they trust each other, are there smaller groups within one group?

II. Background to conflict in the community

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

§ Brief history of conflict/tensions and IEV: pre-1989, history during the 1990s, war experience and immediately post-war.

§ What is the frequency and nature/typology of violence?
 o Are the reported figures accurate? More/less than actual. What are the motivations? What is the effect of IEV – fear, solidarity within your community, defiance? What is the current status of violence and intimidation?
 o Is IEV linked to organized crime? If so how?
 o Intra-group violence – quantity, frequency and causes. Is there a connection between intra-group and inter-ethnic violence? In other words, are you likely to be intimidated by your community if you participate in cross-community activities?

§ What factors influence violence in the community? Why does it happen here?
 o Missing persons: number, profile/importance of this issue in the community
 o Status of the war veterans, war invalids/martyrs and families associations – do they exist, what do they do, public sentiment around them?
 o Is there a relationship between 'proper behaviour' (I've done nothing wrong, I've behaved properly) and IEV?
 o Who are the 'outsiders' who are violent? What could the community do to protect themselves from them?
 o Proximity, size and make-up of KFOR, CivPol, KPS and Kosovo Protection Corps – role and communities opinion of each?
 o What happens here when violent or high profile events that are negative to your community occur elsewhere in Kosovo? What about when those events happen within the municipality?

o How did inter-community relations change immediately after the March 2004 riots? Why did this happen? Was this positive or negative? Has it continued?

III. Experience of resisting or not participating in violence

§ Examples when people in the community peacefully resisted those who were threatening violence. A sense of frequency of these examples.
  o What was the situation (riot, demonstration, children throwing stones)?
  o Who were they (gender, age, education, job, position in community, etc.)?
  o What did they do? What happened/what was the result?
  o Was this in-character for them or were you surprised by their behaviour? Why?
  o Why do you think this person(s) did this – what made them behave this way?
  o What was the reaction from the community of this action?

§ Examples of times when you thought things could explode in violence or that someone would be intimidated, but nothing happened.
  o What happened that made you think things would explode/person would be intimidated?
  o What happened instead of violence?
  o What was the community reaction to no-violence occurring?
  o Why did nothing happen?

§ Relations between Serbs/Albanians in the community
  o How have they changed over the last two years?
  o What did you first see that told you things were changing? What do you see now that you wouldn't have seen two years ago?
  o What do you think caused the change?
  o Has your community tried anything to help improve relations?

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

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

§ Number of international NGOs and indigenous NGOs operating in the community
§ What is their primary work (agriculture, roads, schools) and which are considered peacebuilding activities (by the community and by the agencies)?

§ History of the peacebuilding efforts in the last 2.5 years. (Note they do not need to still be running now. Note also that community members may know the answers to some of these questions, but may not to others here. Still it would be interesting to know what they do think.):
   o Who started it – person and/or agency?
   o What do they do (activities)?
   o How long has it run?
   o Why did they choose to do this activity and not something else?
   o How will this activity bring peace?
      Ø If integration is the answer then explore why is integration important? What will it mean if it is achieved?
   o Who is involved in it [participants]? Why did they get involved? (Identify not only gender, education, social status but also the war experience).
   o Who has chosen not to be involved in these activities? Why? Who has actively resisted these activities from happening? Why?

   o What difference has this project made – positive and negative? What initiatives have helped build bridges between the communities?
   o What evidence is there of these changes? Be sure to connect with those involved in the initiative and those who were not as a means to cross-check the connection between the initiative and the change.

§ Has the work of the international community done any harm or damage to this community?
§ Are the different NGO projects linked in any way? If so how are they linked and why is that link important or not important? (linkages exploration)
§ If there are lots of peacebuilding activities and you could only pick one which has been the most significant for your community? (significance)
§ How have the peacebuilding activities affected the amount of violence in the community?

Phase III: Comparative analysis of case studies

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

and feedback. The conclusions and recommendations thus reflect extensive discussion and collective reflection on the evidence.