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## 9. Developing Social Sensitivities and Insights through Social Development

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### 1. Introduction

Like so many other concepts related to the less scientific aspects of change in the human condition – such as “sustainable development” and “participation” – social development is a broad term that encompasses a range of activities and can be defined in a myriad of ways. One of the more broadly accepted definitions is that of the World Bank, which suggests that, “[...]social development is development that is equitable, socially inclusive and therefore sustainable. It promotes local, national and global institutions that are responsive, accountable and inclusive and it empowers poor and vulnerable people to participate effectively in development processes.” Thus, social development is a mechanism for integrating new streams of empowerment and enlightenment for all into the broader spectrum of development processes in ways that improve the quality and, as importantly, the equality of the means and benefits of societal change

One of the greatest challenges of social development is the argument that the international community has no jurisdiction to interfere with the natural social development of a country or jurisdiction in ways that question or contradict the norms and standards of local culture. While this is fundamentally true, all development processes involve questioning and ultimately changing local cultural, business, governmental and social regimes. Thus, to create sustainable change on any spectrum, it is important to address the underlying social elements within a community that allow it to position itself for change.

This chapter illustrates the importance of social development while exploring the key social development themes – gender equality, youth participation and minority integration. To build consistency and clarity, the discussion considers the varied approach in each of the three geographic jurisdictions using illustrative vignettes displaying anecdotal evidence of social change, and highlighting special research projects and notable observations from field and international staff, community partners, teachers and relevant education personnel. We examine the challenges, lessons learned and success stories of each.



## 2. Overview of Social Development in EDP

### Social Development in EDP – Why Bother?

From the outset of EDP, resistors to the idea that social development issues should be integrated with EDP's work materialized both within the project and outside it. Most of this resistance was passive – people, for example, generally understood that women and men should have equal opportunities. However, it was unclear to many as to why this should be highlighted as a goal when so many other urgent issues were facing the education system. Further, at an individual level, many people appeared affronted by the suggestion that their own approach to human interactions needed to complement specialized programming within EDP to further promote these values. As the programme unfolded, and results from various initiatives took place, the resist-stances that were experienced at the start took a positive turn within our own team development.

Two driving forces defined the social development agenda within EDP. First, as part of its change process and the needs of the context, EDP understood that there was a need to form a theoretical and practical strategy towards addressing social development agendas within its work. In undertaking its assessments, certain issues – gender equality and ethnic minority integration and empowerment – came to the forefront as key in fostering sustainable change. Educators would often include special needs education on this list; however, this was an issue being specifically and extensively addressed by a concurrent and complementary project of the Finnish Government.

Secondly, EDP was directed by its donor, CIDA, through contractual arrangements to address a series of crosscutting issues, which included gender equality and minority integration. However, the conventional CIDA approach of doing gender analysis up front was seen by the EDP team at the beginning as being too intrusive. Our approach to gender was slow, as we wanted to continue our focus on success in sustainability and impact. This is explored more so in our section on gender in this chapter.

As time passed, CIDA asked EDP to also explore means of addressing youth participation and the integration of refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) as social development issues related to educational change and reform in Kosovo. These elements were encouraging additions to the social development agenda that addressed specific needs in Kosovo.

In short, the decision to pursue these crosscutting social development goals within EDP was one that was based on good development practice *per se*.

#### **Gender equality, but different results for men and women**

Several people working on or with the project, when discussing gender equality issues, proclaimed themselves to be “gender blind” both personally and professionally. This, however, fails to acknowledge the fact that change processes and results within a project such as EDP (as well as within education itself) do have a different effect on women and men.

#### **Education reform and social development**

“Education reform in any society cannot be separated from the development of society. The discoveries and discussions in the classroom set the path of social changes to come. Essential, social development is education, as education is social development” (Mizzi, Partridge & Baron, 2003, p. 69).

## Learning About the Context

EDP realized that it was well-positioned to make the long-lasting changes in society needed to contribute to Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro's success in education reform. The EDP goal was to change the views and mindsets of teachers, student teachers, administrators and policy-makers so that they would go beyond traditional views that resulted from years of communist rule to a climate of fairness and respect for all. It was also widely understood that in the Balkan culture of the time, it was one of the riskier components of our work.

As a starting point, EDP needed to work to analyze the social development contexts in all three jurisdictions to build understanding of the social development environment. In all three regions, EDP began programming by undertaking a social development analysis – drawing on the literature and experience of other organizations, interviews with local partners, and our own observations. In Kosovo, the analysis was undertaken using a generalized framework for gender analysis and, in the absence of analytical tools, a purpose-built model for minority integration analysis. With youth, in particular, the analysis was built on a highly participatory process that involved interacting with youth groups over a period of six months.

The gender analysis in Serbia was originally designed as part of an organizational assessment of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), integrating elements of the University College of London's "web of gender institutionalization model" with the Universalia/International Development Research Centre's Institutional Organizational Assessment (IOA) model (for assessing the performance of organizations (See Adrien et al, 2002). Unfortunately, the planned organizational assessment of MoES did not occur as such. Thus, in Serbia the assessments of gender equality and minority integration were completed using a model similar to that used in Kosovo. As youth participation was not central to the programming model in Serbia, the analysis of youth was limited to a desk study (though elements of youth participation were added to programming in Serbia later in the project).

In Montenegro, EDP was able to employ elements of the University College of London's web of gender institutionalization model into the organizational assessments that were made of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Bureau of Educational Services (using the Universalia/International Development Research Center's Institutional Organizational Assessment (IOA) model). The approach to minority and youth participation was similar to the approach used in Serbia.

In Kosovo, we observed that men generally disenfranchised women, especially rural women. While news from Western countries about women's liberation hit Kosovo, there was a distinct "not us" attitude that resonated throughout the region. It is noteworthy that women were seen as irrelevant during the war, despite a small contingent of female soldiers working for the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Youth were also marginalized and considered irrelevant as a result of their age. Male youth, in particular, were more regarded for their vitality, both as strong soldiers and for their political weight in organizing student protests to advocate for independence, rather than for their intellectual, social or economic production. Further, in Kosovo, despite Serbians being the ethnic minority in Kosovo, they did hold the power in society. Bosniaks<sup>1</sup> and Turkish were treated fairly, while Roma/Ashkali/Egyptian (RAE) individuals were treated subserviently, as they are in other parts of Europe. The effects of the last 15 years of conflict and change are dramatic; however, we can confidently argue that a reform in attitudes has successfully started, despite ongoing persistent challenges. Shortly after the war, Kosovars started facing issues relating to trust, disparity, prejudice, and trauma. Kosovo Albanians were in many cases "mirroring their oppressors" through disenfranchising others and themselves for power, and Serbians were grief-stricken

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<sup>1</sup> A Bosniak is a Kosovar of Bosnian origins



due to their loss of the war, empire and land<sup>2</sup>. Youth were activating themselves through political intentions, and ethnic minorities were displaced, hoping to negotiate their way through the ensuing change processes and reconstituted power relations. However, through our intervention and collaboration with dedicated local individuals and groups, we have managed to contribute to reversing the trend to a significant degree in areas where EDP had influence.

In Serbia, the situation proved to be much different. While the gaps in gender equality witnessed in Kosovo were no doubt also present in rural Serbia, the gender equality issues in the predominately urban populations targeted by EDP were much more subtle than in Kosovo – akin more so to the urbanized Canadian experience – with gender issues often being more qualitative than quantitative in nature. Further, Serbia was found to have a very active landscape of NGOs, institutions, and individual activists working towards issues related to gender equality and contributing to the growing awareness of the essential link between gender equality and the fulfillment of basic human rights.

### A question of perspective

Many women that EDP talked to in Serbia and Montenegro noted that clearly there were gender equality issues in society but that they themselves had not ever been subject to discrimination. Interestingly, many of the stories they told, however, led the EDP researchers to understand that there were gender-based inequalities in Serbia but these were not recognized as being gender-related. For example, several women noted that it was more difficult for women to advance in their careers as they had to take time off to raise families...and that this was a parenting choice (not a gender-based choice).

The minority situation in Serbia was a complex one. While openly discriminatory practices have widely been abolished, there are still historical social legacies of discrimination. This is reflected in unemployment figures, or the distribution of management posts in public enterprises. Similarly, there are clear imbalances in public spending in, for example, healthcare facilities, and infrastructure in areas with high concentration of ethnic minorities.

The largest ethnic minority, at 16.5% of the population, were the Albanians. This immediately added a layer of intricacy given the recent history of the region. The Albanian majority in Presevo Valley has been identified by the International Crisis Group as one of only a handful of success stories in conflict resolution in the Balkans. However, while significant armed conflict in the area has been limited to a short uprising in 2000 – when the Albanian Liberation Army of Presevo led an ongoing revolt agitating for independence and inclusion of the Presevo Valley in an independent Kosovo – continual incidents since then indicate that this is a fragile peace. At the same time, Vojvodina – an autonomous province formed in 1974 within Serbia based on the same constitution that granted a similar status to Kosovo – was another area prone to ethnic violence.

While most non-Serb ethnic groups face challenges in several areas and sectors, the most marginalized and disadvantaged group in Serbia as in other Central and Eastern Europe countries are the Roma. The public discourse about Roma, including discourse that is aiming to speak in favour of the group and is hoping to better the Roma's situation, is in most cases viewing the Roma from the perspective of the dominant (i.e. Serbian) majority and their norms. In this view, Roma attitudes, life styles, and behaviours are characterized as deficient and in need of improvement; it is very rare to find descriptions of anything related to Roma life that

### Discrimination against the Roma

“You can hardly find a Roma who hasn't experienced a sort of discriminatory attitude: unable to get employed even if they're properly qualified, difficulties in realizing their rights, unwillingness of services to deal with them, humiliation, verbal and physical attacks, molesting by the police, the highest fines for small felonies” (Roma Information Centre, 2004, p. 100).

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<sup>2</sup> Serbians in Kosovo were relocated to “enclaves” to protect them from Albanian backlash.

is not described in negative terms, stating a lack, want or need of something, thus implicitly calling for assimilation of the Roma.

Despite ongoing changes in Montenegro, traditional perceptions of gender roles prevail across the country, especially in rural and remote areas where the primary role of women is still regarded as caretaker in the family, raising children, and responsible for household jobs. In many families, women's employment is not a priority, and women's salaries are qualified as additional income for the family budget. With the closure of many state owned enterprises, and the rapid growth of the grey economy, women are faced with increasing challenges to find well-paid employment. Around 53% of women in Montenegro are employed, 31% work in informal sectors or are seeking employment, while 16% have never worked. The most popular jobs are those in administration or trade. Women have on average 18% lower income than men.

Public awareness towards equality issues, in particular gender equality, and equality for people with disabilities, is still in its early stages, yet is growing steadily and visibly. NGO activities aiming at raising awareness, e.g.: through media campaigns, have played important parts in this process. However, even among interested, informed, and educated members of society the depth of knowledge regarding equality issues is often lacking. As one woman reported in an interview on the subject: "people know that they are against gender discrimination, but they often don't know what exactly that means, or what could be done to improve the situation." Also, as in neighbouring countries, women and men frequently negate that there are any gender issues at all, and refer to the communist past of Montenegro that in their view had ensured equality for all.

Montenegro's ethnic composition is made up by number of different groups, in particular Montenegrins (43 %); Serbs (32%); Bosniaks (7.5%); Albanians (7%); Croats (1%), and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians (0.4 – 3.3%) As Montenegrins and Serbs are regarded as two separate groups, the last census did not show any clear majority/minority relations in Montenegro, which now impacts the adoption on the law on education of minorities. A clear definition of which groups are regarded as ethnic "minorities" *vis-à-vis* various "majorities" is thus dependent on further steps regulating the rights and responsibilities of different groups. At the time EDP was active in Montenegro, in the year leading up to the referendum on independence, the question of ethnicity was a particularly sensitive one.

Despite approximate data as cited in various censuses, there is no exact information on the total number of Roma in Montenegro. In particular, Roma refugees (mainly from Kosovo) are often not captured in statistical data, and the authorities only estimate approximate numbers. According to the World Bank, there are approximately 20,470 people of Roma nationality currently residing in Montenegro. Among them, about 5,000 people are refugees/displaced persons from Kosovo, a majority of who do not speak the official Serbian language. A low percentage of children from the Roma community attend school on a regular basis, and illiteracy within the Roma population amounts to 76%. Inadequately trained teaching staff is among the key challenges for full integration of Roma children into the regular education system. In 2003, Roma children attended primary education in only 12 out of 21 municipalities in Montenegro.

## EDP Strategies for Social Development

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world." Mahatma Gandhi's quote captures the very essence of the EDP's philosophy towards integrating gender, youth and ethnic minorities within educator development. Change must come from within, however we approach change knowing that some kind of intervention must take place in order for alternative views of being, becoming and belonging can emerge. It is core to our basic nature of learning: we observe, we learn, we engage, and we change. In our three projects,



and when working under the guise of cultural sensitivities, this remains at the fore. It is the very reason why a social development/developing socially duality exists in our work.

We began in a myriad of strategies to ensure that change could take place. A multi-method approach was important to accommodate the varying learning styles individuals possess. We group these methods into two categories to clarify our approaches: direct and indirect methodologies.

Direct methodologies that we utilized include specific seminars that focus on gender issues in education, empowering youth, or cross-cultural dialogues that heighten awareness of ethnic minority teachers and students. Local specialists trained in each of these sub sectors facilitated the cultural work that needed to take place in the teacher education process. For example, one Albanian teacher trainer explained in one session how Albanian teachers do privy their friend's children when giving grades, and questions the ethics around doing this. Canadian trainers would not be able to do this given their outsider status; however, Albanian trainers can. Providing "safe spaces" for learning is not new to disenfranchised groups, since one has to feel safe in order to be open to new ideas and change. An example of this would be when we began training Kosovar Serbian teachers in their enclaves in lieu of a conference/shared learning approach that appealed to Kosovar Albanian teachers. Finally, we provided direct training when we would transport key individuals to regions where certain concepts would be explained, such as the integration of dual-language programming in the schools in Quebec, or women leaders in the Teacher-Training Institute in Slovenia.

Indirect methodologies (or using the power of the hidden curriculum) include a demonstrating/modeling approach where we would have a cohort of women, youth or ethnically mixed trainers reach out and mentor teachers and administrators. A second method was to integrate components of human rights education within curricula, such as depicting women as leaders within case scenarios, or using language that doesn't provide a preference strictly within the masculine form. For example, when giving tips on Parent-Teacher Conferences, Mizzi, Partridge and Baron (2003) advise: "Focus on the child's behaviour, and not on the child. 'Aferdita can sometimes become frustrated when the other children don't like to her,' instead of 'Aferdita is a very frustrated little girl' (p. 31). Using girls as the example keeps teachers focused on girl child development as well as boy child development, and aims to value girls as valuable learners in the classroom.

### 3. Youth Participation

From its conceptualization, KEDP was not envisioned as a youth project or even a project with youth as a crosscutting theme. However, in the period immediately prior to the inception mission for KEDP, the donor agency informed the implementing agencies that KEDP would be one of five CIDA pilot-projects in youth and child participation. Given that KEDP was an education project, the linkage might have been readily apparent. However, the design of KEDP focused mainly on education reform issues that traditionally, or conventionally, did not involve the participation of young people. Young people, for example, generally do not play a role in teacher training, leadership training or in the establishment of academic units at universities other than assuming traditional roles as pupils or students. Nevertheless, the implementing agencies agreed to the challenge of integrating elements of youth participation

#### **Defining "youth" in post-conflict settings**

As is normal in projects of this nature, KEDP was faced from the outset with the challenge of defining whom to include in the category "youth." Drawing first from standard international definitions and then modifying to meet the social, cultural, educational and programmatic realities of KEDP, it was decided that the focus would be on people aged 14-25 (high school to the end of university) with some emphasis on young academics (up to 35 years) and, indirectly through the capacity building elements, on younger children.

into KEDP's work.

KEDP adopted a “go-slow” approach to youth participation. Rather than coming in with prescriptive modes from the outset, KEDP appointed two people with backgrounds in youth participation to explore the issue within the project and make recommendations for how youth participation could be integrated into KEDP. However, from the outset, some dissension arose within the KEDP team over this point. There was not, for example, a clear consensus that youth participation should be added as a cross-cutting theme to the project. The late addition of the theme after the fact contributed to this lack of consensus. At the time, many people viewed the youth participation component as an “add-on” – a non-core activity that took (and continued to take) low priority until the fourth year of the project. It took a considerable time before the KEDP team developed a clear understanding of what youth participation meant within the project. This split was largely professional in nature – with a camp of educators and a camp of international development workers with differing visions. There were also team members who were “cross-overs” with backgrounds or experience in both. Initially, there was a drive toward normative models of youth participation – appointing a young person to sit on the project steering committee or working to develop a youth committee to advise what was then the Department of Education and Science. However, there were concerns raised about these approaches. While symbolic value might be added by including a young person on the steering committee, it was noted that, culturally, such a move might be seen as cheapening the seriousness of that body in the eyes of local members – and thus, affecting KEDP's relationships and image. Rather, it was suggested that the approach to programming should be to “nibble around the edges” of existing programming, find handholds and from these allow participation to develop organically. This is very similar to the approach used to gender programming in the project. Further, it was also noted at the time that adopting strong “rights-based approaches,” which insist on youth participation as a human right to be fulfilled, were counter-productive and led to greater resistance.

Thus, in time for the start of the second year of programming, KEDP introduced a strategy for integration of youth participation into the project. This strategy was largely built around the model of doing what you can and demonstrating results to build participation. This included:

- A formal partnership with a local youth NGO with an interest in youth participation and educational reform
- Working to ensure that youth participation ideals were integrated into capacity building programming (e.g.: LCI and leadership training in all ethnic areas, so that youth issues are discussed with ethnic minorities and within the context of gender)
- Experimentation with youth led professional development for teachers (in areas such as Child Rights and student mobilization where local youth NGOs had a capacity to provide training to their peers and others)
- Youth-led research projects on the participation of young people in the education system
- Integration of youth participation into the policy development model being promoted
- Introduction of child rights and youth participation into the curriculum of the Faculty of Education
- Including young LCI Teacher Trainers as a sub-cohort (See Chapter 5)

The degree to which much of this programming was pursued was initially based on the physical presence of the KEDP youth advisor and the willingness of the Canadian advisors on hand to experiment with these notions (which in many cases they were not). One of the



first major successes of the programming was the addition of youth-led in-service training courses for teachers on child rights and youth mobilization as part of the 2002 Summer Institute. While there were some teachers who felt fooled when they arrived at a workshop only to discover it was youth led, many participated actively and, afterward, reported being impressed with the skills and knowledge of the youth as trainers. While student involvement in providing in-service teacher training as part of the Summer Institute lasted for only two years, it served to provide a strong starting point for cooperation between teachers and students and for breaking down the notion that teachers had nothing to learn from younger people.

At the same time, significant progress was made in partnership with Canadian trainers who were willing to incorporate elements of youth participation (and other aspects of equality) into existing programming. Rather than taking an aggressive approach, such as having an entire training day devoted to youth participation (or gender equality), the strategy was to integrate these issues into cases used in both Learner-Centred Instruction and leadership training. In the leadership training, for example, one Canadian trainer made ample use of a case involving school improvement planning on girl-child enrolment. The focus of the exercise was to highlight how a school can engage in improvement planning; however, instead of focusing on a more pedestrian improvement plan, such as improving grades, this example introduced a new idea to the trainees. In the LCI training, similar examples were also integrated and, over time, this led to the development of an entire chapter in the LCI Casebook devoted to equality and inclusion issues, as well as our inter-connecting themes that are woven into the main text.

Other early achievements included involvement of a cadre of 20 young people (including students of education and young people involved in a local NGO) in the first Kosovo educational leadership conference. This proved to be a successful endeavour in two ways. First, the youth from the Kosovo Youth Council who attended did a workshop on their research into truancy at high schools in one district of Kosovo. This session was reasonably well attended. What was most interesting was that their research, surprisingly, began with the rate of teacher tardiness or absenteeism, which was deemed to be the reason for close to half of all student truancy. The second group of young people involved, students at the Pristina Higher Pedagogical School, were very inspired by what they saw at the conference. In follow-up meetings, they formulated a plan to develop an educational publication for student teachers in which they could share their learning experiences from the conference. This eventually led to a youth-led quarterly newspaper specifically for students of education that is now being run by the Students Association for Professional Development (SAPD) of the Faculty of Education, University of Pristina. SAPD itself also arose out of the HPS student's involvement in the leadership conference and from the culture change that the Faculty of Education was generating. Student teachers determined for themselves that there should be a similar organization for students of education – one that focused on early professionalization of teachers and one that introduced life-long learning as a key aspect of the teachers' career. Furthermore, at the time, it was determined that this organization should be non-political, as an alternative to the student advocacy organizations – such as the Students Union – which were highly politicized bodies.

Interestingly, in the early years of SAPD, the students union worked actively to block the formation of the group. However, over time the Union became comfortable with SAPD's non-political status. During the 2005-2006 crisis over leadership at the Faculty of Education, SAPD, as an organization with a growing reputation for integrity, was asked to oversee the Faculty of Education student elections. In the second round of elections, SAPD was asked by another organization to enter into a coalition. Thus, while SAPD may have lost some of its apolitical nature by entering into the realm of elected student politics and advocacy, this





model is in fact much closer to similar organizations in Canada, such as the Canadian Federation for Students.

Over the six years in Kosovo, we continued to dive into uncharted waters of a youth perspective within KEDP. We hosted a regional student teacher conference, further strengthened the *Arhdmeria* (“The Future”) magazine that was initiated out of the student teacher conference, created an inclusive school network that was youth-friendly, connected our teacher trainers to an initiative of having student researchers visit new learner-centred classrooms (which was particularly useful towards highlighting how the teacher-training program was taking place without EDP staff directly involved), and further, had a youth representative on the project steering committee. The latter, who was the President of SAPD, demonstrated how EDP models the messages it sends. It was important to bring youth onto the project steering committee to further emphasize EDP’s commitment to youth issues. Incidentally, we had a member of the PSC who was an ethnic minority as well to further illustrate our dedication to ethnic minority issues and to ensure relevant issues were brought to the fore. While initially youth participation was not a major crosscutting theme in Serbia and in Montenegro, opportunities did emerge to work with youth in a variety of ways that enriched the overall program. In Serbia, the SEDP office added a youth internship program designed to assist students of translation and interpretation from Belgrade University in gaining on-the-job experience to assist them in their career development. Further, SEDP engaged in outreach activities with students of education and youth volunteer programs as a contribution to a larger regional initiative on youth participation (outlined below). In Montenegro, linkages were made to the national university as part of the same regional youth participation initiative

Early on in EDP’s work in Kosovo, it was noted that youth in general paid fewer political and social costs for interacting with other ethnic groups. It was

noted, for example, that the first formal organization-to-organization interaction (not facilitated by internationals) between an Albanian and Kosovar-Serbian organization in the immediate aftermath of the conflict was a meeting between the Kosovo Youth Council and members of a School-Based Serbian Youth Group in Rahovic/Orahovac. On the strength of this, EDP explored the notion of initiating formal interaction among youth throughout the region. For EDP, the natural entry point was to work with youth studying to be

educators. In Kosovo, a significant component of KEDP was dedicated to developing a pre-service teacher education program at the University of Pristina, of which SAPD was an integral component. While neither Serbia nor Montenegro had a pre-service component, efforts were made to create linkages with such groups. The results were the conference on Promoting Equality, Access and Change in Education Conference (dubbed the PEACE Conference). This event was as interesting for its logistics as it was for its results. Ultimately, the PEACE conference was organized collaboratively between SAPD and KEDP. However, the conference was held in Montenegro (a “neutral” territory) and logistically organized in

#### Lessons Learned about youth involvement

The stereotyping that youth must face can be overwhelming at first. For example, SAPD followed the steps needed towards legalization and still faced challenges in having legitimate acknowledgement from the Faculty of Education or with the Ministry of Education. Thus, youth need support from respected leaders.

International actors have a vital role in empowering local allies to integrate youth issues in a positive and peace building manner. As mentioned earlier, there is a masculine “his-story” with youth in Kosovo, and it can be challenging to not have the future be dictated by the past.

Youth experience trust issues with each other, as any minority group does. In one case, the governing body of the SAPD didn’t want high school students to speak at their leadership conference. They had no problem involving peers, yet anyone younger was expected to grow up before being fully accepted. Their posture reminded us of the discussions we had with adult EDP partners when discussing youth issues. Ultimately, high school students were allowed to present, but only after substantial deliberations had taken place.



part by students from the University of Montenegro. In the end, the conference had over 160 participants from seven different jurisdictions including two universities from Serbia. The conference itself spawned a number of follow-up activities – including two follow-up conference (one in Serbia and one in Kosovo – notably the Serbia conference was attended by Kosovar students) a number of study tours of Kosovo students to universities in Albania, and a range of ICT-based networking activities – most notably a Yahoo-discussion group.

### 4. Ethnic Minorities

Working with ethnic minorities in Kosovo provided us with a glimpse of post-war remnants, allies and attitudes. We needed a greater amount of careful sensitivity when entering a classroom full of ethnic minority teachers who possessed a very different history and living situation than the Albanians. Often politics would affect the training sessions. While we felt that teachers needed to express their opinions, we often tried to keep the teachers focussed on the subject of learner-centred instruction. For example, in teaching a lesson on the purpose and usefulness of integrating drama in the classroom, Serbian teachers created messages of “hope to survive the bombing” while their Albanian counterparts presented more child-friendly images. Learner-centred instruction seemed to have more potency among the Albanian population as it was viewed as the non-Serbian way of teaching. However, with non-Serbian ethnic minorities, LCI had yet a different form.

In RAE (Roma, Ashkali or Egyptian) communities, it was more of a challenge to locate RAE teachers. Once located, they needed to feel safe to attend the training. Often the number that actually became involved was very few. We made attempts to create a RAE Teachers’ Association with OSCE; however our attempts to go beyond were often thwarted by issues relating to security, language and ethno-centrism. RAE teachers were afraid of being assimilated, and viewed training as a means of assimilation.

#### Teaching educators about education of Roma

In facilitating a workshop on school improvement planning, one activity that was often used was the development of school improvement plans that focused on improving Roma integration into the school. Thus, the topic of Roma education was introduced without being associated with the perceived “hard-selling” of Roma education issues that might be associated with, for example, a workshop on human rights and the role of the school as a duty-bearer in rights fulfillment for Roma.

Our work with Turkish and Bosniak communities was much more fruitful. Often both communities would continue to hold teacher-training conferences, publish magazines and/or become teacher trainers. Specifically, the government of Turkey became involved with Turkish Teacher Training with which we were happy to cooperate (i.e. encouraging Turkish student teachers at the Prizren campus of the Faculty of Education to attend classes in their native language). We had Bosniak teacher trainers that were able to train Bosniak teachers and continue as a force of change for the Bosnian Teachers Association. Relationships with both teaching communities remained strong and proactive throughout KEDP’s lifespan.

The Serbian community in Kosovo was a much greater challenge. When we completed the project in 2007, we were uncertain if we actually accomplished the task of educator development. Serbians in Kosovo were very much tied to Belgrade, and while Belgrade did not have much interaction with them, the loyalty to the motherland was always apparent in our work. We needed to frame the teacher training differently, as according to Serbian teachers, “there was no need to change.” We referred to the training as a “cross-cultural exchange” rather than a training program. During our early years of work, we were able to have several Equal Opportunities in Education Symposia, so that Serbian teachers would have the opportunity to meet with Albanian teachers, for the first time since the conflict, to talk about their classroom activities. Often the transportation of the Serbian teachers was the



main security concern, but teachers continued to attend these symposia. In other cases, feeling resentment towards being displaced from their homes, Serbian teachers would not attend any event that was connected to international involvement. Furthermore, school directors often forbade any involvement unless it was sanctioned in Belgrade. Personal decisions became political for Serbian teachers.

The need for Serbian teachers to be trained became clearer. Often teachers were among the few people with paid employment in an enclave. Some did not have the proper qualifications, and most had never attended a professional development seminar. When publishing *Messages from the Classroom: Sharing Learner-Centred Ideas* (Buleshkaj & Mizzi, 2003), we had to integrate the English language pages between the other two languages (Albanian & Serbian) in the three-language book, as people would not accept the book if the Albanian and Serbian languages laid side-by-side. With this editorial change, we sold (at a minimal charge of one euro) over 4000 copies in all communities (with exception of the Turkish community). For some Serbian teachers in 2003, it was the first teacher-training textbook that they had ever received.

With our specific ethnic-specific programs in place, we were also able to integrate issues relating to ethnic minorities within our LCI Casebook and have a special section and training segment on ethnic issues. During the March 2004 violent flare-up in Kosovo, it was noted that teachers were among the protesters, and we realized that we needed to ensure that teachers were learning how perpetuating prejudice is not acceptable in the classroom, but that more open discussions about the nature and root causes of violence are acceptable methods to promote change.

The approach to working with minority groups in Serbia and in Montenegro was limited in scope. This was in part due to the much narrower mandates within these projects and also due to the nature of the ethnic make-ups of both of these places. In Serbia, for all intents and purposes, the project had very little contact with ethnic minorities. While there were windows of opportunity to include the Vojvodina's semi-autonomous Department of Education into leadership development, the project was unable to mobilize in this regard. Rather, the focus was on integrating content into leadership and project management workshops that raised awareness about minority inclusion. This proved to be a useful strategy. By addressing minority inclusion in this way, participants in programming were able to see first hand how their new leadership and management tools could be applied in a variety of situations and how the issues could be introduced in a non-threatening, matter of fact manner.

The approach used in Montenegro was similar. However, in Montenegro, there was a somewhat greater openness among participants to discuss minority issues – including Roma

#### **Lessons Learned in integrating ethnic minorities**

The uncertainty and instability of the region, including local events, directly affect ethnic minorities, and divides their loyalties between teacher education and community justice. Often, the status of ethnic minorities as community members of a school, municipality or group of families supersedes their role as educators.

A top-down approach towards integration needs to take place in order to allow the bottom-up processes to begin gathering momentum.

Reminding participants that they are all teachers and need to continue with their professional development in order for social change to emerge can become a strong counter to people dwelling on a certain event/crisis/situation, and can be helpful in bringing rival groups together.

Youth and women who are also ethnic minorities are doubly marginalized, and are hardest to reach. We had to really search to identify these people and invite them to opportunities that they might be interested in.

Prepare for anything to take place when working with ethnic minorities: transportation, security, meals, materials, etc. All these will affect their involvement and commitment. Leave no stone unturned!



and Albanian minorities. Further, while it was never confirmed, the participants in MEDP's programming – based on their names – clearly included several non-Slavic Montenegrins.

Thus, in both Serbia and Montenegro, EDP was able to demonstrate the power of the second approach to social development – modeling and demonstration – rather than direct interventions.

## 5. Gender equality

Gender was another highly politicized and challenging area to integrate into our work. However, its political correctness made it an easier element to address, despite frequent broken pledges and promises. At times, men felt threatened with the discussions of gender issues. Men feared that they would lose their jobs, and that their power within society would be lost. Therefore, when we discussed gender issues, we needed to be aware of this reality. We worked around it by espousing that diversity in the workplace and in classrooms produces a more just and democratic society. As we did with youth and ethnic minorities, we approached gender programming on two levels, integrated and directly targeted.

Our efforts began with our initial cadre of teacher trainers – and how we favoured women to become teacher educators. While this did unveil a gender bias, we felt that it needed to take place in order for women to feel more appreciated in their work. We also needed our Canadian trainers to be aware of gender issues, so that we lived what we were preaching. The notion that two men are writing this chapter on gender issues is not unique in KEDP – men acting as change agents for the status of women can challenge men's thinking and attitudes. Moreover, we also utilized gender experts through CIDA and consulted with local women who were able to speak to the experiences of being a woman in a patriarchal society, and with them, we were able to explore avenues for change.

We needed to discuss and understand that when we speak about gender, are we are not just talking about women's liberation. We structured our work to be universal – the equal liberation of women and men throughout Kosovo. However, in our activities, we did need to promote a heavier emphasis on women, since women were more underappreciated in education and other sectors within Kosovo society.

Through our research (counting the number of LCI participants over the years and their locations) we did notice a significant amount of women in urban sessions, and a significant amount of men in our rural sessions. Men were able to find jobs in other sectors in urban areas while women were largely unemployed in rural areas, leaving the most available jobs (teaching) to men. It became a lively discussion when our local trainers (who always had mixed teams of women and men) would introduce gender issues with a group of predominantly male teachers. We noticed that it was harder for them to challenge the authority of the teacher trainers when it was the male teacher trainers introducing the concept of gender issues. Male-to-male discussions on gender issues were generally not disputed. One unique scenario that localized more male support for women in education came from a small

### **An unexpected source of support for gender equality**

One day, at a teacher training NGO consortium meeting, we began with an introduction of who we were and what we were doing in teacher education, since there were some new faces at the table. We all went around introducing ourselves and stopped at this man who looked somewhat out of context with his leather jacket and jeans. "My name is Ahmed," he began, "and I represent the Kosovar Women Teachers Network." At first the internationals didn't understand the smiles from the local Albanians until the translation came through. The atmosphere became filled with confusion, surprise and, unexpectedly, emerged with a pleasant after taste. In future meetings, the female consortium members never confronted him whenever he presented his organization's viewpoints on certain topics. He remained committed to representing this new initiative and felt proud of his involvement. It was one of these points in our time in the Balkans that team members realized that we could never say "we have seen everything."



village called Dragash. A male school director openly asked our Canadian team how he could attract female candidates to teach in his school, which, at that time, only had male teachers. He was worried about the female students in his school and ensuring that they would have women as role models.

Not all women welcomed the prospect of change. In one Serbian enclave, the school director refused to endorse our LCI work in her school. When we did show up to start the sessions, she remained critical and confrontational with our Canadian trainers. She was determined to undermine our efforts and leave her school as it was. Unfortunately, this was not an abnormal reaction by school directors, as often we were initially seen as people trying to create revolution rather than exploring methods for improvement. Our persistence through returning every year with opportunities and success stories taken from Serbian communities like Shilovo gradually won over our adversaries to a certain extent.

In some instances we succeeded in integrating the gender theme within the LCI Casebook, and used such examples in teacher and leadership training. Choosing women to speak and lead groups was important, and encouraging teachers to question stereotypic roles for women and men in our activities were essential. *Messages from the classroom* also highlighted lesson plans that introduced gender themes to an unsuspecting audience.

We also approached the topic of gender directly. We included a section in the LCI Casebook on gender issues, trained a cadre of gender trainers and produced a gender equality book. A participant in the Senior Leadership development Program developed a gender equality strategy for the Ministry as her change project, and it became the model for other ministries. Our own KEDP staff also had a small cohort of gender equality experts from CIDA and a local staff person housed in our office to review all programs to ensure they were “gender-fied.” It was more useful when we located a few key, local allies towards gender in the Ministry of Education and the Faculty of Education (which later offered a course on “Gender Issues in the Classroom”).

The approach addressing gender issues in Serbia and in Montenegro was much more limited in scope than was the

case in Kosovo. In Serbia and in Montenegro, EDP did not pursue any specific programming initiatives (other than the regional initiative described below) and focused more on modeling and demonstrating gender equality in our own work and in the content that we delivered in the various capacity building programs.<sup>3</sup> This was done for several reasons. First, as noted

#### Lessons learned in implementing gender equality

Despite certain success stories of having more men engaged in gender issues, men generally do feel uncomfortable discussing this issue. It is best to integrate gender within other programming areas as well as having direct approaches.

The role of men training other men on gender issues is very important and can be used as a powerful tool. Ensure that female trainers also continue their work on gender issues, as they can present a cultural expertise men cannot.

Participants will acclaim that they do not discriminate against women. However, when it comes to their decisions, they will, for instance, drink the tea first before offering it to a woman, or have the women hand out the materials. Be very specific in the messages so that they realize that sexism takes place on very microscopic levels.

The word “feminism” can be a very scary and disabling word thwarting men’s involvement due to the radical feminism that took place in the West decades ago. Include a session on the differing forms of feminism, and how it can relate to keeping sensitive to each other’s differences and opinions.

<sup>3</sup> In Serbia, it was the intention of SEDP to engage directly with MoES’s Department of Democratization on social development issues including gender equality and minority integration. However, during the life of the project, this Department was in a highly tenuous position within the Ministry and was essentially programmatically paralyzed. By the end of SEDP, this department had been disbanded.

above, in Serbia and in Montenegro, gender equality was not seen as a priority. Many of our local counterparts noted that the ministries in both places were predominately staffed by women and that women occupied several high-level positions. As such, the receptiveness to the need to discuss and build capacities in terms of gender equality was low. Further, as seen in other places, if the project had attempted to hard sell gender equality issues, this might have affected the building of relationships required to achieve other program results.

## 6. Cross-Jurisdictional Social Development

Similar to the experience in working with youth, EDP found that the champions of social development in terms of gender equality, special needs education and minority integration were often open to the notion of collaborating across jurisdictions. EDP capitalized on this by developing its first regional publication *Equality in Education* (2006). This book was an edited volume that contained over 50 submissions from authors across the region. The goal of the book was to provide local educators, educational leaders, students and others an opportunity to share experiences related to equality in education and showcase examples of successful initiatives and best practices. Interestingly, in Kosovo all submissions for the book focused on gender equality; whereas, in Serbia the focus was predominately on special needs education, while submissions from Montenegro were mixed. We are not sure whether this split in emphasis reflected the fact that EDP worked more actively in Kosovo in terms of gender equality or whether this merely reflected the priorities of educators in different regions. In Serbia, educators general did not identify gender issues as a top priority. The book itself proved to be a significant success and led to some incidents of cross jurisdictional networking between authors.

## 7. Conclusion

As we have tried to integrate social development within EDP, we ourselves have developed our social insights and sensitivities. We have learned or confirmed many lessons. Though youth are receptive to change and generally change quicker than their adult colleagues, they must be mentored as with any other sub-group. This is exemplified through SAPD in Kosovo, where the members adopted a multi-lingual constitution and invited ethnic minorities quickly to join their leadership board and/or magazine editorial board. All in all, despite the initial challenges of integrating youth within EDP, it is now widely accepted as being the right move that strengthened EDP's programming. Unfortunately, the youth outreach was very limited in SEDP and non-existent in MEDP, but there is room to grow in future work.

Power dynamics become heightened when working with ethnic minorities, as we have uncovered. In a reconstructing society, those who were given power may see their power reduced when those who had none are now given power. The remaining problem is how to adapt and strategize for each of these changes. With power comes responsibility to govern and provide for the powerless. How does one confront her/his personal prejudices and concede to change? A new dynamic emerges within ethnic groups (especially when the conflict was ethnically-charged) that carries forth in the educator development curricula. As outsiders, we had to prepare for the historical perspective, the current context, and the future in our delivery. We had to also integrate other segments of change (gender and youth, for example) so that a holistic approach towards reconciliation and development could take shape. While our efforts were valued by many, they were not valued by others, so we still need to reach a point where forgiving local reformers continue to work to bridge current and new gaps as they emerge.

Tackling issues such as gender equality within educator development is not new in our times, and certainly is not fully resolved in any country. However, dialogues need to take place as the patriarchy has lasting effects on both women and men. In our experiences



implementing the EDP program, we were faced with a multitude of diverse challenges. How do we get women and men talking about gender issues in their classrooms in respectful and helpful ways given that some may feel that there is no need for discussions such as these? Given the timeframe and available resources of the project, what kind of impact is realistically possible? These were a few of the questions that our team faced when we were tackling the larger issue of gender construction and knowledge. We did experience positive signs of development, such as the gender training team at the Ministry of Education, and we ensured that gender was involved in all aspects of programming over the years. However, as noted when discussing ethnic minorities' involvement in educator development, we have merely opened a door to a room full of opportunities and learning. We needed to make sure that the door was kept open by empowering the leadership to continue with their gender strategies and discussions after the conclusion of the EDP program. Remaining committed to the issue is paramount, and being able to speak about gender issues to a multitude of audiences is just as important when ensuring sustainable development in this sector.

In social development, issues must be repeatedly raised and events that feed into those issues must continually take place until social development and developing socially becomes the norm. Secondly, there is great power in the involvement of allies within social development such as men training on gender development, or one ethnic group working on respecting ethnic differences of others. Participants will expect the opposite (i.e. women talking about gender issues), which undoubtedly also needs to take place, but also there is great value in a diverse approach to training about social development. It connects themes and breaks through cultural boundaries that might otherwise resist and limit. Thirdly, emphasis on social development needs to start from the beginning of any project or program. There is an atmosphere of change in post-conflict reconstruction, and social development needs to be integrated from the start. It is through these early interventions that allies can be identified and cooperative work can begin to take shape. "Neutral" international resources often need to begin facilitation related to such activities, but local role models and champions need to be cultivated for the day when they become the social development leaders.

