



CSSProject for Integrative Mediation

Report

Professional Training for Key Leaders of Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/ Shtërpçë


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Integrative Mediation: Bringing Local Leaders Together

The CSSProject for Integrative Mediation e. V. evolved out of ten years of experience of the International Mediator in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling. The work of the Mediator started informally in 1992 and was formally mandated by the international community and the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1995 to 2004. Upon request, the format and structure of mediations were conducted at the local level based on practical needs and local conflicts. The Mediator sought to increase dialogue and reduce tensions by finding step-by-step solutions to daily problems. The format of the process included information visits, mediations, follow ups and round table dialogues. In 10 years the Mediator conducted over 185 local mediations in 55 municipalities. The mandate of the Mediator was completed in December 2004.

Integrative Mediation seeks to apply lessons learned and to adapt the unique Bosnia and Herzegovina model for possible use in other parts of South Eastern Europe. The mediation team developed a comprehensive approach to mediation by including various levels of responsibility, multiple actors and a variety of techniques. It combines six different conflict resolution activities, drawing on classical mediation and developing a holistic and decentralized instrument for implementation of agreements. The elements of Integrative Mediation are Grassroots Mediation, Self-Mediation, Negotiation Training, Problem-Solving Workshops, Reconciliation-building, and Research/Analysis. Throughout the process, it assists local actors to develop initiatives and to implement confidence-building measures. In addition, it helps to clarify to civil society why certain measures are needed, and enables communities to participate actively in the local peace process. Furthermore, it brings the general and hierarchical process of conflict resolution down to the local level.

Integrative Mediation does not seek to replace or remove ownership of the peace process. Instead, by complementing the peace process Integrative Mediation provides local parties with a conflict resolution framework that enables them to identify for themselves the obstacles to conflict resolution and reconciliation efforts. The main aim of Integrative Mediation is to leave decisions and solutions in the hands of local actors and to strengthen the work of local peace initiatives, thereby facilitating return, co-existence and re-integration at the local level.

For further information contact:

CSSProject for Integrative Mediation, e.V.
Auguststr. 72
10117 Berlin
Germany

info@cssproject.org
www.cssproject.org
tel: +49 30 227 7741
fax: +49 30 227 76417



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Background

The municipalities of Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë are approximately 30 kilometres apart and have a complex economic and political relationship. As the result of the 1999 conflict, Štrpce/Shtërpçë is identified as a Serb majority municipality which has financial and operational difficulties to run its daily affairs effectively. Kosovo Albanians working in the municipality live in Ferizaj/Uroševac and commute to work on a daily basis to ensure Albanian representation in the municipal structures. This dynamic inhibits the integration of Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians in the municipality. Kosovo Albanians also see Štrpce/Shtërpçë as a place to build weekend homes due to the proximity of a ski resort. This popular ski resort could be a valuable source of economic income and development, but the constant friction between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians in Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë has hindered the municipality from tapping into it. Furthermore, the municipality has had severe problems with the Kosovo Energy Agency (KEK), which due to lack of payment by some members of the community has strictly limited energy supply to the entire municipality. This condition reduces the possibility for economic development and financial investment in the region even further. It also becomes a life-threatening problem if it is not resolved before temperatures drop. CSSP has been actively mediating in this issue and has received proposals from both sides

to resolve the deadlock. This was the first contact KEK and the municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë have had in a year and all previous efforts to resolve the issue have failed or were never followed-up or monitored. At the time of writing, negotiations were still ongoing and progressing towards a bilateral meeting.

Ferizaj/Uroševac, on the other hand, is a Kosovo Albanian majority municipality that has functional institutions and a respectable budget to run its daily affairs. However, there are almost no Kosovo Serbs living in the town centre. They have only one Serb representative in the municipal government and she is rarely in the municipality as she lives in Serbia. This lack of representation of the Kosovo Serb community has serious implications for the local peace-building process and inhibits any serious efforts of integration. There are two Kosovo Serb return sites in villages (Babliak/Babljak and Babush/Babuš) around Ferizaj/Uroševac and although the municipality has reiterated its verbal commitment to increase reintegration and return efforts, only minor progress has been made and the sites are in a dire state. At one site the majority of the Kosovo Serb population has not returned despite having agreed to return. This site is experiencing major problems with infrastructure, especially water supply. The other site has been completely rebuilt, but no return has taken place, so at the moment it is empty.

There are no returns to the city centre and this is a sore point of conflict with the

IDPs currently living in Štrpce/Shtërpçë. Since 2005, CSSP has been working on the return of these IDPs to Ferizaj/Uroševac. At that time the municipal return officers (MROs) of both municipalities did not speak to each other or work on resolving the return issues. Since then the two MROs have had several joint meetings, developed a joint list of returnees, identified obstacles, and met with IDPs. However, until today there are still no returns to the town centre. In this regard the IDPs play an important role. On the one hand they claim they want to return because they live in a collective centre and have a low standard of living. On the other hand, they often do not make an effort to solve their problems and begin the return process. At best they claim they will return if there is a group of returnees willing to return together and only if their homes are rebuilt beforehand. Given that these claims have been made before and that the IDPs have not returned to the other villages, the municipal government is not willing to make another effort in this regard.

Another challenge is the actual and perceived lack of freedom of movement. Kosovo Serbs argue that they are afraid to travel freely throughout the Ferizaj/Uroševac municipality and therefore are restricted to specific areas where they feel safe to work and live. These conditions have caused very high tensions in the overall relationship between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians in Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë which have hindered social, economic and political

development. The dispute between the two municipalities has taken on such levels that representatives rarely meet to discuss important issues. Specifically in Štrpce/Shtërpçë, the Additional Deputy President, a Kosovo Albanian, claims he is actively excluded from meetings and discriminated. The municipalities are strictly divided along ethnic lines and any opportunity is used to reinforce the ethnic groups' opposing positions.

Specifically the Municipal President of Štrpce/Shtërpçë argues that his municipal government has representation of Kosovo Albanians while the government of Ferizaj/Uroševac does not. He has called repeatedly for this disproportion to be corrected. The problem is very much a vicious circle. Kosovo Serbs claim there is no freedom of movement and therefore often do not go to work, and Kosovo Albanians do not make an effort to hire them because they believe the Kosovo Serbs will not go to work. In addition, the jobs available are usually very low paying menial labor jobs and Kosovo Serbs are not ready to accept them. As a result there are many Kosovo Albanian majority areas where no Kosovo Serbs are working.

As was mentioned above, CSSP began working with Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë in 2005. The initial meetings in the municipalities took place to assess the local situation through various exchanges with international and local representatives, as well as members of the NGO community and IDPs. The main goal of these

preliminary meetings was to build trust and analyse the best way CSSP could cooperate with and support the municipalities. At the end of the year, CSSP conducted mediations in Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë which resulted in concrete joint conclusions signed by leaders from both communities. In 2006, CSSP carried out several follow-up visits to monitor the progress made on implementing the joint conclusions and to determine which leaders would most benefit from attending the workshop. However, the problem is much more deep-rooted and needs more attention from the international authoritative structures. The situation in Štrpce/Shtërpçë has reached a conflict point with the municipality adopting statutes considered illegal in Kosovo and the Kosovo Albanians boycotting the Municipal Assembly.

The two municipalities were selected by CSSP to receive a Professional Training, sponsored by the Austrian Development Agency, in order to improve inter-municipal cooperation on returns and to try and contribute to a reduction of tensions. The following is an overview of the training.

General Structure

The Level 1 Professional Training focuses on the development of conflict resolution methods, creating options, and on becoming self-aware. Main elements include understanding the concepts of negotiation and problem-solving, active listening, and team-building. Throughout

the training an emphasis is placed on becoming aware of stereotypes and deeply rooted perceptions that hinder cooperation between the municipalities. All sessions of the workshop, as well as all written material, are simultaneously interpreted into Albanian and Serbian.

The Level 1 Professional Training includes a variety of teaching styles, such as short lectures, role plays, case studies, plenary discussions, smaller working groups, and individual exercises, to provide the participants with the most well-rounded and participatory experience possible. All elements are supervised and monitored by the trainer team and each trainer provides extra assistance in his/her field of expertise. Dr. Juan Diaz of CSSP leads the sessions on negotiation and problem-solving concepts and techniques. Ms. Alexandra Schwarz-Schilling guides the sessions on awareness, team-building, and communication. Ms. Eva Maria Malisius leads the part of the training that focuses on role plays and creating presentations.

The schedule of the training is similar each day with theoretical and plenary work in the morning and practical group work in the afternoon. However, the schedule remains somewhat flexible to adapt to the needs of the participants without deviating from the objectives of the course. Throughout the training, participants are encouraged to contribute with their thoughts, opinions, ideas, experiences and suggestions and special emphasis is placed on making all



information applicable to the daily responsibilities of the participants.

After completing the professional training, all participants are awarded certificates of participation to confirm the additional conflict resolution skills they have acquired. An interactive evaluation of the course also takes place to determine what parts of the training can be improved and what aspects are especially successful. Participants are encouraged to suggest topics or issues they would like to see covered in future trainings.

Aims of the Training

The aim of the professional training was to build trust between the two municipalities and to enable local key leaders from Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpcë to productively begin to resolve their conflicts with respect for all parties involved. It focused on team-building exercises and on strengthening the negotiation and problem-solving skills of the participants, making them more able to effectively define and represent their interests. Throughout the training an emphasis was placed on group work and from the beginning participants were divided into working groups that discussed specific topics related to actual problems faced by the municipalities. Therefore, participants were able to apply the theory learned during the workshop directly to the situations they encounter in their daily lives. Since the two municipalities rarely communicate, this dynamic gave the participants a chance to interact with

their counterparts from the other community and discuss relevant issues.

To improve the cooperation between Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpcë, time was allocated between the different sessions to allow informal discussions among the participants. One of the main mottos of this training series is bringing local leaders together. Therefore, the time the participants use to interact outside the official schedule serves the purpose of improving relations. Especially in a situation where the relationship between the participants is so precarious, it is important to provide enough room to have informal interactions. This decreases tension and gives participants the opportunity to withdraw when they feel too much pressure.

The training also provided a safe space for different leaders to interact and discuss issues without outside pressure. This gave them the opportunity to become aware of the others' perspective and begin to understand the different sides of the problems facing the municipalities. The location of Struga was specifically chosen to remove the participants from their ordinary environment and allow them to discuss and collaborate freely. Throughout the workshops, the participants were guided and observed by the trainer team: Head Trainers Dr. Juan Diaz and Alexandra Schwarz-Schilling and Assistant Trainer Eva Maria Malisius.

Since this was the Level 1 Professional Training and the participants had not

really interacted previously, the participants in the beginning had a very reserved attitude towards each other and also towards the trainer team. It was obvious that they were uncomfortable and suspicious of each other, especially since the relationships between the different ethnic groups and municipalities are strained. They were easily aggravated and spent the first session making their positions clear. However, as the training progressed, the participants began to work together and feel a bit more comfortable in their surroundings. They recognized the value of the training and especially of the opportunity to work together with their counterparts and others involved on important issues. The participants also realized that the skills they were learning were directly applicable to their daily lives, which motivated them.

Participant Selection

The target group for the Level 1 Professional Training were the key leaders from the municipalities of Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë. Special emphasis was placed on trying to achieve ethnic and gender balance for the workshop, which proved quite problematic due to the inter-ethnic tensions that exist between the two municipalities. To facilitate the attendance of all leaders, CSSP offered child-care services for the duration of the workshop. Even though this offer was welcomed by the representatives, nobody chose to take advantage of these services.

Also, CSSP made special efforts to ensure the ethnic balance of the participants. Both communities tried to increase the number of representatives from their majority groups and CSSP had to demand several revisions of the proposed participation lists. At the last moment, a number of selected participants declined to attend the workshop for unknown reasons and the Municipal President of Štrpce/Shtërpçë sent someone to replace him. The selection process of the participants was a clear example of the tensions that exist between the two ethnic groups and of the political nature of every decision that is made, even just choosing workshop participants. In the end there were 28 participants of whom twelve were women, 13 were Serbs, twelve were Albanians, and three were members of the Roma minority. There was one participant from Handikos, an NGO representing the disabled community.

Due to the seriousness of the issue of return in both municipalities, CSSP invited two representatives from the Ministry for Communities and Return (MCR) to participate in the training. During the January visit of the CSSP Team to Kosovo, the Minister had promised that the two MCR officials in charge of the region of Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë would attend. After repeated attempts to contact the Ministry and obtain the names of the nominees, CSSP was finally able to ensure the participation of two ministry officials. At the last minute, the Minister asked to have two additional representatives included, which was welcomed by CSSP.

The MCR is the key office in charge of resolving the return issue and still does not have a stable and effective structure. Therefore, CSSP believed it would be beneficial to have the two extra ministry officials attend the workshop. Unfortunately, it turned out that the extra two people were the Minister's daughter and assistant who were not motivated to actually take active part in the workshop and did not have any real authority over the issue of return. Their attendance was minimal and the trainer team had to approach them and reiterated the importance of their active participation. They modified their behaviour the next day but on Day 3, they informed the trainer team that all the ministry representatives would leave the workshop the next morning. The trainer team demonstrated their disapproval of this decision and requested that the two original ministry representatives remain for the rest of the training. It was made clear to the ministry officials that their behaviour had been unacceptable and highly disappointing. Eventually they agreed that only the daughter and assistant would return to Prishtinë/Priština and the ministry officials from Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë would remain. Later, one of the officials approached the trainer team to clarify that he had encouraged the leaving of the daughter and the assistant due to their lack of interest and active participation in the workshop. He had felt that it was more beneficial to the trainer team and the rest of the participants if the two would return to Prishtinë/Priština. CSSP informed UNMIK, OSCE and the Minister of its

disappointment with the behaviour of the ministry representatives and of the lack of professionalism this institution has demonstrated. The Minister agreed not to undertake such actions in the future.

During the workshop, the trainer team made a several observations about the participants and their interaction. The lack of cooperation between the various groups - Serbs from Ferizaj/Uroševac, Albanians from Ferizaj/Uroševac, Serbs from Štrpce/Shtërpçë, and Albanians from Štrpce/Shtërpçë, as well as the Roma minority in both communities – was obvious. Although the communities are so close to each other, many of the representatives had never interacted before and most did not have each other's contact information. The lack of cooperation and regular contact is a major obstacle to peace-building in the region.

Another observation was that it is very important that the IDPs become more organized and begin to clearly define their interests and options. Even though the return issue was one of the foci of the workshop, several key representatives of the IDP community were unable to attend because they forgot to update their travel documents. This lack of organisation diminishes the IDPs' ability to become effective actors in the political arena. Also, many of the municipal leaders dealing with the return issue did not know what the correct procedures for different claims were and even representatives from the ministry were at a loss at times. There is a need for

further education about this issue for the general public.

Issues of Concern

Since the participants were able to form their own groups around actual topics that were of concern to them in their role as municipal leaders, the training team was able to obtain greater insight into some of the predominant disputes facing the communities. The participants were divided into five working groups, each discussing a different case that they are either directly involved in or affected by in some way. They were asked to develop each case, defining the conflict parties, their interests and developing options, as well as designing an action plan for future steps. On the last day every group presented its case to the rest of the workshop participants and show the work they had done throughout the week. This allowed first proposals to be made for resolving some of the issues that keep the municipalities apart. The documents developed by the five groups are attached in the appendix and demonstrate the genuine efforts made by the participants to begin to resolve their cases. The topics will be briefly summarized below because they present valuable information that can help formulate suggestions for future projects and give an idea of where improvements in existing structures are most needed.

Group One discussed coordinating sporting and cultural events between Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë. These types of events provide the perfect platform for interaction between

members of both municipalities and also between the different ethnic groups on an informal basis. Especially sporting events can actually bridge the gap between ethnicities particularly when the teams are multi-ethnic. In the past, for different reasons – be it lack of publicity or interest - these events have not been able to attract as many supporters as had been expected. Now the members of this working group, which included the mayor of Ferizaj/Uroševac, came up with several modifications that needed to be made to make this project more successful. The group also showed that top level local leadership, like the mayor, is interested in strengthening the relations between the two municipalities, and between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. It is also noteworthy that the mayor demonstrates support for cultural and sporting events, two aspects of municipality life that usually take a backseat to other issues.

Group Two dealt with the issue of illegal construction. This post-conflict problem heavily affects all of Kosovo and strains the relationship between Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë and between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. Since regulations often do not exist or are not enforced, much illegal building is taking place, and most people do not know how to stop it. This development is further reinforced by the corruption that often accompanies the post-conflict environment. Frequently, authorities ignore illegal construction, especially when they are done by members of organized crime groups. The municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë, with

its proximity to a ski resort, is very attractive to real estate development and therefore conflicts like this one are frequent. One member of the group was directly affected by this case and shared the problematic course that has to be taken in order to try to resolve this issue using the local institutions.

Group Three tried to design an action plan of how to best accommodate persons who are forcefully returned to Kosovo. It is interesting to note that the majority of the members of this group came from the ethnic minority of the Ashkali and the Gorani. This demonstrates the importance this issue has for specifically their community, although it might not be of great concern to the Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs. Cases like the one they used as an example are abundant in the two municipalities and therefore the members of this group were eager to find a solution in order to use it as an example for resolving other cases. This population is especially vulnerable because it is always a minority and it was encouraging to see that the workshop offered a space to discuss this issue at length. It is important to note, however, that this group was wholly comprised of members of the Roma minority which directly demonstrates the lack of interest in this issue from anyone else. Additionally, since they were all in one group, the Roma minority was not present to voice their views in any of the other groups.

Group Four focused on taking first steps to try to resolve the return issue between

the two municipalities. This issue is especially important in the local context and it was very fortunate for the workshop to have both Municipal Return Officers as well as representatives from the IDP population and from the MCR present. The workshop provided a huge step in the direction of closer cooperation for this group of participants since it was the first time these individuals talked together about return over a four day period and really began discussing issues. Although it should be obvious that these individuals who are in charge of resolving probably the most pressing issue facing post-conflict Kosovo regularly meet and are proactive, this is unfortunately not the case. The workshop environment made them come together and work constructively, without having the ability to leave early or avoid topics. The result was the establishment of concrete first steps towards a suitable action plan that would benefit both Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë. It is incredible that in the past six years, such an action plan has not already been designed. Especially for this group, just getting to know each other, was a vital step in the direction of better cooperation in the future.

Group Five discussed the issue of transportation between the two municipalities and determined what needed to be done in order to resume a reliable transportation service. Improved transportation would facilitate interaction between members of both municipalities, which would enable everyone to take a more active part in community life. Transportation is one of the basic

services which should be equal and accessible to all members of the municipality and it can play an important part in bringing people together. It also enables potential returnees to check up on the progress made with the reconstruction of their houses or the eviction of illegal occupiers. Additionally, it helps people who live in enclaves come to the city centre and representatives attend meetings without being discriminated due to their lack of funds for private transportation. Therefore, improving the transportation infrastructure directly strengthens democratic participation.

Conclusions

The Level 1 Professional Training for Key Leaders from Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë helped to start building relations between decision-makers from both municipalities. Many did not know the name of their counterpart in the other community. Most did not have each others' contact details (which at the end of the training were distributed by CSSP in order to facilitate future communication between the participants) or had ever worked on a project together over several days. At the beginning there was a lot of suspicion amongst the participants, but at the end of the training they had become more familiar with each other and now felt more comfortable working together. Many had never objectively analysed their specific problem and therefore it was very helpful for them to have a space where they could really think about their options and alternatives.

The training was definitely a step forward in improving relations between these two municipalities, which are tightly linked, yet plagued with an abundance of conditions that cause conflict on a daily basis. However, it was only a small step. One major request out of the workshop was that the Štrpce/Shtërpçë leaders, specifically the Board of Directors would appreciate having a small professional training alone. The goal would be to improve trust in the Board of Directors which is at the moment at its lowest point. CSSP will discuss this with donors and will inform the municipality in the coming weeks.

The training allowed participants to be removed from their usual constraints and interact freely, which created a greater understanding among the different groups and lay the groundwork for building peace at the local level. By providing a space for local key leaders to interact and empowering them to resolve their problems peacefully, in accordance with the law and with a respect for the human rights of all people, this training helps consolidate sustainable peace in the region.

Next Steps

CSSP was very encouraged by the progress made by the participants from Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë during the professional training and would like to strengthen this foundation in the future. Several participants requested future trainings in order to build on the skills they had learned and approached the trainer team inquiring



whether future workshops would be possible and whether workshops for other members of the municipality could be organized. The gender officer from Ferizaj/Uroševac made a special plea to try to have another workshop that specifically incorporates the issue of gender. Unfortunately, at the moment no further workshop with the municipalities of Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë has been planned even though participants as well as trainers agreed that this would be very beneficial. The Level 1 workshop acquaints the representatives with each other and lays the groundwork for future cooperation. A Level 2 workshop would allow the participants to build on the work they have already accomplished and delve further into the issues they are trying to resolve.

CSSP will continue to work with the two municipalities and do everything within its capabilities to support them in

resolving their inter- and intra-municipal conflicts. A follow-up visit to Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë is planned for April and May 2007, where the CSSP team will meet with workshop participants to determine on what issues progress has been made and where more efforts are needed. Especially around the return issue more emphasis will be placed to improve the current situation and increase the coordination between the Ministry for Return, the local Municipal Return Officers, and the Kosovo Property Agency (KPA).

However, in order to more effectively strengthen local problem-solving capacities, it is vital to continue improving the conflict resolution skills of the local leaders, and to promote their increased cooperation. Therefore, CSSP would like to emphasize the benefit of conducting a Level 2 Professional Training with Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë.

APPENDIX

Trainer Team

Dr. Juan Diaz	CSSP	Trainer
Alexandra Schwarz-Schilling	Conflict Spirale	Trainer
Eva Maria Malisius	CSSP	Assistant Trainer
Brigitta von Messling	CSSP	Project Coordinator
Javor Pobric	CSSP	Security / Logistics
Florent Hajrizi	Partners Kosova	Local Partner

List of Participants

No.	Name	Function/Position	Gender	Ethnicity
Ferizaj / Uroševac				
1.	Faik Grainca	Municipal President	M	Albanian
2.	Danush Ademi	Additional Deputy President	M	Ashkali
3.	Xhevahire Dervishi-Rexhepi	Municipal Returns Officer	F	Albanian
4.	Arjete Istrefi	Assistant to the Municipal President	F	Albanian
5.	Ferinaze Isufi	Gender Equality Committee Member	F	Albanian
6.	Vjollca Krasniqi	Gender Equality Officer	F	Albanian
7.	Valbona Ratkoceri	Handikos – Organisation dealing with Disabilities	F	Albanian
8.	Ganimete Nuredini	Assistant to the Municipal Return Officer	F	Albanian
9.	Salih Jashari	Head of Gender Equality Committee	M	Albanian
10.	Hyzri Hasani	Director of OOO	M	Albanian
11.	Ali Halimi	Community Return Officer	M	Ashkali
12.	Nadije Shutrak	Communities Officer	F	Gorani
Štrpce / Shtërpçë				
13.	Ranko Geric	Director of Emergency Response Operations	M	Serb
14.	Slavisa Staletovic	Additional Deputy President	M	Serb
15.	Hamdi Aliu	Additional Deputy President	M	Albanian
16.	Srdjan Dobrosavljevic	Director of Urbanism	M	Serb
17.	Spomenka Kojadinovic	Municipal Return Officer	F	Serb

18.	Petar Jovanovic	Financial Director	M	Serb
19.	Slavisa Davidovic	Communities Committee Officer	M	Serb
20.	Bojana Dobrosavljevic	Possession List Issuance Clerk	F	Serb
21.	Marjan Ljubic	Director of Committee on Education, Culture and Sports	M	Serb
22.	Slavisa Vaciljevic	Head of the Health Committee	M	Serb
23.	Dragomir Dordjevic	IDP Representative	M	Serb
24.	Fazli Islami	Member of the Community Committee	M	Serb
Ministry for Communities and Return (MCR)				
25.	Albert Zeca	MCR Representative in Ferizaj / Uroševac	M	Albanian
26.	Radica Jevtic	MCR Representative in Štrpce / Shtërpçë	F	Serb
27.	Edona Rrustemi	Assistant to the Minister	F	Albanian
28.	Ana Grbic	MCR; PR Officer for Ministry Relations with UNDP	F	Serb

Working Group Information

Throughout the professional training the participants were divided into working groups focusing on a specific topic. The participants decided for themselves in which working group they wanted to take part and also chose their specific case themselves.

Over the course of several sessions, the groups worked on their cases and applied the concepts from the workshop sessions.

This concluding document contains the results of the working groups. It is intended for the use of the participants of the professional training only.

Group 1: Working Group on Inter-municipal cooperation: Planning Joint Youth and Sports Events for the Two Municipalities

The Working Group focused on the problem of how to improve inter-municipal cooperation between Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë through a focus on cooperation between the two departments of youth, sports and culture.

Some efforts have been made in regards to cooperation in this aspect, although it appears that the planned events were not able to attract a high turnout. The Working Group consisted of representatives from both municipalities, who felt strongly about the issue and the potential to work together on planning these events and putting together a concrete action plan.

All agree that the Working Group put together an excellent action plan and has identified concrete next steps. The present actors have agreed to make all efforts to implement the plan and to take up any open questions and issues with the counterparts that were not present.

While the alternatives presented below are more options rather than alternatives, all agreed that in case of failure to implement the action plan the alternative of cooperating with other municipalities instead of Ferizaj/Uroševac or Štrpce/Shtërpçë is not favourable.

Group 1: Inter-municipal Cooperation: Problem Statement, Issues, and Options

Problem statement: Inter-municipal cooperation between Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë, cooperation between two departments of youth, sports and culture

Issues	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Lack of cooperation between departments	Re-establishment of cooperation	More frequent meetings between directors of the departments and actors	Support of the Ministry for youth, sports and culture
Organization of sport and cultural events	Joint community exhibitions (matches)	Concerts cultural associations	Theatre hosting
Trust among citizens	Building of the modern multi-ethnic society	Confidence building among citizens	Involvement of community leaders and political representatives
Communication	Reestablishment of the communication between two departments	Communication between two presidents	Organization of public hearings

Group 1: Inter-municipal Cooperation: Action Plan / Next Steps

Action	Responsible Person	Timeframe	Supporting Institution	Funding Needed
Football match between Uroševac/Ferizaj – Štrpce/Shtpce for 1 May 2007	Municipal departments for culture, youth and sports, Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtpce	May 2007	Municipal department for culture, youth and sports, Ferizaj/Uroševac	1540 euros
Concerts of cultural-artistic associations	Municipal departments for culture, youth and sports, Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtpce	8 March 2008	Cultural-artistic associations, Ministry of Culture, youth and sports	495 euros
Organization of public hearings	Municipality of Ferizaj/Uroševac and	June 2007	Donors	1100 euros
	Municipality of Štrpce/Shtpce	September 2007		1100 euros

Group 2: Working Group on Illegal Construction in the Municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë

This working group formed out of interested participants, all of whom perceived that they did not fit into any of the other groups. Many of the members of this group have positions that deal with the topic of illegal construction or are directly affected by it.

The case used by this working group addresses the problem of illegal construction on property designated for weekend homes. The concrete problem is that temporary permits have been issued; however, these have now been used to construct permanent constructions which are also bigger than the original permit (permit for 60 sqm, construction 260 sqm). The necessary legal documents for the extension of the construction are missing.

This concrete case of illegal construction is further complicated by the fact that the person who is building the illegal construction is politically powerful and does not recognise the authority of the municipal administrative bodies. However, the rule of law should apply equally to all citizens, irrespective of their political functions or power.

This case has an added difficulty as it appears that only one party, i.e. the municipal department of urbanism, is interested in finding a solution to the problem. As the person refuses to respect the authority of the department, he also refuses to be part of the solution and being a counterpart in the process.

Several points are important to note when analysing this case. It needs to be stressed that illegal construction is not in anyone's interest and that the rules and regulation are created for the benefit of all citizens and must be respected. One needs to make all efforts to limit damage when somebody does not want to solve the problem together or at all. In this case the problem is beyond the competence of the municipal department of urbanism and should be referred to and brought to the attention of higher levels of governance.

Group 2: Illegal Construction: Problem Statement, Issues and Options

Problem statement: Enlargement of NN object

Problem	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Lack of respect for municipal decisions	Servicing cease construction order	Servicing decision on removal/displacement the object, paid by the owner	Legal removal the object by the municipality	
Usurpation of municipal property	Establish usurpation	The owner sues the usurper for the usurpation	Court brings decision against the usurper	Implementation of decision
Usurpation of national park property; national park put in danger	Issue order on construction of restriction by municipality	Construction ban around the National Park	Construction ban by the Ministry for Environment	
Violation of municipal legislation	Problem unsolved =>verbal explanation			
Illegal construction	Provide construction bid	Give a permit for further construction, destroy existing construction	Owner destroys what has been illegally destroyed	Removal through municipality

Group 2: Illegal Construction: Action Plan/Future Steps

Action	Responsible person	Timeframe	Support	Finance
1. Servicing decision on construction ban	Buildings Inspector	April 2007		
2. Servicing decision on removal/displacement of building at the expense of owner	Buildings Inspector	April 2007		
3. Removal/displacement of building by municipality by virtue of legal action	Head of Department, Buildings Inspector	April 2007	Police	Assessment of real estate value by company effecting the removal
4. Establishing usurpation	Department of Cadastre	Imminent		
5. Owner sues usurper for usurpation	Municipal Court	April 2007		30-50 euro
6. Court reaches a decision on claim	Municipal Court	April 2007		Subject to damage assessment
7. Implementation of decision	Municipal Court	Imminent		
8. Issue construction cease order by municipality	Environment protection officer	May 2007		
9. Issue construction cease order by national park	National Park Officer			

Group 3: Working Group on Forced Returns

This working group focused on the problem of providing minimum living standards for forced returnees. The group confirmed that it is their wish to lobby for an agreement between Kosovo and the countries that conduct forced returns to re-consider their decision to deport individuals since adequate conditions for their return do not exist.

After the presentation it was emphasized that a more concrete action plan is needed that clearly identifies responsibilities and deadlines. Also, the group attempted to approach more than one problem at the same time and should consider making a distinction between the property issues involved (between occupier and returnee) and the municipal issues (how to provide minimal conditions for returnees).

The working group identified the interests of the following interests for the main actors in the problem in view of ensuring minimum living standards for forced returns.

Interests of Returnee family

- permanent location
- temporary shelter
- integration in the community
- solution of problem

Interests of usurper

- usage of property
- reduce selling payment of house, forced to sell house at lower price
- profits out of commercial use of house
- tax payment and infrastructure (water, gas, electricity bills)
- missing documents, unclear legal situation in regards to who is accountable

Interests of municipal council

- community directorate interest to return owners to property
- provide proper documentation
- start dialogue and find peaceful solution
- stop discrimination of minorities
- provide financial support for returning family

Group 3: Forced Return: Problem Statement, Issues and Options

Problem Statement: Forced Return and release of occupied property

ISSUE	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Priority
Return occupied property	To restitute property	Not to restitute property	Disagreement among the parties	Failure to resolve status	Lack of support from the government and ministry	
Shelter	Municipal Assembly Municipal department for communities	Temporary shelter for families	Rent			
To provide economical conditions	Municipal Department for Health and Social Welfare	Donors	ARC, UNHCR IOM	Ministry for return		
HPD	Procedure	Negotiation HPD				
Municipal Assembly Municipal Department for Communities	Provision of documentation	Provision of transport	Guidance / Assistance of the administrative instructions			
Court	Case Trial	Problem Resolution	Failure of a problem resolution			
Police	Examination of a scene					

Group 3: Forced Return: Action Plan / Next Steps

The group agreed to continue working on improving the action plan with more concrete next steps.

Action	Responsible Person	Timeframe	Supporting Institution	Funding Needed
1. Providing a valid documentation on property				
2. Finding a donor – repair of a house				
3. Support from the ministry of return				
4. Support from Municipal Assembly – transport, integration, payment of fees.				
5. Meeting of MDC with returnee and provision of documentation.		1 st week		
6. Transport service and forwarding cases to HPD		2 nd week		
7. Waiting for a court decision		3 rd week		
8. Meeting with the ministry of returns related to the issue of forced return		4 th week		
9. If the case is resolved – provision of a valid documentation.		5 th week		
10. Finding donors		6 th week		

Group 4: Working Group on Organised Return between Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë

Working Group 4 focused on the issue of Organised Return between the two municipalities and included relevant stakeholders from all sides, both municipalities as well as returnee representatives. The Working Group welcomed the opportunity of working together on return within the environment of the workshop.

The background situation to the problem is a group of IDPs living in Štrpce/Shtërpçë which have been seeking for a solution to return to the city center of Ferizaj/Uroševac. Their expressed wish has been to return together as a larger group. They suggested to first return to a temporary shelter located in the centre which could provide for their safety in a couple of buildings while the step by step release or reconstruction of their property allows them to permanently return. This initiative has not found the support of either UNHCR or the municipality who have rather focused their efforts on the return of property.

The working group has focused on the case of family J. as an example case. The model can be used and adapted for other cases.

Upon presentation of the case the following questions have been raised:

- Who will implement action plan? Action plans are only good if somebody takes over responsibility for their implementation. The plan should be implemented by the municipality of Ferizaj/Uroševac as the property is located there. Be more concrete on identifying the person responsible: who in the municipality, which department? The CEO should form a committee on housing, see action plan.
- To pay rent for property has been identified as an alternative: paying of rent is an option as the two parties do something together which makes it not an alternative but an option. An alternative could be for the usurper to destroy the property: something you do not want to achieve or happen.
- Is part of next steps for two MROs to take action plan to next level? Ferizaj/Uroševac already has some experience, and will take the plan to be reviewed with the Board of Directors and CEO. The plan will than be passed on to the working group for return and responsibilities will be divided. Members of the Working Group have agreed to take the plan back home and improve plan with what has been learned during the workshop.

Group 4: Organised Return: Problem Statement, Issues and Options

Problem Statement: Return of the property of J. family

ISSUE	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Priority
Property protection	Plan for property protection; to avoid damage upon removal of occupier	New plan Municipality establishes housing comity	Usurper leaves willingly		
Facing negative consequences (damages of house)	Compensation of the damage	Material	Without being reimbursed	Alternative shelter	
Compensation of the damage	Perpetrator	Donator	MR (ministry of return)		
Disrespect of legal decisions	Judiciary efficiency				
Communication between parties					

Group 4: Organised Return: Action Plan / Next Steps

Action	Responsible Person	Timeframe	Supporting Institution	Funding Needed
1. The new plan for protection of property	Department for Urban Planning	June 2007	KPS	
2. Establishment of the Committee for Urban planning	Chief of Executive Council	October 2007	Department for finance	Donations
3. Engagement of a private agency for security	Committee for Housing	December 2007	Chief of executive council, Office for procurement	
4. Compensation * depending on the damage*	Committee for Housing	June 2008		
5. Lobbying for more effective implementation of legal acts	Municipal official for return	Imminent	Ministry for Return and Communities, NGOs, Media	Municipality and the Ministry

Group 5: Working Group on Public Transportation between Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë

The working group focused on an issue of interethnic relations and chose the example of public buses between Ferizaj/Uroševac and Štrpce/Shtërpçë and other municipalities. The group did not put together a presentation following the format of the other groups, however, the group felt that they had made a lot of progress regarding the issue and improved cooperation between the two municipalities on the matter.

- The working group resulted with proposals for feasible action to improve relations
- Involved parties are the ministries, municipal departments, citizens
- interests vary for the different parties involved: to deliver better services to both communities: communities will mingle uses the bus, and improve relations and dialogue; interest of promoting business: commercial interests; citizens interest: enjoy public transport
- The current situation is a lack of public transport, and run down relations between the municipalities
- Aim for next steps is to initiate joint meeting with municipalities and ministry
- what would happen if there is no outcome i.e. no meeting: involve citizens to prepare petition and hold public press conference to step up pressure on both municipalities; push issue at higher levels to achieve resolution
- easy next steps: problem statement: to get public transportation to gain trust between citizens
- 2 questions: who are main actors: two municipalities and their institutions; public transport will improve relations
- The additional deputy president will initiate next steps to implement the plan of re-establishing public bus transport between the two municipalities

Sample Evaluation Form

Are you **Male** ----- **Female** (please circle)

Dear Participant,

In order to be able to draw some conclusions from the professional training and to be able to plan further steps and events, we would like to ask you to take a few moments and fill out the following feedback questionnaire.

Thank you very much for your participation over the last days! If you have any further questions or feedback, please do not hesitate to contact CSSP e.V or Coaching Spirale GmbH.

1. How satisfied are you with the content: **5 (very satisfied) – 1 (very dissatisfied)**

• How well were your learning targets and expectations met?	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>
	5 1
• How well you think you will be able to apply it in practice?	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>
	5 1
• How was the proportion of theory to practice?	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>
	5 1
• How was the length of the course?	<input type="radio"/> optimal <input type="radio"/> too short <input type="radio"/> too long

Thinking back to the course content, what worked really well for you? What did you like in particular?

Give two concrete examples where you might apply the newly discovered skills.

In particular, how do you think this professional training will influence the way you represent your community? How will it influence the way you will interact and negotiate with the other communities in your municipality and beyond?

What have you not understood? What would you have wished to be done differently?

About which topics would you like to learn more?

Did you feel understood and accepted in your role as a man / as a woman? Did you feel equally at ease with male and female colleagues and team members? Why or why not?

How are you going to structure processes of cooperation, conflict-solving or informal and formal negotiation in the future?

Recommendations about content:

2. How satisfied are you with the methods/materials:

5 (very satisfied) – 1 (very dissatisfied)

• How easy and clear were the course materials to understand?	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>	5	1
• How was the mix of methods (group work, lecture, discussion)?	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>	5	1
• How comprehensive and appropriate was the material?	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>	5	1
• How clearly was the course material presented and discussed?	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>	5	1
• How effectively was technology/multimedia used during the course	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>	5	1

Thinking back to the methods and materials, what worked really well for you? What did you like in particular?

What would you have wished to be done differently?

3. How satisfied were you with Dr. Juan Diaz?

5 (very satisfied) – 1 (very dissatisfied)

• How well did he know the subject matter (expertise)?	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>	5	1
• How well was he able to pass on his knowledge?	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>	5	1
• How motivating and empowering was his teaching?	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>	5	1
• How helpful was his feedback about your performance?	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>	5	1

4. How satisfied were you with Alexandra Schwarz-Schilling?

5 (very satisfied) – 1 (very dissatisfied)

• How well did she know the subject matter (expertise)?	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>	5	1
• How well was she able to pass on her knowledge?	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>	5	1

- | | |
|--|---|
| • How motivating and empowering was her teaching? | <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> |
| | 5 1 |
| • How helpful was her feedback about your performance? | <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> |
| | 5 1 |

5. How satisfied were you with Eva Maria Malisius?

5 (very satisfied) – 1 (very dissatisfied)

- | | |
|---|---|
| • How well did she know the subject matter (expertise)? | <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> |
| | 5 1 |
| • How well was she able to pass on her knowledge? | <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> |
| | 5 1 |
| • How motivating and empowering was her teaching? | <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> |
| | 5 1 |
| • How helpful was her feedback about your performance? | <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> |
| | 5 1 |

6. How satisfied were you with the coordination team?

5 (very satisfied) – 1 (very dissatisfied)

- | | |
|---|---|
| • How easily available were they?
(Did they have time when you needed them?) | <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> |
| | 5 1 |
| • How open to questions were they? | <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> |
| | 5 1 |
| • How they organized logistics (transport, meals, etc.) | <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> |
| | 5 1 |

Thinking back to the work of the lecturers and the coordination team, what worked really well for you? What did you like in particular?

What would you have wished to be done differently?



How satisfied are you the surroundings of the course?

5 (very satisfied) – 1 (very dissatisfied)

• Invitation, prior information, etc.	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>
	5 1
• Atmosphere in the group	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>
	5 1
• Seminar room facilities, including your ability to see, hear, concentrate	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>
	5 1
• Hotel rooms and food	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>
	5 1
• Translation	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>
	5 1
• Transportation to the training site	<input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/> – <input type="radio"/>
	5 1

• What is your overall impression of the course?

5 (very satisfied) – 1 (very dissatisfied)

– – – –
5 1

Is there anything else you would like to let us know?

Many thanks for responding to our questions!