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Sida Review

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Evaluation of Support to the Civil Society in the Western Balkans

Final Report

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September 2010**

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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Dear Madame/Sir

It is a pleasure to share with you the results from the evaluation of Sida's support to civil society in the Western Balkans. Sida started this type of support to the region back in the late 1990's. The present evaluation, however, focuses on the years 2005-2009 and the countries Serbia, Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Kosovo. The evaluation was made by a team from In Develop/IPM, with Annika Nilsson as a team leader and Joakim Anger as a deputy team leader and Jim Newkirk as a civil society specialist.

The evaluated organisations were Kvinna till Kvinna, working with gender equality, Civil Rights Defender, working with the civil rights, and Olof Palme International Centre, working for democratisation primarily at local level. These organisations, referred to as frame organisations, have channelled Sida support to a number of partner organisations in the countries mentioned above, plus Montenegro.

Because of the large number of partner organisations – up to 130 organisations per year in total - the evaluators have carefully made a set of selection criteria, leading to a total of 38 partner organisations that have been interviewed. Besides this, the evaluators have also interviewed several boundary partners, as well as Sida Embassy staff. The evaluators' extensive use of local consultants in each country is believed to have improved the understanding of the context and local conditions.

This document is of interest not only for civil society organisations, but also for policy makers, researchers, methodology experts, and, not least, the general public in the Western Balkans who wish to know more about an external donor's funding of civil society organisations.

Robert Backlund,
Programme Manager
Reform Cooperation in Europe

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and aims

Sida interventions in the Western Balkan countries started in response to human rights violations in connection with the Balkan war in the early 1990s. Initially the interventions were mostly humanitarian and psychosocial. A number of Swedish humanitarian and human rights based organisations were involved, with Sida support. At the end of the 1990s, Sida's department for Europe saw the need for a more long-term civil society capacity building program, focussing on peace-building, reconciliation, democracy and human rights. An invitation was sent to all potential Swedish NGOs to be part of a regional program. Three organisations, Kvinna till Kvinna, Civil Rights Defenders (then Swedish Helsinki Committee) and Olof Palme International Centre, were already involved in the region and answered Sida's call for assistance. Sida decided to enter into framework agreements with them, meaning a support to their programs rather than project by project support.

Since 2005, the SEE countries have applied for and been granted differing levels of accession status with the EU. Although progress among the Western Balkan countries is uneven, the accession agenda has influenced the working environment of Sida and the framework organisations to a large degree. The support has become even more focussed on achieving EU standards in terms of human rights, economy and environment. Simultaneously, there have been substantial organisational changes at Sida. The Department of Europe remains (now Department for Reform Cooperation in Europe), but there is no longer a separate SEE division. Since 2008 the FOs have been required to prepare separate country applications.

Against this background of a changing environment, Sida's Department for Reform Cooperation in Europe commissioned Indevlop-IPM to carry out this evaluation, in order provide Sida with an *overall summative judgment*, with regards to methods, organization, cooperation partners and regulatory framework, as a basis for a discussion about future support to civil society in the respective countries of the Western Balkans.

The evaluation attempts to answer two main questions¹

- a) “*what has been the outcome of the Sida investment of MSEK 400 since 2004*” and
- b) “*to what extent do the Framework Organizations (FOs) bring an added value as compared to other possible forms of support*”.

The evaluation has focussed on the support financed via Sida Europe Department during the period 2005–2009 in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo. The evaluation was carried out by Annika Nilsson (team-leader), Joakim Anger, Jim Newkirk and 5 local consultants, one from each of the country visited.

The data in this report originates from various sources, e.g, we have reviewed available reports, earlier evaluations and related research, interviewed key stakeholders, all in all 32 external observers, 66 partners, 24 FO representatives, 39 partner organizations as well as Sida personnel both in Stockholm and in the field. We also sent a questionnaire to all 142 partners who fulfilled the selection criteria.

¹ For further information on the assignment see Terms of References, annex 2

Findings

The support provided by Sida through the framework organisations, Kvinna till Kvinna (KtK), Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) and Olof Palme International Centre (OPC), has strengthened partners in a number of aspects and contributed to the development of democracy and human rights in the Western Balkan countries. KtK support has strengthened the women's movement in the countries studied. This has contributed to improved conditions for women in targeted municipalities in terms of influence, health services and protection against violence. It has also led to improved interethnic relations and thereby contributed to the peace process. The CRD support has strengthened the capacity and credibility of human rights defenders and contributed to the survival of independent media and to the safety and professionalism of journalists. It has also contributed to access to justice for tens of thousands of people who had lost property, had no citizenship or were victims of violence. OPC support has contributed to improved dialogue and trust between local authorities and civil society organisations in targeted communities.

The initiatives have been relevant to the local context and to the Sida country strategies. The Framework Organisations (FOs) have managed to adapt their support from a post-conflict to a pre-EU situation, but KtK to a lesser extent. The FO support is highly valued by partners because it is not only about technical channelling of funding to projects, as is the case with many other donors. To a varying degree the FOs also add value in terms of:

- Offering neutral ground in times of conflict and ethnic antagonism.
- Providing networking opportunities nationally, regionally and internationally.
- Providing moral and political support to, and protection of, activists.
- Sharing gender equality and human rights values in practice.
- Providing technical and professional support.
- Offering long term, flexible partnerships and funding for core costs.
- Coaching partners in strategic planning, management and reporting.

The modality has also added value for Sweden and Sida. It has increased the capacity of the Swedish resource base to engage with women's rights, in conflicts and in peace processes, with human rights defenders and with public participation. There are now competent Swedish organisations that are able to provide Sida with expertise and networks relevant to the country strategies in the Western Balkans and worldwide.

The very fact that the FOs are also NGOs, sharing the vision and goals of their partners, is one of the main reasons that brought about the *added value* and quality in the relationship. The evaluation identified the following success factors, which the three FOs demonstrate to a varying degree:

- Being value-based and driven by a commitment to a cause.
- Practicing what they preach in terms of democracy and human rights.
- Ability to understand and adapt to the local context and use emerging opportunities.
- Ability to identify the most effective local change agents nationally and locally.
- Being flexible and listening to local priorities and needs.
- Capacity to contribute particular expertise, skills and networking opportunities in the respective focus areas.

- Wanting to empower partners in their own right – not see them as project implementers – and contributing to core costs.
- Willingness and pro-activeness to cooperate with other stakeholders to achieve more.

The three FOs have used different approaches and strategies to support and strengthen local partners. KtK has used a close coaching and networking method, CRD has used a professional and political backstopping model and OPC has used a more administrative, equality approach. The following statements of partners illustrate these relationships:

“We grew together” – about KtK.

“We fight together” – about CRD.

“We work together” – about OPC.

Despite the praising of the modality it also has its risks, such as mutual dependence, low efficiency, limited innovation and closed circles. Although the three FOs have improved their capacity, methods, strategies and outcome focus (according to Results Based Management principles) during the period, the effectiveness could be further improved.

We also noted that Sida and the Swedish embassies in respective country could make better use of the FOs and their networks and experiences. Many country programs have included support to legal reforms, gender equality initiatives, freedom of expression, public administration reforms, etc. but joint strategising with the FOs has been limited and irregular. Increased knowledge and understanding by embassies of the work of FOs and their networks could help them recognise the potential for dialogue and joint advocacy work in relation to key stakeholders.

Sida has not yet used its position to influence the EU to coordinate and improve the effectiveness of support provided to civil society. The way support has been provided by the EU so far has contributed more to the creation of a donor driven, NGO business and employment sector than to the empowerment of value-based change agents representing the voice of people concerned.

Recommendations

Based on the positive findings in this evaluation and the fact that Sida envisages reduction of its own administration, we recommend that Sida continues to use Swedish value-based NGOs as intermediaries for support to civil society, especially in contexts of conflict/post-conflict and in contexts where democracy and human rights are not endorsed or practiced by authorities. In such contexts it is of additional importance to have external inspiration and experience exchange, neutral ground, and moral and political support and protection.

At the same time, we **recommend** that Sida takes a number of measures to improve the present functioning of the modality, in particular:

- Sida should make its selection of Swedish NGOs in a more transparent and strategic manner. Invitations should be made to a wider group of organisations and selection should be made against clear criteria (in terms, for example, of legitimacy, commitment, competence, experience, technical expertise, administrative capacity, international and Swedish networks, etc.). The same criteria should be used by all departments and teams using Swedish NGOs as intermediaries.
- Sida should make better use of FOs in implementation and monitoring of the country strategies and be more specific in its conditions and ToR for the assignments given. Conditions and expectations should be more clearly spelt out (what is expected in terms of selection of local partners, local own-

ership, capacity development of partners, networking, contributions to development processes, support to Sida, etc.).

- Sida should accept and support that FOs also have an independent role and their own priorities over and above the ToR for the specific assignment for Sida. “Free” funding should be made available to promote flexibility and enable FOs to meet emerging opportunities and new challenges as defined by themselves (but within Sida policies and overall objectives).

Taking the Aid Effectiveness Agenda into consideration, Sida should engage more in donor coordination and in influencing other donors to work with a more rights-based approach, and coordinated towards civil society. We **recommend** that Sweden uses its position as one of the larger bilateral actors in the Western Balkans to influence the EU and other multilateral donors to bring funding for civil society in line with the policy for support to civil society “Pluralism”. Also, we **recommend** that Sida engages more with likeminded donors and partnering governments for the creation of an enabling environment for NGOs (e.g. legislation, taxation, protocols for consultative processes, transparent government funding systems etc.) with the aim of reaching a situation where local NGOs are able to form alliances and sustain themselves with local and international funding without intermediaries.

The evaluation also has recommendations for the three FOs. As the FOs have worked very differently we make specific recommendations for each of them on how to further improve their effectiveness and approaches (see pages 22, 29 and 36). We also make some general **recommendations** to all FOs, the most important being to:

- Improve their transparency and strategic approach to partner selection and regular evaluation of partnerships.
- Increase their support to overall organisational development of their respective partners (e.g. ability to develop and sustain operations) and active engagement in donor coordination and basket funding arrangements.
- Increase their focus on a few key competencies where the FO has particular competencies (comparative advantages) and can bring about added value.
- Increase cooperation with each other, with other ongoing development initiatives and with Sida.

Finally, the evaluation raises some dilemmas for discussion:

- Should Sida, through the FOs, provide support to projects, change processes or organisations?
- The role of FOs as consultants to Sida and actors in their own right – is it possible to find a balance between the consultancy and activist roles? Is there a model that provides freedom and flexibility but still maintains Sida’s right to give directions on implementation and to demand results?
- What is the right level of pro-activeness of an intermediary NGO? Can strong local ownership be combined with requirements on strategic approaches and results of Sida and FOs contributions?
- How can Sida ensure that supported and contracted CSOs have true commitment to a cause, a value-based driving force and accountability to a real constituency? How can these qualities be combined with demands on professionalism, systems, structure and delivery of particular results?
- How can grassroots organisations organising poor and marginalised groups be reached and supported when the application and tendering systems created (especially EU) require a high level of administrative capacity?
- What is the best way to select local partners – calls for proposals vs. active screening? What are the pros and cons?

ABBREVIATIONS

ALMAKO	Team for Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo
CIVSAM	Sida Team for Civil Society Cooperation (Sida department)
CRD	Civil Rights Defenders
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
FOs	Framework Organizations (term used for the three Swedish organizations engaged as intermediaries in the Western Balkans)
KtK	Kvinna till Kvinna
OPC	Olof Palme International Centre
SHC	Stockholm Helsinki Committee (now CRD)
SEE	Sida's unit for South East Europe
ToR	Terms of Reference

1. INTRODUCTION

The report consists of an introduction (chapter 1) and a description of the methodology of the evaluation (chapter 2), followed by individual reports on each Framework Organisation (chapters 3, 4 and 5). In these sections we summarise the findings and recommendations regarding each of the organisations. Further details can be found in the country reports.

The report then makes an overall analysis of the findings against the evaluation questions (chapter 6) and makes general recommendations to the framework organisations and to Sida (chapter 7). The report can be read without going into the detailed assessment of each organisation as chapter 6 summarises the key findings.

1.1 The background and history of the program

The Department for Reform Cooperation in Europe at Sida is the regional department responsible for Sida's development co-operation with Eastern and Central Europe. The Division for South Eastern Europe (Sida/SEE) has been responsible for the Western Balkan program – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia, including Kosovo since the war in the 90s. In 2008, Sida introduced a new organisation with three teams; one for BiH, one for Serbia and Turkey and one for Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo (ALMAKO).

The formal agreements, dialogue and reporting mechanisms with the three framework organisations (FOs) are still linked to a Western Balkan/SEE perspective, and have not yet been adapted to the new organisational situation. There is also an ongoing decentralisation of powers to country teams. The evaluation team noted some uncertainty about decision-making responsibilities and roles regarding the Western Balkan civil society program.

Sida interventions in the Western Balkan countries started in response to human rights violations in connection with the war. Initially the interventions were mostly humanitarian and psychosocial. A number of Swedish humanitarian and human rights based organisations were involved, with Sida support. At the end of the 1990s, Sida/SEE saw the need for a more long-term civil society capacity building program, focussing on peace-building, reconciliation, democracy and human rights. An invitation was sent to all potential Swedish NGOs to be part of a regional program. Three organisations, Kvinna till Kvinna, Civil Rights Defenders (then Swedish Helsinki Committee) and Olof Palme International Centre, were already involved in the region and answered the calls of Sida for assistance. Sida decided to enter into framework agreements with them (meaning annual contributions to programs rather than project by project support). The main idea behind the framework system is that support to civil society is most fruitful through cooperation between different civil society organisations.²

Initially there were no clear guidelines for the selection/review of, and cooperation with, framework organisations. Although there were annual agreements, formal guidelines for the cooperation were only established in 2007 after the parties had experienced some differences in interpretation of roles and responsibilities. According to these guidelines, a Swedish organisation may become a framework organisation eligible for a multi-annual agreement and 100% funding, if they:

² A SEE framework organisation is regarded as a civil society organisation eligible to allocate long-term support (both financial and expertise) to national civil society organisations or media institutions in the region through a multi-annual agreement with Sida/SEE. Support to national organisations is regulated by Sida's cooperation strategies and the SEE position papers (outlining the country specific scope and objective of the bilateral support to the civil society in South East Europe). It should be noted that the concept "framework organisation", is not synonymous with how term is used by other parts of Sida (e.g. CIVSAM).

- Have a formal structure and are registered.
- Have experience of development co-operation in South Eastern Europe and in their particular sector.
- Have a concrete and well-founded strategy for their work in general and in South Eastern Europe in particular.
- Have capacity for an efficient and reliable project administration, including project screening, monitoring and evaluation, reporting, financial management and procurement.
- Are transparent, accountable, and based on democratic values.
- Have a concern for poverty, human rights and gender equality incorporated in their work.
- Have, or are prepared to set up, local representation in the region.

The total Sida support to civil society in the Western Balkans during the period 2005–2009 has been around 480 MSEK. It was channelled through a) Sida/CIVSAM (16% – MSEK 80)³ and through the Sida/Europe Department (84% – MSEK 400). Olof Palme International Centre (OPC) has worked with funding through both channels, while Kvinna till Kvinna (KtK) and Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) have worked only with the Europe Department funding. For Olof Palme Center, the Western Balkan program covers a wider range of interventions than those funded by the Sida/Europe department. In addition to the Sida/Europe support, Sweden has contributed to civil society capacity building through Embassies and through OSCE, IPA funds and other European Commission programs.

The Western Balkan programs of KtK and OPC were evaluated previously in 2006/07, which led to discussions and some modifications of approaches. The CRD program was evaluated in 2003. In addition, the CRD programs (rule of law, non-discrimination) and the independent media support were evaluated on CRD's own initiative by three different consultants between 2006 and 2008, which also led to adjustments. In 2008, Sida engaged consultants to assist the framework organisations to improve their Results Based Management and reporting skills. This process is ongoing. All three FOs have also been subjected to system audits in 2008–2009 which has led to revision of systems and structures, especially at CRD.

During the period of review the SEE countries have applied for and been granted differing levels of accession status with the EU. Although progress among the Western Balkan countries is uneven, the accession agenda has influenced the working environment of Sida and the framework organisations to a large degree. The support has become even more focussed on achieving EU standards in terms of human rights, economy and environment⁴. Simultaneously, there have been substantial organisational changes at Sida. The Department of Europe remains (now Department for Reform Cooperation in Europe), but there is no longer a separate SEE division. Since 2008, the FOs are required to prepare separate country applications.

Responsibilities for development cooperation have gradually been moved from the regional level to country teams and Embassies and the linkage between development cooperation and foreign policy has been strengthened. Decisions on country strategies and policies rest entirely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The usefulness and role of the framework organisations in the new environment have been discussed within Sida and Embassies. The country team in BiH made its own assessment of the framework organisations' work and added value and took some preliminary strategic decisions in 2008.

³ The funds have for example been channelled through Swedish Save the Children, Forum Syd and SHIA which all have had substantial involvement in the region.

⁴ The new direction was explained in a publication published in September 2009, "Harmonization with the EU – a priority for Swedish support" and a special "Partnership Program" was launched by the government for 2009–11

Based on the assessment, and consultations with FOs and local stakeholders, the team decided to work for a phasing out of the FOs as intermediaries in a 2–4 year period, starting with OPC. These decisions will be reviewed in light of this evaluation.

1.2 The aim of the evaluation

Against this background of a changing environment, the Sida Department for Reform Cooperation in Europe commissioned Indevlop-IPM to carry out this evaluation in order provide Sida with an *overall summative judgment* as a basis for a discussion about future support to civil society in the respective countries of the Western Balkans, with regards to methods, organization, cooperation partners and regulatory framework.

The evaluation attempts to answer two main questions

- a) “*what has been the outcome of the Sida investment of MSEK 400 since 2004*” and
- b) “*to what extent do the Framework Organizations (FOs) bring an added value as compared to other possible forms of support*”.

The specific aim of the assignment is to evaluate the outcome and impact, relevance, effectiveness, cost efficiency, and sustainability of the support provided via the framework organisations Kvinna till Kvinna (KtK), Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) and Olof Palme International Center (OPC).⁵ The evaluation has focussed on the support financed via Sida Europe Department during the period 2005–2009 in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo. Although the primary purpose is to provide Sida with a summative judgement, the evaluation will also contribute to the learning of the FOs and their partners.

The evaluation was carried out by Annika Nilsson (team-leader), Joakim Anger, Jim Newkirk and assisted by 5 local consultants from each of the country visited (Lona Iloja, Albania, Selma Osmanigic-Agovic, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Blerim Vela, Kosovo, Marija Nashokovska, Macedonia and Dragiša Mijačić, Serbia).

⁵ For further information on the assignment see Terms of References, annex 2

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 How impact and outcome was assessed

Assessing impact and outcome were deemed to be the main challenge of the evaluation. The evaluation team spent a significant amount of time preparing this part of the evaluation. First of all we looked at the objectives of the FOs for the period under review. It was agreed that the objectives established for the application 2008–11 would be the most relevant to use when accessing impact and relevance. These objectives were:

KtK	CRD	OPC
A stronger and more visible women's movement and Improved cooperation with women's movements within the EU	Strengthening the rule of law – improved access to free legal aid – improved capacity of NGOs to monitor and hold duty bearers accountable to the European Convention on Human Rights – decreased impunity for serious human rights violations	To strengthen participation of citizens in civil society organisations and to enable them to influence the local political agenda (with special focus on women and youth)
Increased participation of women in peace processes	Strengthening the freedom of expression and right to information – improved ethics and self regulatory mechanisms for media – improved professionalism and sustainability of independent media support organisations – improved legal protection of journalists and media actors	To enable civil society, local political representatives and local civil servants to fully benefit from the process of EU integration (with special focus on women and youth)
Increased representation of women in decision making and improved cooperation between women NGOs and women politicians	Improved protection against discrimination – adoption and implementation of anti-discrimination laws – increased access to justice, media information and advocacy skills by Roma and national minorities – increased access to justice and improved conditions for inclusion in society of PWDs – strengthened capacity of the LGBT movement and increased awareness of LGBT issues among the public and duty bearers	
Discrimination against women is seen as an important issue in society and more women are aware of and claim their rights		
The issue of violence and sexual abuse against women is established on the political agenda and action is taken by the state to combat trafficking		
Increased awareness and improved access to sexual and reproductive health rights		

In connection with the inception report, we attempted to establish an approximate base line for these aspects by studying the context analysis in each of the FOs' applications, the EU accession progress reports and statistics and indices of relevant themes, e.g. aggregated statistics (gender index, human development index, transparency index, NGO sustainability index, freedom house index). In most cases reports and indices showed rather limited progress since 2005, except when it comes to adoption of new legislation. Many of the countries had adopted legislation according to EU standards and in some cases structures for implementation and monitoring were set up.

However, implementation and understanding of the laws and policies remained slow or non-existent. In the area of freedom of expression, some countries had negative trends. There were also signs in some countries that trends are working against democracy, tolerance and human rights. Weak state structures without proper mandates and tools provide opportunities for undemocratic political movements, corrupt practices, criminal gangs and unethical business. Also, the heavy international interventions, especially in B&H and Kosovo, have had negative side effects on confidence in democratic processes, when decision making powers have been removed from the people and their opinions have been disqualified.

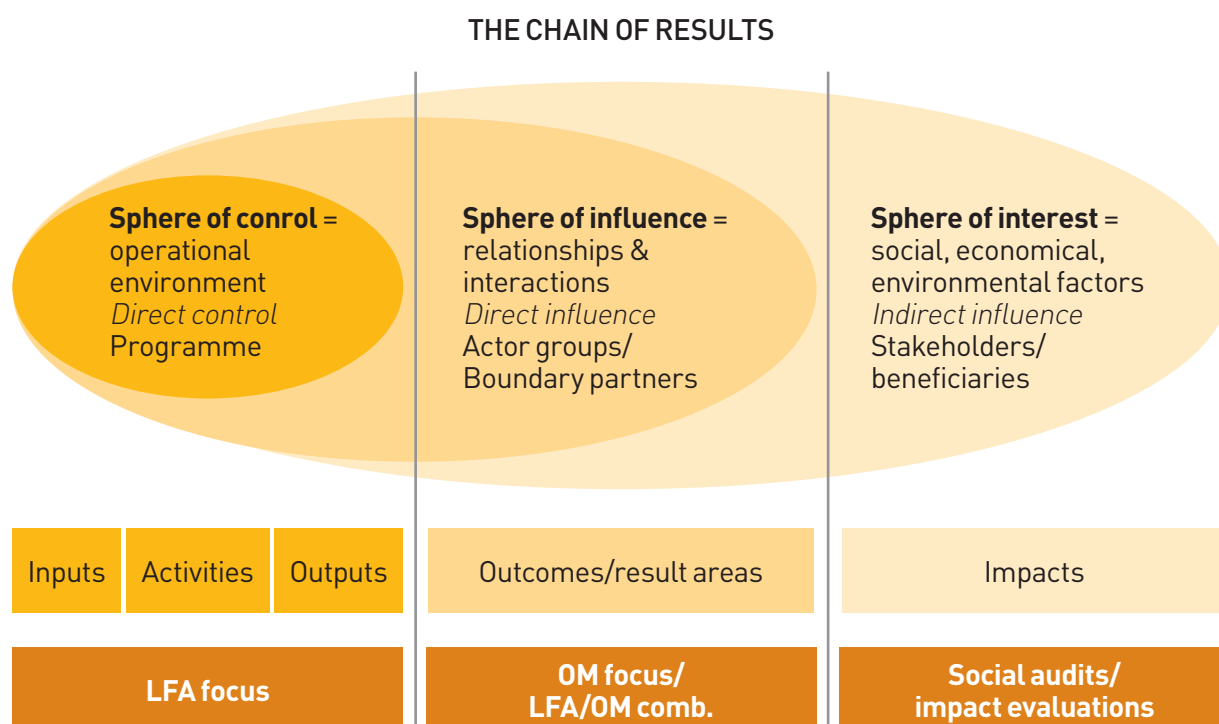
As expected, problems were faced in assessing the impact⁶ on societal level mainly because of:

- The *effect problem*: i.e. assessing what would have happened if the interventions were not implemented. This means that even though we cannot detect any progress on a societal level, the situation could be even worse if the intervention had not been implemented and thus justified. For example, the CRD interventions have had impact on the safety of journalists and behaviour of printed media, but the general political climate has worked against these developments.
- The *attribution problem*: even though we could observe effects, the problem is to assess (with some degree of certainty) that these effects could be attributed to the interventions as such? i.e. the difficulty to be certain to what extent Sweden/Sida/FOs have contributed to the observed changes. The OPC support for example was often characterised by small contributions to partners, where other major donors played a more prominent role.
- The *baseline data* (the reference situation) refers often to the national level situation. Many FO partners worked on local/community level and the impact of their work was mainly visible on this level. In KtK partner municipalities in BiH for example, the number of women elected in the last election increased, while the national trends were negative.

Hence, the focus of assessing effects has been at the outcome level, i.e. where the FOs and their partners have had realistic possibilities of influence. However, despite these inherent problems we have tried to comment on possible contributions by the FO partners to the impact observed in each country.

⁶ Outcome and impact are both referring to *effects* or *change* caused by an intervention. However, there are no clear distinctions between the concepts. In this evaluation, the difference between outcome and impact is that the concept outcome is more clearly connected to the intervention as such (clearer causality and attribution) while impact here is referring to more long term effects that the intervention has contributed (but not so clearly attributed) to.

As agreed with Sida, the main focus of the evaluation has been on the outcome level. We have used a modified Outcome Mapping⁷ approach to capture information.⁸ The approach is informed by the model below, which was introduced by the RBM consultants commissioned by Sida.⁹



According to the model, the FOs and their partners have direct control of the program activities as such and the outputs of activities. The FOs and their partners, however, can only partly influence the outcomes of the programs, e.g. how the intervention affects the boundary partners in terms of changed behaviour, actions taken, improved working methods or decisions taken etc.

Together with recognition of the complexity of development processes, this instrument focuses more on how programs *facilitate change* rather than how they control or cause such change, i.e. outcome. Using this approach is also consistent with the view that there must be local ownership and drive for change processes to be sustainable. We have focussed our questions on how FO partners have facilitated changes that can be observed among the boundary partners¹⁰, what they did to achieve this and what the FO did to help.

To capture this information we constructed tailor-made interview guides for FOs, FO partners, boundary partners and external experts and we constructed and tested a questionnaire which focussed on assessing the following outcomes:

⁷ Outcomes according to Outcome Mapping Instrument (OM)= Changes in relationships, activities, actions, or behaviors of boundary partners that can be logically linked to a program's activities although they are not necessarily directly caused by it. These changes are aimed at contributing to specific aspects of human and ecological well-being by providing the boundary partners with new tools, techniques, and resources to contribute to the development process.

⁸ The description on the OM tool is based on IDRC's philosophy and practical experiences using the tool in different stages of the program cycle (for further information on OM, see www.idrc.ca). The underlying ideas of OM, is based on qualitative principles of research (e.g. anthropology) while classical evaluation methods borrow ideas from a more positivistic/quantitative traditions of research (e.g. natural science and economy). Hence, using OM as an evaluation method basically means adapting the methods and ambition to what is possible assessing social changes.

⁹ The model was presented in RBM consultants' report to Sida in January 2009, prepared by Charlotte Ørnamark and Anja Taarup Nordlund, Nordic Consulting Group.

¹⁰ In this report boundary partners refers to individuals, groups, organisations and authorities with whom the program interacts directly to achieve change and with whom the program can anticipate some opportunities for influence (mobilising or influencing)

- *Ability to mobilise trust, support, involvement and resources* from concerned citizens (rights holders and rights defenders). Signs of engagement would be increased participation, organising, reporting, protesting, volunteering, provision of local resources, citizen initiatives etc. which are not imposed by or dependent on external agents. These signs will serve as evidence of outcome.
- *Ability to build relationships and alliances for change* with other stakeholders (i.e. civil society, private sector, media and authorities). Signs of good relationships are increased networking and cooperation between stakeholders, dialogue opportunities, consultations, transparent decision making, regular meetings and functional structures for cooperation, etc. These signs will serve as evidence of outcome.
- *Ability to interact constructively and influence* authorities/municipalities (duty bearers) to take action. Signs of change would be legal and policy reforms, inclusive and non-discriminatory programs, improved social, educational and legal services, anti-corruption measures etc. These signs will serve as evidence of outcome.

These expected outcomes are consistent with the approach and objectives set by Sida in the Policy for Civil Society 2004: *"Regardless of the primary aim of the contribution, Sida shall aspire to promote the development of a vibrant and democratic civil society in which people have the opportunity to act together to influence the development of society and/or improve their living conditions"*.

2.2 Data collection methods

To find the information necessary to answer our questions, we used a wide range of methods and sources. We used both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods i.e:

- Studying of available reports and research.¹¹
- Using the experience and expertise of the local consultants in each of the countries who already had an extensive understanding of the civil society context.
- Interviewing researchers, experts, and external observers such as other donors, government officials and NGO representatives. In addition, we spoke to the RBM consultants assisting the FOs in developing their monitoring and evaluation systems. In total we spoke to 32 external observers.
- Interviewing present and former Sida representatives who had worked with the Western Balkan program both at HQ and in the various Embassies. In total, we spoke to six persons in Stockholm and nine persons in field offices.
- Interviewing FO representatives at the respective HQs and in field offices. In total we spoke to 24 FO representatives (CRD 6, KtK 11, OPC 7).
- Assessing questionnaires that were sent to all partners asking about outcomes and the added value of the FO support. In total we received 84 replies, which represent 60% of the total number questionnaires sent to partners (142). The questionnaires were analysed per FO and country. The replies to the questionnaires helped to underpin, quantify and exemplify the conclusions made in the interviews in each country.
- Interviewing a representative selection of FO partners and their boundary partners. In total we interviewed 38 partners (out of 170 fulfilling our criteria) and 66 boundary partners. Boundary partners were other NGOs, authorities and beneficiaries. Interviews were individual or with groups and

¹¹ E.g. the recent evaluation (2010) of EU support to Balkan Civil society "Europe's Balkan Dilemma", EU accession progress reports, UN Human Rights reports, Freedom House analyses, FO reports, Sida assessments, previous evaluations, partner reports etc.

lasted for 2–3 hours. In order to get a representative sample of partners we asked the FOs to classify projects according to the following three aspects;

- **national/urban** vs. **local/rural**,
- **expert** (depending on professional skills) vs. **grassroot** (depending on voluntarism),
- advocacy towards **duty bearers** vs. empowerment of (or services to) **rights holders**.

We also asked the FOs to categorise partners according to the main focus of support, size of organisation and annual contributions during the period of review. This exercise turned out to be difficult because many partners work on different levels with different methods and more than one focus area. The FOs did however complete a self-assessment which gave an overall picture of the main features of their respective programs. As can be seen from the table below, the sample selected for our study represents the overall picture and mainstream size of programs well. In this table we show the profile of the total KtK, CRD and OPC programs and the profile of the selected sample for the interviews. It shows that we have met a sufficiently representative sample.

Main focus 2005–2009	KtK total	KtK sample	CRD total	CRD sample	OPC total	OPC sample
Urban/national organisation	39 %	33%	77%	80%	62%	70%
Local/rural organisation	61%	67%	23%	20%	38%	30%
Expert oriented organisation	45%	33%	87%	90%	64%	66%
Grass root organisation	55%	67%	13%	10%	36%	33%
Focus on duty bearers/advocacy	20%	20%	12%	16%	32%	33%
Focus on rights holders/empowerment	37%	30%	23%	9%	28%	17%
Focus on both duty bearers and rights holders	43%	50%	65%	75%	40%	50%
Annual contributions to partners		0.8–3.7 MSEK		0.5–5.2 MSEK		0.5–2.1 MSEK
No of staff in partner org.		3–6		5–12		2–25

2.3 Limitations and lessons

Within the framework of this evaluation we studied five countries with various contextual issues and challenges, three framework organisations with very different approaches, histories and developments, within a timeframe where there were substantial organisational and policy changes at Sida. Within this environment we had to answer a number of complex questions in a short time.¹² Our method has attempted to minimise the difficulties. The use of local consultants was a key factor for a quick and accurate analysis at country level. Despite this we would like to point at the following limitations:

1. The interviews were carried out by different teams in the various countries. To ensure a similar understanding of the questions at hand we developed a detailed interview guide and held joint preparatory discussions. The detailed guide was however not practical to use in the interview situation and each team therefore developed its own practical approach to the interviews, depending on previous knowledge, specific contextual issues and interview style. The interviews in the different countries were therefore not as similarly structured as was anticipated in the inception phase.
2. Although we visited 38 partner organisation in total, the organisations visited in each country were few (2–3 per framework organisation) and they did not necessarily form a representative picture of the FOs' work at country level. Sometimes key persons were not available for interviews, so important information may have been missed. Even if questionnaires, boundary partners, external observ-

¹² The international consultants spent about 5–7 days in each of the countries.

ers and local consultants added valuable information, conclusions at the country level should be treated with some caution. The country reports (see Annexes 3–7) should thus not be considered as standalone reports but rather as input to the main report. It is mainly at the total, aggregated level, where we have been able to collect sufficient information to draw general conclusions and make summative judgments.

3. The outcome mapping covered interviews and group discussions with two boundary partners per partner organisation. These were representatives from authorities, beneficiaries and other NGOs. We felt afterwards that these discussions and interviews were not sufficient to give an independent and adequate description of the changes and the contributions by partners and FOs. Some partners were funded up to 100% by the FO and others only to 10%. How much of the changes could be attributed to the FO? The Outcome Mapping tool would most likely be of better use if the evaluation had focused only fewer interventions making it possible to meet with more than 2–3 boundary partners. However, we then would have been able to cover even less ground at the country level.
4. When evaluating the modality it has not been possible to limit the assessment to 2005–2009 only. The added value of the framework organisations must be seen over a longer period as the arrangement has been going on since mid 90s. The respondents had difficulty in drawing a clear line pre- and post 2005. However, the ability of the FOs to adapt to changing conditions, from post-conflict to pre-EU, has been assessed as well as their ability to adjust to changes in the donor community and to NGO sector developments.

When collecting all the information from all countries and all informants, a very similar picture emerges of each FO and the Sida support with only few diverging views. We are therefore reasonably confident that our conclusions are valid, despite the above limitations. At the outset we thought it could cause problems to use different teams in different countries, eg. that our diverse backgrounds would make it difficult to mainstream our methods, approaches and interpretations. However, using different teams to carry out the evaluation at country level proved to be an asset in the end. All teams, regardless of their background and possible bias and pre-conceived ideas, regardless of the different country contexts, arrived at almost identical conclusions. Hence, our method thus strengthened our findings and conclusions in an unexpected way.

3. KVINNA TILL KVINNA

3.1 Background and history

Kvinna till Kvinna is a Foundation with a mandate of a) empowering women in conflict affected regions by enhancing their mental and physical well-being and their participation in building a democratic and peaceful society, b) promoting research and studies on the effects of war and conflict in women c) provide information about the effects of war and raise public opinion in favour of peaceful conflict resolution.

KtK started its work in the Balkans in 1993. BiH was its first partner country and KtK is well known and respected for its brave and important interventions during the time of conflict. Informants often made references to the cooperation that took place before 2005, remembering personalities and interventions during that time. It has been difficult to limit discussions to the time after 2005 only. Many of the partners are still the same. KtK has since expanded its cooperation with women organisations beyond the Balkans and even entered into international lobbying and advocacy for implementation of

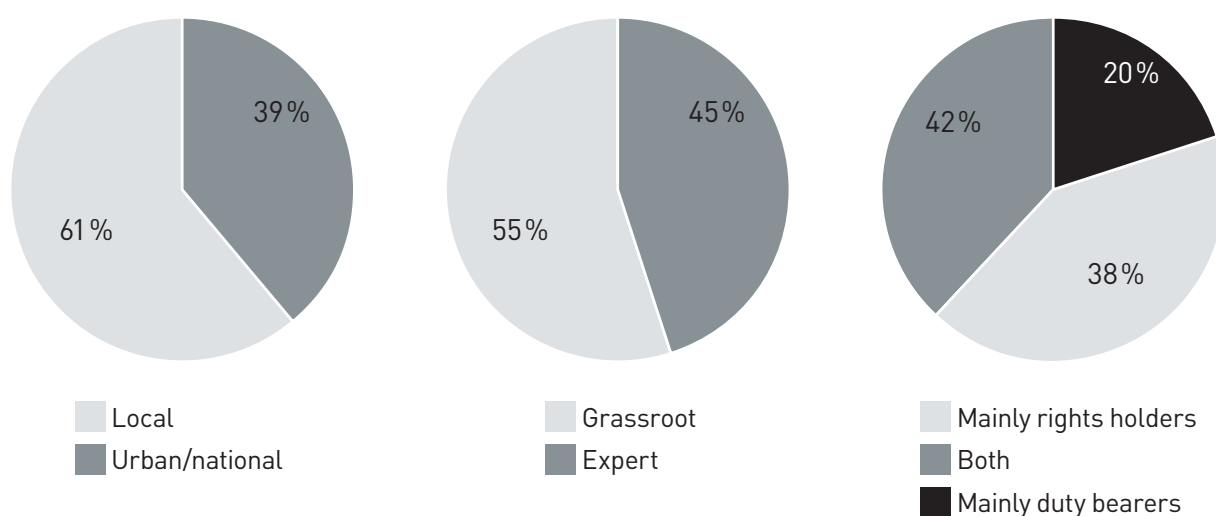
the UN resolution 1325. The Western Balkan portion of the portfolio has gradually been reduced from 80% of disbursements in 2005 to 38% in 2009. Dependence on Sida funding has decreased from 95% to 76%. This table shows KtK development between 2005 and 2009 and the Western Balkan (WB) part of it. Some figures were not possible to obtain within the time frame of the evaluation.

Expansion 2005–2009	2005		2006		2007		2008		2009	
	Total	WB	Total	WB	Total	WB	Total	WB	Total	WB
Number of countries	14	6	14	6	13	5	15	5	16	5
Number of partner organisations	102	69	111	70	120	55	113	57	115	56
Number of employees	38	14	38	12	36	10	30	7	34	8
of which in Sweden	20	4	20	3	21	3	19	2	22	2
of which in the field	18	10	18	9	17	7	11	5	12	6
Total income (MSEK)	57	36	64	35	60	25	64	26	72	24
of which Sida	54	36	60	35	55	25	57	24	55	21
of which other sources	3	0	4	0	5	0	7	2	17	3
Total expenses (MSEK)	57		62		64		65		73	
of which disbursement to organisations	34	27	37	23	39	17	39	16	45	17
of which KtK expenses in Sweden	8		9		11		12		14	
of which KtK expenses in the field	15		16		14		14		14	

KtK has provided long term support to partner organisations with a focus on core costs and empowerment of women organisations as change agents, rather than on projects. KtK is flexible and encourages partners to set their own priorities. Local ownership is a prominent feature¹³. KtK's method involves frequent dialogue and learning by doing. KtK has a strong field presence and has built close relationships with its partners. In the period 2005–2009, KtK supported around 60 organisations each year in the Western Balkan region. This represents around 15% of the total number of women's organisations. More than half of the partner organisations have been KtK partners for seven years or more. Since 2005, only a few new partnerships have been established each year. These new partners are mainly research organisations or national advocacy groups, with one being a lesbian organisation. The old partners are mainly rural grassroots organisations, often focussing on psychosocial activities, gender based violence and local political influence. KtK partners focus mainly on empowerment of rights holders. In 2009, KtK supported 56 organisations in the Western Balkans.

¹³ Verified by partners in interviews.

The profile of KtK supported organisations according to KtK's assessment:



According to the KtK plan for the Western Balkan program, the objectives are:

- A stronger and more visible women's movement and improved cooperation with women's movements within the EU.
- Increased participation of women in peace processes.
- Increased representation of women in decision making and improved cooperation between women NGOs and women politicians.
- Discrimination against women is seen as an important issue in society and more women are aware of and claim their rights.
- The issue of violence and sexual abuse against women is established on the political agenda and action is taken by the state to combat trafficking.
- Increased awareness of and improved access to sexual and reproductive health rights.

In each country these KtK objectives have been further divided into sub-objectives. As KtK supports each partner's own agenda, the KtK objectives have not really functioned as steering tools. They have rather been used to categorise the outcomes and outputs reported by partners. The limited pro-active-ness of KtK in guiding partners has contributed to a strong local ownership but also made it difficult to work according to a joint agenda or program¹⁴.

3.2 Impact and outcome

According to our assessment, KtK program objectives have been fulfilled to some extent. Most KtK partners have increased their capacity as a result of support from KtK. External observers consider KtK partners to be among the most important women's organisations in the respective countries. The long term support to carefully selected partners, including core funding, has enabled partners to build capacity in terms of leadership, project management, gender activism, political involvement, negotiation, self confidence etc. This has resulted in increased visibility and respect in communities, improved relationships with local authorities and increased networking with other stakeholders¹⁵. A majority of

¹⁴ Conclusion based on interviews and reports provided.

¹⁵ Replies to questionnaires and interviews.

partners have moved from being only service providers towards engagement in advocacy and policy dialogue¹⁶.

The increased abilities and strengths of KtK partners have contributed to improved conditions for women in the targeted communities¹². KtK partners have managed to influence their local authorities to improve services in areas such as health and sanitation (in Kosovo) and to develop support mechanisms to victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse. In communities where KtK partners work, awareness of women's rights has increased and women are increasingly willing and able to challenge existing norms and practices. Women participation in decision making bodies has also increased, although this is not necessarily a national trend in all countries. Boundary partners confirm these positive changes, which are mainly visible in local communities in rural areas and in the Roma community (in Serbia).

In all countries, women's organisations have been among the first to overcome the ethnic divisions created by the war and work together to address common issues. The Kosovo Women's Network is the most recent example of this, where Serbian women groups have been encouraged to join the network. The KtK encouragement and provision of neutral ground has contributed to these developments, although there have also been lessons. One lesson is that in order to overcome barriers there must always be a practical and urgent common cause or purpose that motivates the cooperation. Working together reduces tension, just meeting and socialising is not enough¹⁷.

KtK partners and boundary partners also confirm that domestic violence is increasingly talked about and seen as crime by the general public and by the police in targeted communities. Hot lines have been established and action is taken to bring perpetrators to court and to assist women who are victims of violence. Some municipalities have started to take financial responsibility for the shelters established and/or supported by KtK partners. The KtK partners can show that their work has contributed to these positive changes, although attribution is a bit of a challenge, as there are many donors and organisations that are involved in the work against gender based violence and trafficking.

All countries in the region have passed gender equality legislation and gender action plans to improve the status of women. In some countries legislation was even passed before 2005. Gender desks or commissions are now being created nationally and in municipalities. Some KtK partners have participated in the processes of establishing these mechanisms, although the EU/UN pressure and support played the major role in these developments. The implementation of these laws and plans is still limited and there is a need for consistent pressure. There is a slight feeling of despair among the women organisations that the international community is satisfied with good legislation but do not care to follow up on its implementation¹⁸.

Although women networks are being created to address certain common issues (e.g. breast cancer screening and treatment, vote for women campaign, trafficking, etc) and to meet certain funding requirements (e.g. TACSO, EU etc), in most countries national level networking of women's organisations is not yet a coordinated, strong and effective force. It was pointed out¹⁹ that women's networks in all countries, including Sweden, tend to be informal, and/or issue based. Perhaps formal national level networks representative of all women and all issues might not be a desirable/possible objective, although without a focal point certain issues will fall between chairs (such as the abolishment of maternity leave in BiH).

¹⁶ KtK reports.

¹⁷ Numerous respondents in BiH and Kosovo who were tired of external, well meaning reconciliation efforts

¹⁸ Especially mentioned in BiH

¹⁹ By KtK staff

3.3 Relevance

We believe that KtK's support has been highly relevant to the regional context, to Sida and EU priorities and to partners' own objectives. It could however be even more relevant in all these areas.

The KtK approach to identify and support potential change agents in local/rural communities and among marginalised ethnic groups has been very relevant to the post war context and to poverty reduction (in its wider definition). The program has reached poor and marginalised women to a large extent and supplemented other donors who mainly work in the capitals²⁰. Women's participation and influence in peace making, reconciliation and reduction of violence against women in a post conflict society are still extremely relevant areas. Ethnic tensions have increased in some countries and there is uncertainty about the future, especially in BiH. The experiences gathered in Balkan countries are also used in other countries where conflict is ongoing. It is our opinion that the planned phasing out of KtK support is too early in countries such as BiH and Kosovo.

At the same time, Balkan countries are now in the process of EU accession and need to address gender inequalities and patriarchal structures in order to meet the EU criteria on democracy and human rights. This is also a priority area of Sida and the EU. So far, KtK interventions have not been strategically geared towards these broader gender equality aspects, although some new national level partners have been brought on board. KtK has kept a low, background profile and tried to inspire and empower partners to take action themselves. KtK has mainly designed its program based on the partners' own analyses and wishes. This is the strength of the program and has contributed to its effectiveness. At the same time these locally defined focus areas have not always responded to national level processes, emerging opportunities and Sida policy developments.

Another limitation in the pre-EU context is the KtK mandate to work in conflict and post conflict contexts with a focus on women empowerment. Although the interpretation of the mandate is wide, it is obvious that KtK does not work on all levels and areas of society to promote gender equality, especially not with government structures and women's economic empowerment. KtK has not yet deliberately targeted women with disabilities or lesbian organisations, although LGBT and disability are profile areas of Sida's human rights work. There are a few examples of such partners but not a consistent strategy.

The Sida evaluation carried out in 2006²¹ recognised this emerging dilemma and suggested that Sida should bring in another framework organisation to fill the gap. This did not happen, but the Sida ALMACO team has engaged a consultant to assist in the area of women's economic empowerment to supplement KtK. During the period of review, KtK has also initiated cooperation with national level research institutions and networks to engage in monitoring and reporting of women's rights which has responded to some of the concerns²². KtK has however recently stressed that it is women in conflict and post-conflict contexts which is their mandate.

KtK partners indicate²³ that KtK support fits the broader context of their organisational objectives and operations to "totally" (60%) or "quite well" (30%). According to partners, the most important issues at the moment are:

- 1) Ensuring implementation of the laws on gender equality through joint efforts by government structures and women NGOs.
- 2) Political participation and influence for women.

²⁰ Confirmed by country reports and previous evaluations

²¹ Women's Empowerment Projects: "Kvinna till Kvinna", Anette Lyth and Lennart Peck

²² KtK annual reports

²³ Questionnaires to partners

- 3) Social/ health security and employment for women.
- 4) Reduced violence against women.

The crucial question is if the mandate and statutes of KtK allows them to be more proactive in relation to the new challenges and a broader gender equality agenda. If this is not the case, KtK should at least consider forming partnerships with others, in order to be able to answer to expressed needs or at least to assist Sida and partners to link up with such organisations/ resource institutions in Sweden, the EU or elsewhere.

3.4 Effectiveness

We find that KtK is effective in its work in strengthening the women's movement, in increasing the participation of women in the decision-making process and in addressing issues related to violence against women²⁴. The fundamental approach of inspiring and supporting the organisational capacity and knowledge development of partner organisations is particularly effective at the local level. The focus on local/rural organisations has been well chosen as a specific strategy/niche of KtK. Most other donors work only in capitals. KtK today can call on a network of strong and influential partners. The strength is in many cases the result of KtK partnership.

The long term relationship and funding of core costs has helped partners to develop an identity and to build capacity to engage in change processes. This is very much along the lines of the Program Based Approach advocated by Sida (and the Paris Agenda). KtK partners have developed a very clear focus on gender equality and women's rights and their leaders and staff have gained important skills through the networking and support provided. KtK is very much considered to be a partner, not a donor. Apart from funding, KtK has taken a keen interest in the operations of their partners, showed genuine concern, engaged in frequent dialogue, provided moral support, worked together to develop applications and reports to KtK, organised study visits to Sweden as well as regional and national networking. Partners confirm that in a post conflict situation it is of great value to have a neutral party that can facilitate contacts and organise meetings across ethnic lines. KtK also played a role in enhancing the voices of local women's organisations and to open doors both locally and internationally. A quote from one partner illustrates the feeling of mutual dependency and sisterhood was "*We grew together*".

The approach taken by KtK with its partners has clearly delivered quality results with the organisations visited and with their boundary partners. It must be asked however if such development requires a 10 year commitment, particularly where, at the end of these 10 years, 50–100% of the partner budgets still comes from KtK's Sida funds. The mutual, long term dependence has not been conducive to innovation and some partners have continued quite comfortably with the same activities "that worked before". KtK has perhaps been too open to the ideas and proposals of partners. This freedom has been deemed more important than the overall program objectives and results²⁵. It is a delicate balancing act between promoting local ownership and steering for better overall results. We believe however that KtK could use its networks and position to work more strategically and proactively with other donors and national processes. External observers also point at the need for more openness to new partnerships and to involving non-partners in networking events. The KtK partners are sometimes seen as an exclusive and privileged group. KtK even calls partners "our organisations".

Although there are benefits of having Swedish staff (neutrality in times of distrust, understanding of Swedish systems and gender equality practices, easy communication with Swedish embassy staff, reduced risk of nepotism and corruption etc), the heavily reliance on Swedish field representatives with 2–3 year contracts has affected both effectiveness and efficiency negatively. Each new person has needed

²⁴ Confirmed by country reports

²⁵ Consultants conclusions

time to learn and adjust and the inability to communicate directly with partners naturally makes work more difficult and time consuming. In Kosovo, the frequent changes of staff were noted by partners with concern. In Macedonia partners did not know who their KtK contact person was. In general, it was the view of respondents that in order for KtK field representatives to be effective (and cost efficient) they should have longer practical field experience before taking a position, longer-term contracts and provide more pro-activeness and inspiration on joint strategising and engagement with other development processes. It was felt that more senior staff would be more able to inspire behind-the-scenes leadership, encouraging, prodding and inspiring partners in the development of their own strategic directions²⁶.

3.5 Cost efficiency

KtK has a heavy field presence and also part time dedicated staff in Stockholm in support of the country programs. On average 40% of the budget is spent on overheads for coaching, support and monitoring by Swedish program officers and field representatives. In total this would amount to approximately 15 MSEK per year for the Balkan program (or 250 000 per partner). It should be noted that the committed and close coaching, which is the core element of KtK support, has been a precondition for reaching weak and rural organisations and is extremely appreciated and useful to partners. Support is even given to potential partners who are seen as important change agents to access the KtK/Sida funding. This is where many other donors fail. Nevertheless, the program is relatively expensive compared to the level of support experienced by partners and by Sida. The use of Swedish staff on 2–3 year contracts is rather expensive. It takes time for each new person to get a contextual understanding; it requires resources for housing and travelling, and it requires staff for language interpretation.

It is the view of the evaluation team that KtK could have reached the same (or even better) quality of relationship and results, at a lower cost, by engaging and building the capacity of more senior local staff to represent KtK in the field office and calling on the Swedish desk officers or experts for specific issues such as Swedish gender equality and women's rights experiences, facilitation of networking and provision of political and moral support.

It should however be noted that KtK could not have been exchanged with any other technical, local intermediary or consultancy. The results achieved are not only linked to the provision of funding, it's also about inspiration, moral support and development of a global network of women working for peace-building, influence on peace processes and against violence.

3.6 Sustainability

KtK has contributed to increased capacity in women's organisations and individuals. Individual leaders will continue to work for women's rights in new positions and arenas even if their organisation is not surviving. The changes in attitudes, policies and practices that have been achieved will also remain even if some of the organisations may have difficulties to develop when financial support is phased out.

The number of persons affected by the direct interventions of KtK is rather limited. The average KtK partners have 3–6 employees and 5–10 volunteers. Some service providers have 11–16 staff. Most of the partners (60–70% of them) depend on KtK for 50–100% of their budgets. This is sometimes due to the recent loss of other donors, but it is also because grassroots organisations in small towns have limited opportunities to compete for external donor funding being offered in complex tenders. KtK has not sufficiently included alternative resource mobilisation in their coaching. It has been comfortable for both parties to continue a good working relationship year after year. This has both benefits (organisations can develop their identity and program without being distracted by various donor agendas) and problems (innovation and efficiency may be hampered and dependency created).

²⁶ Sida respondents views, interviews with partners and external observers

In some towns there are other competing or supplementary women organisations. KtK partners need practical support to find ways to join forces with other organisations and mobilise resources together. This cannot be done through seminars or training, but through context specific coaching. Respondents mentioned that they had participated in numerous fundraising trainings, but this did not help them in practice. Opportunities to receive funding through municipalities (for services) and through other national and international mechanisms should be explored – as well as access to EU funding.

Another sustainability issue is the dependence on one leader in many of the partner organisations. This was pointed out by boundary partners as a problem. The organisations are often referred to as “NN’s organisation” (NN being the name of the founder/leader). Another sustainability issue is the limited recruitment of young women, especially in urban areas. This has recently been discussed as an issue in the KtK network. The evaluators conclude that the organisations would attract more interest from younger women if structures were more democratic and methods more innovative and forward looking.

3.7 Conclusion and recommendations

The evaluators conclude that KtK has played an important role in strengthening a group of strategically placed women’s organisations in each country. Many KtK partners are genuine grassroots organizations that with KtK support have been able to initiate and facilitate change processes, particularly at the local level. It is obvious that these organizations are important for the women living in rural areas and smaller cities. In this sense, KtK partners are able to directly reach poor and marginalised groups with their support. KtK has also contributed to networking and cooperation across ethnic lines, thus contributing to peace building. KtK partners have contributed to successful advocacy for improved health and sanitation services and for increased attention to domestic violence. KtK, being an NGO working for the same cause, helped develop the relationships, create a feeling of “sisterhood” and enhance the voices of the local partner organisations.

The relationships have also helped KtK to grow into a more competent Swedish resource in working with women’s rights in conflict and post-conflict situations, with a number of field officers having built their capacity in Kosovo.

KtK has provided support that could not have been channelled through any consultant or implementing agency as it also involved inspiration, moral support and joint development of a global network of women working for peace-building, influence on peace processes and against violence. However, the support could have been organised in a more effective and efficient manner. The evaluation team makes the following recommendations to KtK:

1. We **recommend** that KtK be more proactive in terms of stakeholder analysis and engagement with national and local level processes to achieve more. The cooperation with Sida could also be enhanced although it is also the responsibility of Sida to take an interest in such cooperation.
2. We **recommend** that KtK be more proactive in dialogue with partners, contributing their knowledge and overall strategic view, without compromising local ownership.
3. We **recommend** that KtK, together with partners, agree on a number of key priorities for future funding. There should be a link between the analysis, objectives and partner activities (the KtK objectives functioned more as steering tools).
4. Although there have been a lot of improvements in results based planning and reporting, we **recommend** that KtK do more to assist partners to develop a culture of thinking of outcomes, not only outputs and activities. Some of the partners have remained with the same activities i.e. “provision of training” for a long time. KtK’s approach could benefit from innovation dialogue, stricter

agreements on outcomes within a well-defined timeframe, including a phase-out strategy that works on independence in all senses (including financial).

5. KtK selected partners a long time ago and have remained with most of them since. This has created a mutual dependence. We **recommended** that
 - partnerships are evaluated and redefined on a regular basis
 - an exit strategy is discussed and planned for from the start
 - KtK continues keeps some free money (20%) every year to respond to new ideas and partnerships
 - the selection criteria is transparent and known to women's organisations.
6. We **recommend** that KtK consider partnering with another actor (or start a supplementary foundation) to broaden its approach and usefulness to partners and to Sida, especially in their efforts to work for mainstreaming of gender equality issues in the private and public sectors.
7. The practice of one-year agreements hampers long term planning of partners. We **recommend** that agreements are 3-year, with possibilities to cancel them if major changes or problems occur. Being one of the bigger donors, KtK could also take initiative to organize donor coordination and basket-funding to assist partners.
8. While recognising the value of sending Swedish KtK staff (neutral ground, external support and inspiration, sharing gender equality values etc.), not all of them have had the necessary contextual understanding and field experience to be able to work effectively. In Kosovo, high staff turnover has also hampered effectiveness and efficiency. We **recommend** that KtK consider using local staff for continuity and contextual understanding and using Swedish staff for particular issues or situations where the Swedish experience, neutrality or international networks are of importance.

4. CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS

4.1 Background and history

Civil Rights Defenders (formerly Swedish Helsinki Committee – SHC) started its international involvement in the Balkans in the 1990s as part of their mission to monitor the performance of the signatories to the Helsinki Final Act. The focus areas have been Rule of Law, Freedom of Expression and Non-discrimination. To a large extent it was the Balkan program that formed and inspired the development of SCH as an international actor on civil and political rights. SHC is an expert organisation providing technical support in areas of human rights law and policy as well as in freedom of expressions laws and practices. The work in the Western Balkans has been the major program of the organisation in terms of engagement and resources (around 75%, now around 50%). The Western Balkan program development during the period 2005–2009 is illustrated in the table below. It shows the expenditures on various parts of the program in SEK.

Area	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Rule of Law	9908079	12629047	10713971	10901258	9238095
Freedom of Expression	6805152	5647098	5164558	4276614	3565430
Non-Discrimination	4619851	7669017	5971923	4836507	4185011
Control and Evaluation	328006	0	0		
Phase-out projects	307528	359562	591606	64721	
Administration/field rep	7589442	8208242	6421785	7730717	8282263
Unspent balances, partners					-117455
TOTAL	29 558 058	34 512 966	28 863 843	27 809 817	25 270 799

In 2009 SHC changed its name (to Civil Rights Defenders), mandate, statutes and governance structures to become less limited geographically and financially and more public and transparent in its operations. The new objectives are:

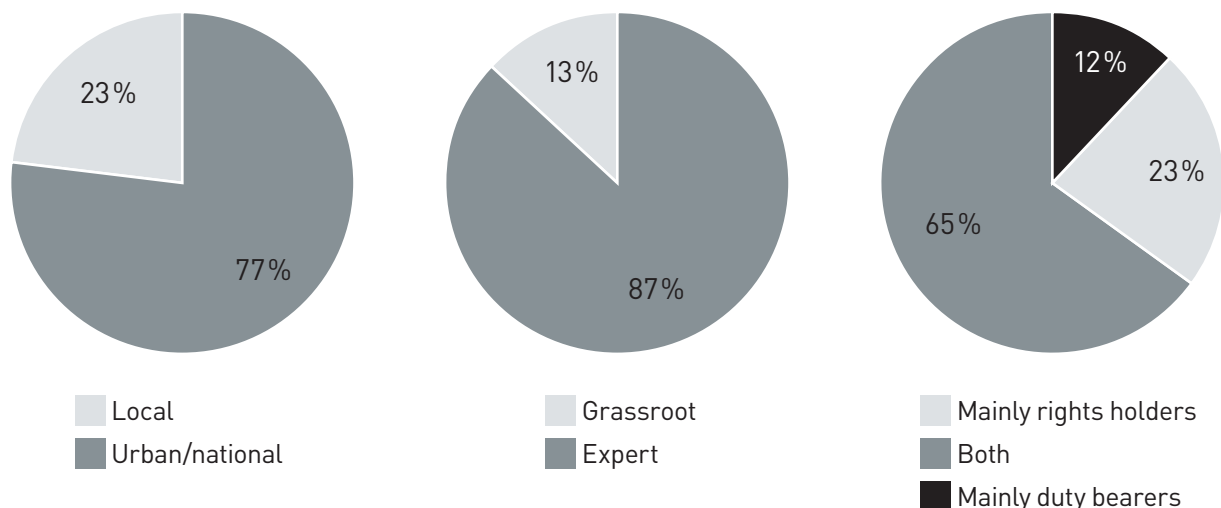
- That people can demand their civil and political rights and thereby obtain influence over their situation.
- That violation of people's civil and political rights by the state are investigated, prosecuted and compensated.
- That there are local human rights defenders who defend people's civil and political rights.

CRD has had a strong focus on Serbia (38 % of projects and 30% of the budget). The regional field office is placed in Belgrade. It has been staffed with 3–6 staff members during the period of review. There is also an office in Sarajevo to cover BiH (one person 2004–2005, two persons 2006–2009). Since early 2010, this office is manned by alternating staff from the Belgrade office, approximately 10 days per month. CRD also had an office in Skopje to cover Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo (two persons 2004–2009). This office is now closed. Since 2006 Albania is covered from Stockholm. Since early 2010 there is a CRD field office in Prishtinë/Priština to cover Kosovo and Macedonia (one person). Sida has wished for country offices to be set up in each country, but CRD has argued that it is the competencies and capacities of support staff not their geographical placement that is of importance.

In 2009, CRD supported 44 partners in the Western Balkans (17 of them in Serbia). The average annual contribution to these partners was around 480 000 SEK. In addition to supporting these organi-

sations CRD has carried out 12–15 regional projects (trainings and conferences) in their own capacity and in partnership with other stakeholders. For some time CRD supported basic costs of independent and ethnic minority media outlets, but this type of support has gradually been phased out. Support to free legal aid services has gradually been reduced as legislation on free legal aid has been adopted (but only slowly implemented). In total, some 70 organisations and 20 media outlets have received support during the period of review. The media outlets are not part of this evaluation.

The profile of CRD supported organisations according to CRD’s assessment:



The objectives of the CRD Western Balkan program during the period of review have been:

1. Strengthening the rule of law

- improved access to free legal aid,
- improved capacity of NGOs to monitor and hold duty bearers accountable to the European Convention on Human Rights,
- decreased impunity for serious human rights violations.

2. Strengthening the freedom of expression and right to information

- improved ethics and self regulatory mechanisms for media,
- improved professionalism and sustainability of independent media support organisations,
- improved legal protection of journalists and media actors.

3. Improved protection against discrimination

- adoption and implementation of anti-discrimination laws,
- increased access to justice, media information and advocacy skills by Roma and national minorities,
- increased access to justice and improved conditions for inclusion in society for PWDs,
- strengthened capacity of the LGBT movement and increased awareness of LGBT issues among the public and duty bearers.

4.2 Outcome and impact

While it would be incorrect to say that CRD does not address capacity where required, their particular focus has been primarily on the external work of the organisations, particularly their approaches towards influencing the human rights situation. Despite this, partners indicate that the cooperation with CRD has contributed substantially towards improving their strategic planning ability, their professionalism, their advocacy skills, their credibility and support base and their networking capacity²⁷. This, in combination with strategic funding of important key efforts, has enabled partners to make a difference. In Albania the very existence of a human rights monitoring mechanism is an important outcome. The good cooperation between partners and the State Ombudsperson are signs of increased influence in Macedonia, Serbia and Albania.

The Rule of law program has seen some achievements in terms of improved legislation and compliance with EU standards. According to Freedom House all countries have experienced improved judicial frameworks during the period. In all countries, laws on non-discrimination have been passed and in all countries, except in Serbia and Montenegro, legal aid laws have been adopted. The main challenge now is the practical implementation and the upgrading of remaining weaknesses of the legislation. The adoption of the new laws is mainly a result of the EU pressure and large donor support to Justice Reform programs, but CRD partners have indeed contributed in most of the drafting processes²⁸. The CRD program has supplemented the legislative efforts by providing various training opportunities for lawyers. Some of these trainings have now been integrated as part of regular curricula for training of judges and prosecutors. The CRD supported programs have also contributed to²⁹

- Thousands of citizens having access to free legal aid to claim their rights and high number of cases were charged in favour of victims.
- Thousands of Roma persons having received citizen status and documents.
- Institutions and government being more cautious, due to the monitoring carried out by partners.
- Improved conditions for returnees and internally displaced persons.
- Improved conditions in prisons.
- Documentation of war crimes/memories and initiation of efforts to start a regional reconciliation process.

CRD partners played a role in pushing for new legislation, especially in the field of non-discrimination and in the area of disability (in Albania). Inspired by CRD, partners are now shifting towards advocacy for implementation of the laws, for formalisation/standardisation of NGO legal aid services and for government funding for these services. CRD partners also play a vital role in the monitoring of and reporting on government human rights performance in general. Apart from CRD, only a few donors support watchdog functions, mainly Germany and USAID. Despite efforts from partners and others, corruption levels have not decreased during the period and are still rife in all areas of government, civil service, business and NGO spheres. There is a shortage of CSOs working against corruption and strategic alliances have not yet been formed to enhance this work. The issue of impunity and reconciliation is still very sensitive and not yet a priority for politicians. A coalition, RECOM³⁰ has been initiated by the CRD partner Humanitarian Law Centre, to advocate for the establishment of an independent regional commission for reconciliation (or “truth commission”). The initiative has been met with mixed

²⁷ Replies to questionnaires

²⁸ Country reports and questionnaires

²⁹ CRD reports, confirmed by questionnaires and interviews

³⁰ <http://www.korekom.org/webpage/1>

feelings among politicians, CSOs and the public. There are still many versions of the “truth” which people are not ready to challenge. CRD has contributed by documenting and publishing memories.

The Freedom of expression program has seen some great achievements in an increasingly hostile environment. Some of these results can be directly linked to the financial and technical support of CRD. Despite negative general trends regarding freedom of expression and increased control by governments and media tycoons, the actions taken by CRD and its partners to counteract these developments have made a difference. CRD support has contributed to improved self regulation mechanisms for printed media, development of codes of conduct for journalists, establishment of Hot Lines and free legal aid mechanisms for journalists in need of help, and increased the capacity of journalist associations to assist and protect members.

The Non-discrimination program has seen laws on non-discrimination passed in all countries. Informants say that this was mainly due to external EU pressure, but the non-discrimination coalitions supported by CRD also played a certain role in the drafting and advocacy process. It is now a great challenge for CRD partners to advocate for these laws to be amended to conform to EU standards and to be operationalised. During our field visits we did not see examples of any such action, although CRD reports that it is ongoing in Albania, Serbia and Macedonia.

Some progress is also noted in terms of LGBT rights. Despite having other larger donors, LGBT partners confirm that the moral and political support from CRD has helped them move forward. They are increasingly being invited to take part in human rights networks and trainings, they have become more accepted in the human rights community and they have increased their skills in planning and advocacy. The involvement by some Swedish Embassies in connection with Pride festivals has been highly appreciated and shows that cooperation between FOs and Embassies can be fruitful, if explored³¹. At the same time, some disappointments have been noted. The newly adopted anti-discrimination law in Macedonia does not include specific protection of LGBT groups and in BiH there are still weaknesses in the legislative protection, despite pressure from CRD partners. Also, some LGBT partners have collapsed when key personalities left the organisation (and sometimes the country). Others have decided to give priority to social and membership issues and do not wish to become visible and have an advocacy role.

Finally, CRD support has also contributed to improved access to information and increased access to citizenship recognition for the Roma population. In terms of disability rights, CRD has not been visible compared to other initiatives (e.g. treatment of persons with disabilities in institutions), although in Albania, a partner has been active in promoting new legislation in line with the UN convention.

4.3 Relevance

The three CRD focus areas are extremely relevant to the country contexts, Sida objectives and EU accession criteria. According to Transparency International and Freedom House, freedom of expression and corruption are two areas where development is going in the wrong direction. At the same time, there is a shortage of organisations that are working on professional and committed monitoring of the rule of law/corruption, human rights and freedom of expression. CRD and its partners are highly needed in this context. It is also relevant to the Sida strategies in all countries and the EU accession criteria.

Initially, CRD also provided support to basic costs to independent media houses to help them survive, while looking for commercial opportunities. Funding from the US was also substantial to these media outlets. Financing of independent media is still an issue in the region as both government and commercial tycoons have vested interests. However, based on our impressions of media partners, we feel that

³¹ CRD reports

the present CRD focus on strengthening investigative journalism, press councils, journalist associations and legal aid to journalists is a more relevant, sustainable and cost-efficient way to reach results.

There are a number of organisations working on various aspects of non-discrimination and the challenge here is to coordinate efforts and develop dialogue with authorities. With a few exceptions (LGBT and disability) CRD has not supported self-advocacy groups but rather ensured that mainstream HR advocates and media address issues of discrimination as part of their agenda. This is a very relevant strategy considering the particular expertise of CRD.

The CRD program is based on comprehensive context and stakeholder analyses in each country. There are however a few areas concerning relevance that need to be discussed:

- The program has a heavy focus on Serbia. While recognising the importance of Serbia for the continued security in the region, a number of observers pointed out that BiH, Macedonia and Kosovo are presently the most urgent countries for interventions in the human rights field.
- Cooperation between CRD and Sida country teams has not been regular and systematic. Joint strategic planning and division of responsibilities in relation to legislative reform programs and support to freedom of expression initiatives has not been common practice. In BiH for example, the Swedish Embassy decided to channel its funding directly to the Centre for Investigative Reporting (CIN)³², while CRD has extensive experience of media development, including support to investigative journalism and cooperation with the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network³³.
- Laws are relevant to people only when they are implemented. There is a general pattern in the region that the laws only are adopted after strong pressure from donors, domestic advocacy groups and the EU. However, laws that require funding or substantial changes in norms and practices are generally not being implemented. There is a concern that the legitimacy of democracy and its decision-making processes will deteriorate even more if new laws continue to be adopted without being implemented. As well, human rights NGOs are at risk of losing credibility if not engaging with the practical implementation of the laws.

4.4 Effectiveness

The CRD methodology is focussing on partnership for change rather than individual projects and organisational development. The approach has meant that partners are chosen because of the position they are in and the role they can play in their key focus areas. They are often already established expert organisations and CRD generally supports some 15–25% of budgets. This approach has been effective in developing the skills, capacities and networks of partners, and therefore their ability to be players. CRD partners praise CRD for its technical and high level professional support and for the moral and political support such as joint signing of petitions, joint press conferences and participation in joint campaigns (although the changing of name caused some initial difficulties). The international backing from CRD also provides protection for activists at risk, adds weight to reports/statements and helps to open doors to decision makers. The quote “we fight together” represents the feeling and the nature of the relationship. Partners also appreciate the willingness of CRD to fund core costs, which assists partners to stay focussed and not become donor driven project implementers. They also find the networking with other like-minded organisations in the wider region very positive.

CRD has mainly been focussing on technical and professional backstopping of partners. Although some grants have also been provided for organisational capacity building (internal control systems, stra-

³² The Centre for Investigative Reporting is a non-profit investigative centre that writes about problems in Bosnia and Herzegovina especially corruption and organized crime. It is based in Sarajevo but covers much of the Balkan region.

³³ <http://birn.eu.com/>

tegic planning etc), this kind of support has only recently become more substantial. To some extent this is due to the fact that partners are already rather strong and professional. Despite this, CRD partner organisations claim that the relationship with CRD has helped them to improve their capacity to plan and manage their organisation strategically, to design and influence public policy and to network with other organisations. The support has also assisted them to be more well-known and respected. Some organisations even report improved relationships with authorities, due to professionalism and objectivity, although as watchdogs it is not possible to have excellent relationships.

A contributing factor to the effectiveness of CRD is the low staff turnover and the long and high level of experience and technical expertise of field office and Stockholm staff. With support from the RBM consultants and the recommendations made by the System Audit, CRD has developed its organisation and improved its ability to work in a results-based manner.

4.5 Cost efficiency

CRD has had an overhead cost for administration, backstopping and support of around 27% during the period of review. This means around 7.6 MSEK per year for support to 45 partners and some 10 regional initiatives, or an average of 170 000 SEK per partner and year. Considering the high level of technical support to partners and the support to networking and joint actions, this seems reasonable. The support could not easily be carried out by any intermediary as it is not only about channelling and monitoring funding, it is about fighting together for civil and political rights, quality technical support in areas such as human rights standards and freedom of expression and international networks. As one CRD partner reported: *“No one local organization could do the job that CRD does, because it does not have the knowledge, mechanisms and instruments that CRD has. In that case, local organization would be only bank!”* Naturally, it is the aim of the CRD program to develop such capacities in local partner organisations, but due to the history and context, partners still distrust the legitimacy, transparency and human rights practices of other local or regional organisations.

We believe that CRD could further increase its effectiveness by having permanent field staff in each country. It should however be noted that increased field presence with offices in each country will increase costs. It is our opinion that it is worthwhile, if manned by the right person/s, because such a function would:

- Follow national developments more closely, make use of windows of opportunity.
- More proactively facilitate networking and participate in joint statements/press releases.
- Have a closer dialogue with partners and follow up and modify support.
- Encourage initiatives outside the capital cities.
- Be a more informed and present speaking partner to Sida on the human rights situation in the country.

CRD watchdog partners live under severe political pressure: they need CRD and international backing for security reasons and to simply have the courage to stand up to political pressure. This could of course also be the role of Swedish Embassies, but the comparative advantages of letting CRD take on this responsibility are that a) CRD has the competence within the subject area of civil rights violations to write statements and petitions, and b) the Embassies might have difficulties being as outspoken as required due to their other relationships with the respective governments.

4.6 Sustainability

The sustainability of the impact of the CRD supported program cannot be questioned. It has contributed to improved legislation, empowerment of discriminated groups to report violations and claim rights, increased capacity and credibility of partners and improved professionalism among lawyers and journalists. The training programs introduced for journalists and lawyers on EU human right standards have been included as part of regular university training and will continue without CRD funding. The financial sustainability of media and journalist organisations seem to be gradually improving as membership fees and other income is growing. CRD has assisted them in developing business plans and to get grants from other donors as well. The legal aid programs are expected to be part of government funded schemes when the new laws are put into practice. There is however a need for persistent pressure for these schemes to be implemented so that the CRD support can focus more on litigation and high level cases. No partner depends on CRD for more than 40% of its financing, although this funding is often of key importance to partners as it is flexible and often includes some funding of core costs, which other donors seldom cover.

To further strengthen sustainability, CRD could work more proactively to coordinate with other donors and promote joint reporting and basket funding to partners (as is done for example with the Journalist Association in BiH).

The sustainability of human rights monitors and defenders is an issue. Partners of CRD will have difficulty accessing funding and political support from other channels. Sweden, USAID and the EU are the major sources of such support. The bulk of the EU civil society support is however directed towards citizen participation and inclusion of marginalised groups. The human rights situation in many Western Balkan countries is not improving and there is a great need to continue supporting watchdog organisations. One external expert said *“There is a clear perspective: if international donor funding stops, organisations will either cease to exist or they will become service providers in competition for government funds”*.

4.7 Conclusions and recommendations

CRD has played an important role in supporting human rights monitors/defenders and media/journalist organisations. The CRD program has been important in the provision of legal aid, documentation – particularly for the Roma population and IDPs, human rights monitoring – particularly of prisons and other government institutions, but also in relation to freedom of expression. CRD watchdog partners live with political pressure and require the support of CRD and other international organisations for their own security and simply to be able to carry on their work. CRD partners are strongly supportive of CRD and its approach, and in how CRD contributes to their development, professionally and specifically in terms of strategy and capacity to advocate. While Swedish Embassies could take on this role, CRD brings established competence, as well as local support, and Embassies are not in the same position of independence to provide advice and assistance where required. CRD is still urgently needed in the region, and can improve its focus, method and effectiveness in a continued role, and in so doing, play a more important role as partner and informant to Sida.

The evaluation team makes the following recommendations related to future involvement:

1. We strongly **recommend** that CRD continues to be active in the region, specifically mentioning Macedonia.
2. We **recommend** that CRD focuses more on its specific key competences, especially strengthening of civil rights defenders who are
 - a. monitoring corruption and government performance in relation EU Human Rights standards, especially treatment and conditions in government run institutions and centres

- b. taking action to ensure implementation of non-discrimination laws in accordance with EU standards, with focus on the most violated groups
 - c. safeguarding freedom of expression.
3. If/when supporting self advocacy organisations, we recommend that this is done in cooperation with organisations and networks with issue knowledge and networks (for example ILGA/RFSL and EDF/SHIA/HI).
 4. In order to meet the challenge of non-implementation of adopted laws and its effects on confidence for democracy, we **recommend** that litigation be used more proactively as a tool. Cases that concern people's everyday life should be prioritized. At the same time it should be noted that duty bearers are sometimes better "helped" to fulfil their obligations by using means of constructive dialogue and capacity development.
 5. We **recommend** a closer working relationship between CRD and SIDA (specifically in Embassies), particularly in joint strategising and closer cooperation, so that overlap situations instead become joint focus approaches.
 6. We **recommend** that CRD establish a national presence in each country (it should however be noted that none of the CRD partners found it to be a problem that CRD does not have continuous, on the ground presence in BiH, Albania and Macedonia. Their communication was fast and easy in any case. The problem is mainly perceived by Sida and the evaluators who feel that analysis and programs will depend too much on existing partners' views and ideas if there is not a field representation).
 7. We **recommend** that CRD be more proactive in terms of cooperation with other donors and potential national and international allies.
 8. We **recommend** that CRD coach partners to move to the next level of monitoring and advocacy when laws have been adopted, gradually phasing out their service provision role (or at least the funding of it).
 9. We **recommend** that CRD engage in more coaching and organisational development support to partners and take initiatives re donor coordination, basket funding and joint reporting to assist partners.
 10. We **recommend** that the heavy focus on and presence in Serbia be scaled back, with a related increase in countries where the situation regarding human rights is deteriorating.
 11. We **recommend** that CRD make selection of partners and programs more open and transparent.
 12. We **recommend** that CRD carefully considers when and how to engage in national initiatives in their own name in order not to compete with local actors.
 13. We **recommend** a stronger encouragement to initiatives outside capital cities.
 14. We recommend that agreements are 3-year, with possibilities to cancel them if major changes or problems occur.

5. OLOF PALME INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

5.1 Background and history

Olof Palme International Centre (OPC) is an umbrella organisation with 27 member organisations from the Swedish labour movement. It engages in development assistance all over the world and focus on cooperation with organisations that share the same values of democracy and human rights. OPC started to work in the Balkans during the war in the early 1990s in support of organisations working for democracy and peace. OPC has continued to develop its cooperation with Balkan civil society ever since. OPC's work is funded by three different Sida funding arrangements; from CIVSAM, the political party funding and the Sida/Europe funding. These programs supplement each other, but the synergies are not fully explored. This evaluation only covers the activities carried out with Sida/Europe funds. These make up approximately 60% of the total OPC budget in the region. Unlike KtK and CRD, the Western Balkan program is not a large part of the total operations of OPC. The development of the OPC Sida/Europe funded program is illustrated by the table below:

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total programme budget	19 700 000	21 580 920	18 500 000	16 645 000	19 009 000
of which disbursements to organisations	16 835 000	16 430 000	14 086 700	12 590 000	14 976 994
Of which OPC expenses in Sweden	1 315 000	1 405 200	1 480 000	1 300 000	1 275 000
Of which OPC expenses in the field*	1 550 000	3 745 720	2 933 300	2 755 000	2 757 006
Number of programme employees	4	5	5	5	5
Of which in Sweden	1	1	1	1	1
Of which in the field	3	4	4	4	4
Number of projects	49	49	42	43	45
Number of partner organisations	41	42	36	39	37

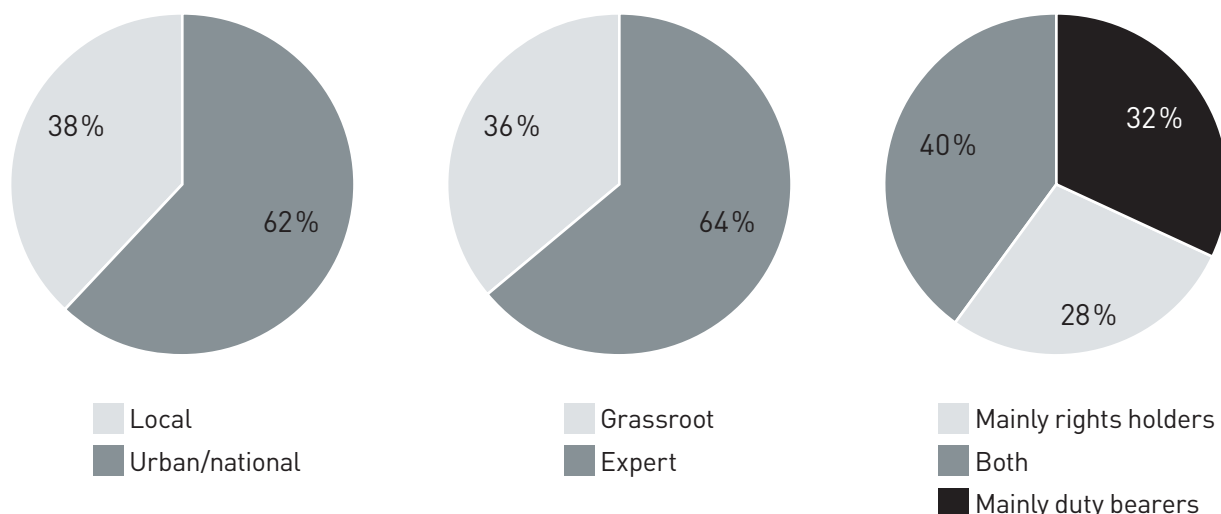
*Includes local offices, regional networking and audit. All figures are in SEK.

Ahead of the current 4-year program (2008–2011) and after the Palme Center had made some strategic changes, a call for proposals was advertised in the countries in the region. This was an attempt to open up the circle of partners that had been supported by the Palme Center in the previous period and to increase the transparency of the selection process. A total of around 400 concept papers for Albania, BiH, Kosovo and Serbia were received and there was an initial selection and between 20–30 organisations per country that were encouraged to write full applications. The open calls-procedure was recommended in the previous evaluation of the programme commissioned by Sida, but turned out to be very cumbersome compared to the benefits experienced. It turned out to be difficult to evaluate proposals in a fair manner because some organisations with no substance had used professional consultants to write wonderful proposals according to donor requirements, while some organisations with great potential failed to meet basic requirements. The selection process has however led to new partners being identified and OPC has engaged in more new partnerships since 2005 than the other FOs.

In 2009, OPC supported a total of 37 partners (45 projects). The average annual contribution to a project was 330 000 SEK. OPC is working with a wide range of organizations, both professional organizations/think tanks and grassroots organizations operating in different parts of the country. Although the majority of organizations share the same basic values, the organizations do not have a natural common cause and would most likely not work to form a network if it was not for OPC being their

donor. Partners work with various issues such as local community development, youth empowerment, children's rights, NGO sector capacity building, monitoring of performance of local politicians, promotion of formalized agreements for cooperation between NGOs and government, empowerment of marginalized groups such as Roma, LGBT and women, etc. OPC is one of the few donors that support projects that target both authorities (politicians and civil servants) and civil society in local communities to promote constructive dialogue and joint action. According to a recent EU evaluation³⁴, this is highly needed and seldom provided. Because of its wide range, OPC's program overlaps to some extent with both KtK and CRD. They have sometimes cooperated with the same partners.

The profile of OPC supported programs according to self assessment



Partners of OPC are often engaged in development of strategies, manuals and models and in provision of various trainings in areas such as project planning and administration, advocacy, dialogue and negotiation etc. The focus on local community programs is a more recent development.

The objectives of the OPC Western Balkan program for the period under review were:

- To strengthen participation of citizens in civil society organisations and to enable them to influence the local political agenda (with special focus on women and youth).
- To enable civil society, local political representatives and local civil servants to fully benefit from the process of EU integration (with special focus on women and youth).

Many other donors also focus on youth and citizen participation in communities, in particular the EU and OSCE. The OPC support is rather limited in comparison with these large initiatives. In some countries, Sida has supported public administration reform programs with focus on local levels, but these programs have not been linked to the civil society initiatives of OPC. The signals from Sida about phasing out the FO modality in the Western Balkans have initiated some rethinking. OPC is now trying to access EU funding for its operations and is preparing applications together with some of its partners (mainly local democracy and community development partners). In Bosnia, OPC has given 50% of its budget to a Bosnian NGO, CSPP (Civil Society Promotion Centre). The idea is to see if this organisation can take over as intermediary for Sida funding to citizen and youth participation. CSPP is also used by USAID as an intermediary.

³⁴ Europe's Balkan Dilemma, Paths to civil society or State Building, Adam Fagan, 2010.

5.2 Outcome and impact

The support from OPC is channelled to professional CSO capacity builders and think tanks and to small scale initiatives, citizen groups and governmental authorities on local level. While CDR and KtK have a more long term partnerships often manifested as core support, OPC support is totally project oriented. The projects supported by OPC involve training, advocacy and knowledge building, with a focus on municipalities and young people. OPC partners often refer to their objectives in terms of methods such as to facilitate, to promote, to enhance, to advocate for, to identify, to sensitise, to train, to influence etc. but are vague when it comes to the specific outcomes or impacts which they want to achieve through these methods. Although the problem analyses made in the various countries and their connection to expected outcomes have been strengthened during the last years, mostly partners we met still described their results in terms of outputs.

OPC partners are working with different issues and methods in different places and levels. There is not a joint focus of the program where projects and partners reinforce each other. Also, there are many other donors and initiatives with similar objectives, contributing to the changes observed, the most important being the EU (EU Human Rights and IPA funding and especially the recently started TACSO capacity building program) and OSCE. There are also huge investments by other big donors in local governance programs and in youth programs. The OPC contribution is often small compared to these, making it difficult to determine attribution. OPC views the development of value-based organisational culture and active inclusion of citizens in local development as a goal in itself and an important part of democratisation and not only a tool to achieve other development goals.

Given their approach, and the type of support OPC provide, impact is not readily apparent. The projects they support are important, useful, and valuable to participants and stakeholder groups/organisations, but with some exceptions, impact cannot be ascribed to them on an aggregated level. Our evaluation found that signs of impact of the OPC support could be found mainly on the local level in municipalities and MZs. In these grassroot projects OPC funding has been 30–100% of budgets. Some examples of results mentioned by these projects were infrastructure improvements (roads, playgrounds, renovation of social centres), improved citizen participation and dialogue with authorities, increased influence by citizen groups, improved youth leisure activities and improved communication between ethnic groups. In all countries partners referred to examples of municipalities where youth activities had been improved and where there was an increased involvement of young people in consultations. Some respondents³⁵ were however disappointed that the social and economic rights issues that people wanted to raise with authorities and politicians (e.g. poverty, lack of health/social services, poor education or lack of employment opportunities) were not included in projects. Consultations and cooperation so far mainly dealt with leisure, culture, environment and infrastructure. A limitation stated by some partners was that investments required often depended on funding from OPC and that the authorities were happy to participate only as long as it did not cost them anything. The willingness to meet and have a dialogue with civil society representatives and young people is of course still an improvement. In Kosovo, a fellow in a targeted district confirmed that 60% of proposals made during formal citizen consultations had been included in municipal plans (to be implemented in the next three year period).

According to partners and boundary partners, areas where OPC funding has contributed to outputs and outcomes on the national level, at least to some degree, were:

- Advocacy for adoption of a law on volunteerism, setting up of network and a web portal for volunteering (www.volontiram.ba).

³⁵ A number of BiH and Kosovo boundary partners.

- Advocacy for increased transparency in allocating grants to NGOs from local budgets.
- Increased number of formal agreements of cooperation between NGOs and local authorities being signed.
- Influencing an increase in the number of women MPs, the increase of participation of women in elections as candidates, establishment of a quota of 30% in the electoral code for participation of women in politics.
- Influencing the compliance with the law on public information, e.g. the information that Ministries publish on their websites has increased and the quality of information has improved.

No partner mentioned results related to EU accession. With few exceptions OPC has worked with partners that are already established and well reputed. They do not receive core funding and they rarely depend on OPC for survival.

5.3 Relevance

The context analysis and the objectives formulated in OPC's application to Sida are relevant both to the local situation and to the Sida country strategies. The problem analysis and its logical links to outcomes and activities have improved in the last years. However, because of the great variation of partners there is a "missing middle" in analysis of what the organizations could do together as a network or program. The perceived outcomes of the partners are often rather isolated and not connected to each other. The link to other ongoing initiatives is not obvious, although there are examples in BiH and Kosovo where OPC partners try to combine projects funded by various donors into a program with a common approach, common objectives and an ambition to cover all municipalities in a district. Many donors, including Sweden, the EU and OSCE, focus their support on development of local administration, local democracy and citizen participation.

In general, we agree that the focus areas of partner organizations, e.g. citizen participation and young people activism, are politically valuable and crucial for the development of a viable democratic state. However, the OPC analysis lacks a proper stakeholder overview, where other ongoing initiatives are discussed and used as vehicles. OPC could be more relevant if linking up to these other processes and initiatives to supplement and to add value.

5.4 Effectiveness

OPC partners work on both the national and local levels to promote change. The focus on the local level has increased year by year. In the current portfolio more than 60% of projects are local and grass-roots oriented. The aim has been to create arenas for citizen action and democratic dialogue, rather than to achieve specific results. As mentioned above, the leverage of the support and potential effects would have been greater if the program was more focused on certain change processes or issues. With the disparate portfolio of OPC it will be difficult to reach a critical mass within a certain subject area. Furthermore, the activities provided by OPC partners are mainly different training activities. Many OPC partners are not implementing partners themselves, but rather intermediaries that carry out training or capacity building for other implementing actors. Such a set-up, with many levels of intermediaries, also makes it difficult to assess the end result. Due to these factors it has been difficult for the evaluators to assess the effectiveness of the OPC program on an aggregated or programmatic level.

On the local level, however, the OPC supported approach to target both CSOs and local government politicians and civil servants jointly seems to have been effective to some extent³⁶. Partners and bound-

³⁶ Country reports and questionnaires

ary partners report that dialogue has been initiated and relationships strengthened. People feel more involved and listened to. Some are still discontent with the concrete results of the dialogue, but at least the communication is established and there are now ways to complain and propose. To target both rights holders and duty bearers is an approach which has been called for by a recent EU evaluation³⁷, where it is noticed with concern that CSO capacity building is not matched with similar efforts directed to the local public administration. The EU evaluation concluded that there has been too little government engagement in the supported projects and CSOs have mainly targeted each other and produced studies, recommendations, plans and strategies without engaging authorities and politicians in the dialogue.

Partners describe OPC as a flexible, reliable, and long term donor. They indicate that the OPC support has helped them to develop overall capacity to strategise, to manage projects and to gain recognition and influence. However, partners have difficulties to describe exactly what OPC is contributing apart from funding, project dialogue and networking. Mostly they refer to support in project management and follow up. “We work well together” and “they understand us” are common statements. OPC has field offices in every country, manned by local staff with the HQ providing backstopping. Although OPC works more as other “foreign” donors supporting projects, they are perceived as being more flexible and helpful than other donors. There is also an appreciation among partner organizations of belonging to a network which particularly values the exchange of ideas among different sorts of organizations in the region, and individuals working in human rights and with young people in the Balkans. Regional networking and visits to Sweden are highly appreciated.

OPC has left a lot of space for local organizations to design their own project ideas. They were originally supported because OPC sympathized with their values and they have been trusted to develop their own projects. Compared to the other FOs, OPC has many new partners but around 50% of them have been partners since 2005 or before. Among these, we found examples of relationships that have become quite comfortable and based more on a friendship/benefactor relationship which does not promote effectiveness and innovation³⁸.

5.5 Cost efficiency

OPC has spent 21–25 % of the budget, or approximately 4 MSEK per year, on its role as intermediary. This is the lowest percentage in comparison to the other FOs and represents some 130 000 SEK per partner and year on average. At the same time, the added value for partners is not as obvious; although partners confirm that OPC is their “best donor”, “flexible and helpful”. The local field officers have played a crucial role in the dialogue with and support to partners and helped them to improve skills to apply for, manage and report on the OPC projects³⁹. One field officer has become a valuable study visit organiser for Sida (Kosovo). The efficiency problem is rather the lack of coherent focus for the OPC program and the difficulty to establish the impact of projects. In such a situation the role of the field officer becomes more administrative, rather than proactive in terms of political and technical support on certain issues, or in making an active contribution to specific development processes⁴⁰.

It was noted that some of the printed materials shown to evaluators, such as promotion pamphlets (BiH partner), training manuals, assessments, and action plans (Kosovo) gave an impression of being unnecessarily expensive.

³⁷ Europe’s Balkan Dilemma, Paths to civil society or State Building, Adam Fagan, 2010.

³⁸ Serbia country report

³⁹ Albania and Kosovo country reports specifically highlights the role played by the field officer

⁴⁰ External observers with experience of all three FOs

5.6 Sustainability

Sustainability of OPC's work has been achieved to a certain extent. Many OPC partners have a high level of visibility both nationally and locally. OPC's partners generally have other donors and support from OPC comprises a small part of the funding base, around 10–20 % of partner budgets. With few exceptions, they are not financially dependent on OPC and will survive even if they lose the OPC contribution. Although the partners also have many other donors, OPC is one of the few donors that have invested in facilitation of networking at national and regional meetings.

Some OPC partners in local communities are financially dependent OPC to some extent (20–100%) and have few staff (2–6) which make them a bit vulnerable. There are however indications that the processes of civil participation that have been started will continue even without funding, although to a lesser extent. In some communities visited, boundary partners confirmed that dialogue and citizen initiatives continued even with newly elected politicians and outside the OPC funded project⁴¹. Sustainability is also helped by the fact that many partners have volunteers. Local partners of OPC typically have around 10–25 volunteers.

The capacity development provided through trainings supported by OPC has increased individual and organisational capacity of partners. This capacity is not lost even if OPC withdraws funding or individuals move on to political or government functions. It may even strengthen these functions. A number of OPC partners have seen their directors or members move on to prominent positions. Many OPC partners are rather strong in the “aid market” – it is not unlikely that as a network they will be able to attract, for example, IPA funding. OPC is helping by making joint applications for EU funds.

5.7 Conclusions and recommendations

The outcome of the OPC program is mainly seen on the local level where citizen participation is slowly evolving in targeted communities. The improved relationships and increased dialogue between groups and between citizens and authorities in targeted communities has created a basis for a democratic and peaceful development. Although there are examples of such interesting and valuable outcomes in local communities, it has been even more difficult to value the possible overall impact of OPC interventions than for the other FOs. OPC projects are very diverse in type and issue and there are many other significant initiatives in the area of civic participation. Both contribution and attribution are problematic to determine. Because of this, the added value of OPC is not as visible as that of the other FOs. It was also noted that OPC is working with three (soon four) different funding arrangements and the initiatives funded by Sida Europe is only part (and perhaps cannot be evaluated separately). The evaluation team found much to like in the OPC program, but could not find the same strength as was apparent in the work of the other FOs.

It is our opinion that OPC's work will benefit, and projects will generate more outcomes, from greater clarity internally on the specific areas of priority within OPC's range of interests, coupled with a more focused approach on partners, projects and intents. The following specific recommendations are made by the evaluation team:

1. We **recommend** that OPC narrows its focus and identifies niches linked to its core values and competencies as a labour movement.
2. We **recommend** that OPC takes a more programmatic approach to selection of partners, and to funding of partner initiatives. The initiatives supported should form part of an overall strategy to influence or contribute to a few selected processes or results, not only to create general preconditions

⁴¹ BiH and Albania country reports

for civic participation. This means a stronger emphasis on outcomes, where funded projects/partners reinforce each other and contribute to a wider program objective.

3. We **recommend** that OPC improves its stakeholder analyses and strategically and proactively engage with ongoing change/reform processes and build on/add value to other donor initiatives.
4. We **recommend** that OPC, if it continues to engage with Sida-funded programs in the Western Balkans, create a much stronger link between Sida priorities, OPC objectives and the projects and partners selected. A carefully balanced dialogue is needed to develop a program where the locally defined agenda can form part of an overall program goal.
5. We **recommend** building on current success with OPC funded initiatives in Municipalities and MZ, but to improve linkages with ongoing local governance processes funded by the EU (and others) and narrowing the focus of the OPC contribution.
6. We **recommend** that partnerships are evaluated and redefined on a regular basis, to ensure the focus of activities continues to contribute to program outcomes and to ensure that partner dependency is minimised in funding relationships. There is a need to find a selection method that can identify the best potential change agents, but is more practical and accurate than calls for proposals and more open and transparent than personal contacts.
7. We **recommend** that agreements are 3-year, with possibilities to cancel them if major changes or problems occur. OPC could also take initiative to donor coordination and basket funding to assist partners.

6. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Our assessment is that the arrangement with three framework organisations has had a range of positive effects both in Sweden and in the respective countries. The modality has had many benefits compared to other possible arrangements. It could however have been more effectively organised and implemented. In the following sections we are summarising our conclusions and respond to the two overall evaluation questions in more detail.

Question 1: “*What has been the outcome of the Sida investment of MSEK 400 since 2004*”? This question is answered under the headings

- 5.1 Contributions towards democracy and human rights in the Western Balkans
- 5.2 Unintended positive effects

Question 2: “*To what extent do the Framework Organizations (FOs) bring an added value as compared to other possible forms of support*”? This question is answered under the headings

- 5.3 The added value to partners
- 5.4 The added value to Sida
- 5.5 The modality in relation to Sida policies and procedures
- 5.6 The modality in relation to the Western Balkan context
- 5.7 The dilemmas and challenges

6.1 Contributions towards democracy and human rights in the Western Balkans

All FOs have, to a varying degree, contributed to the strengthening of civil society partners.

KtK partners especially mention that the partnership has empowered them in terms of improved quality of their services, more self confidence, improved relationships with the community and the authorities, increased networking with other stakeholders, increased ability to strategise and influence authorities.

CRD partners especially mention their increased professionalism, increased recognition by authorities and other stakeholders, increased courage to make public statements and actions, increased issue-based networking and increased influence. They also mention their increased ability to provide legal aid to vulnerable groups and activists.

OPC partners mainly mention their increased abilities to make strategic plans and manage and report on projects funded by OPC. They also mention increased abilities to carry out trainings in areas such as advocacy, dialogue, negotiations. Almost all partners demonstrate improved abilities in terms of results-based thinking and reporting, although to a varying extent.

The increased capacities have enabled partners to contribute to human rights and democracy developments in their respective focus areas. In summary, the following was concluded regarding results of the FO contributions.

KtK

The KtK program has contributed to the development and empowerment of 12–15 women's organisations and women leaders in each country, which have been able to make a difference in their local communities. These partners represent around 10–12% of the women's organisations in each country. Examples of changes that have been achieved in communities include; closing of brothels, making domestic violence visible and treated as a crime, an increased number of women in politics, improved health care services, establishment of government funded shelters for women, empowerment of women to oppose traditional practices, reduced ethnical tensions among women, etc. The support has also contributed to increased networking between organisations and to joint initiatives on the national level in relation to policy development and gender based violence.

The starting point in psychosocial work during the conflict created a basis for trust in the communities and many organisations have been able to establish good dialogue with authorities. KtK coaching, moral support and the provision of neutral ground meant a lot during the initial years. Many organisations would not have existed without KtK support. It is however our opinion that KtK could have played a more proactive and inspirational role in relation to the women's movement and the fight for gender equality in the pre-EU context. There is a need to move beyond the close "sistership" with a few organisations that have become overly dependent on KtK funding. KtK is, according to their statutes limited to operate in conflict and post conflict situations. This is a limitation which has been differently interpreted over time and by different KtK staff. KtK could consider supplementing its present mandate by partnering with or creating another organisation.

CRD

The CRD program has contributed to improved access to justice for thousands of people, improved legal and personal protection for journalists and other human right defenders, development of independent media institutions, improved conditions in prisons and an increased pressure on authorities to deal with war crimes and corruption. True partnership in the fight for human rights, including joint actions, joint statements as well as political, technical and practical back-up has been a key to these successes. Most CRD partners consist of highly qualified experts and all of them have support from other donors, mainly USAID and other US funds. They would have existed even without CRD, but they

would probably not been able to keep their independence and their outspoken (and brave) working methods. CRD has contributed long term funding and constant moral, technical and political support, which other donors do not provide. It is however our opinion that CRD could have done more in terms of joint strategising with Sida, in terms of networking between initiatives and in terms of donor coordination. The proactive role of CRD, acting in its own name in the region, is appreciated but CRD needs to carefully reflect together with its partners when and how this is appropriate.

OPC

The OPC program has contributed to improved cooperation between authorities and civil society, especially in municipalities targeted by its partners. To include both civil servants and civil society representatives as part of projects and capacity building efforts has opened up for much needed dialogue and cooperation. The OPC relationship with their partners focussed mostly on capacity building in planning, reporting and administration of the OPC support, study visits and networking. OPC is appreciated as a very good donor because of its flexibility, long term engagement and keen interest. Although there are some good examples of increased civic participation in municipalities, and successes in terms of advocating for implementation of laws on public information and volunteering, it is our opinion that the OPC support in general has been too fragmented to demonstrate visible results on an aggregated level.

Many initiatives have focussed on training or method development (for example in advocacy, negotiation, organisational development, EU accession, need assessments etc) but the results of these trainings are hard to trace. One reason for this is that the focus areas of OPC (local democracy and youth empowerment) are the main focus areas also of other big donors (the EU, OSCE etc) and the OPC contribution has often been a very small share. We believe that OPC could achieve more with increased focus on a few issues where they could add specific value and competencies compared to others and with a systematic and increased coordination with other initiatives.

Summary

In summary the results of Sida's support to the FOs in the Balkans have been:

- A stronger women's lobby in the Western Balkans.
- Improved conditions for women in selected municipalities.
- A more visible and enhanced human rights monitoring capacity.
- Improved competency among lawyers and journalists on human rights and European standards.
- Improved protection of journalists and human rights defenders.
- Improved mechanisms for self regulation of the printed media.
- Access to free legal aid or advice for tens of thousands of persons.
- Improved citizen participation in a few selected communities.

6.2 Unintended positive effects

The arrangement with funding through Swedish framework organisations has led to the development of two experienced and highly regarded Swedish human rights organisations – KtK and CRD, which are now part of the Swedish resource base for international development cooperation in their respective focus areas – women's rights in conflict/post conflict situations and human rights defenders.

KtK was born out of the initiative for Bosnian women in the mid-90s war and has grown gradually since. The Western Balkan program is still the foundation of KtK's international engagement (around

40%). It focuses on support to women's organizing in conflict regions and their active part in peace and rebuilding processes. Today, KtK is active in 16 countries in three regions and is an internationally respected actor in the area of women and peace. KtK has received the "Right livelihood award" (2002) and played a role in lobbying for the position of Margot Wahström as UN Special Rapporteur (2009). Without its experiences from the Balkan program, and relationships built with women organisations there, KtK would not have developed into what it is today. KtK is now a resource that Sweden can call on for expertise in one of its high priority areas, such as gender based violence and women's participation in peace processes.

CRD (then Swedish Helsinki Committee) was founded in 1982, but its first major international engagement started during the first half of the "90s in the former Yugoslavia (except Slovenia, and in Albania). CRD worked with, and in certain instances was also part founder of human rights organisations that offered free legal aid and support to returning fugitives. CRD also cooperated with cultural institutions and used film, theatre and books to challenge people's fears and prejudices. CRD collaborated with independent media to break through the massive propaganda and warmongering of the government run media. Since then CRD has developed into an organisation with key competence on freedom of expression and human rights monitoring with activities in 11 countries. The Western Balkans has been the main source of experience and capacity development for CRD and more than 50% of its funding is still directed towards this region. CRD is now a resource that Sweden can call on for expertise in one of its highest priority areas.

OPC has been strengthened through the Western Balkan program as the RBM methodology introduced in the program, and its experience with partnerships in the Balkans, has influenced the whole organisation and inspired improvements in planning and monitoring systems. OPC has also become a resource for Swedish media on developments in the region and it has managed to involve resources from the Diaspora in member organisations to promote democracy.

6.3 The added value to partners

All three framework organisations were praised often, and considered by partners in all five countries to be the best donors ever. According to partners, they were perceived not only as donors but "partners in development", taking a strong interest in supported projects and in the "cause" of the partners. The Western Balkan modality has strong support among local CSO partners, in comparison to other donors. The Swedish support is perceived to be flexible, based on mutual respect and allows partners to assume ownership of their own agenda. Other donors are treating the organizations" more as subcontractors assigned to implement the donor's own project. The approach taken by FOs, including the core support provided by KtK and CRD, further emphasizes the local ownership and capacity to adapt to upcoming needs. Furthermore, this approach should, according to the current Swedish Governments policy for civil society (2010), be further prioritized.

The specific value of the modality has been that the FOs are not only engaged in the technical channeling and monitoring funding to projects as many other donors do. To a varying degree FOs also added value in terms of⁴²:

- **Reaching potential change agents.** The FOs have used their local networks and contacts to identify potential change agents at the local and national levels. This means that grassroots organisations and activists with potential, but without sufficient initial structure and management skills, have been able to access funding. Such organisations are rarely reached by other donors, especially not EU funding.

⁴² This information basically comes from country reports and questionnaires

- **Offering neutral ground in times of conflict and ethnic antagonism.** Partners confirm that the mistrust between ethnic groups sometimes made it difficult for them to take initiatives or host meetings across ethnic lines. It was very useful when FOs hosted the meetings and supported activities which required or inspired cooperation between the groups. Also, when it comes to LGBT issues it has been positive to have an external party.
- **Providing networking opportunities nationally, regionally and internationally.** The FOs have facilitated meetings between partners nationally and regionally. FOs have also invited partners to study tours to Sweden and linked them up with other EU actors. This has helped partners to feel and be part of a wider movement for democracy and human rights, in their countries and internationally.
- **Providing moral and political support.** Knowing that somebody outside the country took a keen interest in developments and was ready to assist in various ways gave inspiration, hope and confidence. Partners especially appreciated participation in advocacy events, joint actions and joint statements and reports. International backing provided status to these actions and increased the impact. Partners and activists, who were subjected to threats and political pressure, felt more secure due to the international protection provided. Especially CRD partners mentioned the political support as a key factor.
- **Sharing gender equality and human rights values in practice.** Partners talk about the FO representatives as persons who practice what they preach. They treat partners and staff with respect and equality. They listen and learn. FOs are seen as role models for how civil society should work. Taking this into consideration, the image and behaviour of FO staff is a key factor in the relationship.
- **Providing technical and professional support.** Partners appreciate that FOs have contributed specialist knowledge or contacts with experts on specific issues. Areas mentioned are, for example, EU standards and legal frameworks, psychosocial work with women who are victims of violence, press regulation systems, codes of ethics for journalists, organisation of hot lines, lobbying and advocacy etc.
- **Offer long term, flexible partnerships and funding for core costs.** This approach has enabled partners to develop or keep their identity, vision and independence instead of becoming project implementers for donors. It is not yet common for donors to support core costs or make arrangements for basket funding, although this is recommended by the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness.
- **Coaching partners in strategic planning, management and reporting.** Partners appreciate the ongoing coaching in strategic planning; financial management and results based reporting. They especially appreciate the assistance provided in order for them to fulfil the Sida/FO applications and reporting requirements. FOs are appreciated for being flexible and providing time and help to reformulate applications and reports that do not fulfil requirements. KtK has been especially appreciated for taking a holistic view to the organisational development of partners, while CRD has done this occasionally (e.g. BiH Journalist Association). OPC has mainly focussed its cooperation with partners on the supported projects.

Most of these contributions are based on the specific values, commitment and experiences of the FOs and could most likely, not have been provided by other type of organisations such as consultancy firm.

The very fact that the FOs are also NGOs, sharing the vision and goals of their partners, is one of the main reasons that brought about the *added value* and quality in the relationship. Other donors that FO partners are dealing with are often considered to be much more formal, bureaucratic and inflexible in their relationship with partners, focusing mainly on the successful implementation of a specific project.

The summative statements made by partners reflect their relationship with the respective FOs
KtK partners “we grew together”
CRD partners “we fight together”
OPC partners “we work together”

In summary it can be concluded that the Western Balkan modality of providing support to civil society through Swedish NGOs, with a presence in the field, has been effective and has seen important contributions to outcomes and impact in the countries studied. Taking into consideration the post conflict situation and the initial limited national civil society capacity, the evaluators believe that the modality has been better than alternative modalities (consultants, other donors, direct funding). The use of NGOs as implementing partners is a positive component of the program. More so, the use of NGOs with different backgrounds, different priorities and different modes of operation is not seen as an issue or problematic but as an enabling aspect of the modality. It is this difference that gives strength to the outcomes of the support, precisely because a wider range of organisations with a wide range of capacity are benefiting from the support and from the relationship with international NGOs. Notwithstanding the qualifications discussed in the framework organisation sections above, the evaluation team was impressed overall with the work of the organisations, particularly KtK and CRD. But they are not comparable, not as organisations nor in their approach. It is the view of the evaluation team that this is an important positive of the modality.

Even as the Western Balkans modality “competes” well in terms of effectiveness and outcome with other approaches (such as channelling funds through consultants or directly through local organisations), there is room for improvement. Issues that are relevant to the longer term application of a given modality include, for example: Are the three present FOs the most appropriate organisations to become future intermediaries or are there others? How can effectiveness be improved (all three current FOs have improved their working methods and strategies during the period of review, but each of them still has weaknesses)? Has Sida sufficiently used the FOs as resources and allies in the implementation of country strategies? And efficiency – could the assignment be carried out at a lower cost in order to get more value for money?

Despite the praise from partners and the added value demonstrated, the evaluators found that the FO partnering modality could be further improved in a number of aspects. Overall recommendations are presented below in chapter 7.2, while recommendations to each FO can be found under the respective FO sections.

6.4 The added value to Sida

The Sida “Guidelines for support to NGOs in South Eastern Europe via Framework Organisations”, from 2007, are rather vague on the overall expectations and reasons for the engagement of the three FOs, while they are quite detailed on the formal requirements and expected outputs. They refer to the Sida policy for support to civil society and to the country cooperation strategy as the overall guiding documents for the engagement. We have however interpreted that the intention was twofold – *a) to create a mechanism which could help Sida in its efforts to strengthen civil society in South Eastern Europe and thereby contribute to peace, democracy and human rights and b) to increase effectiveness in the implementation of the respective country cooperation strategies in the areas of democratic governance, human rights and gender equality*. To evaluate the effectiveness of the modality it is therefore not enough to look only at its usefulness to civil society partners and the possible outcomes and impacts of their work. It is also important to see how useful the modality has been to Sida, especially the added value in relation to related bilateral initiatives within sectors such as legislative reforms, rule of law, public administration reforms, gender equality etc.

It is the view of the evaluators that the FOs have worked rather separated from the Sida bilateral programs⁴³. Although FO context analyses have been used by Sida to some extent, Sida has not benefited as much as they could have from the FOs and from coordinated action at country level. The type and frequency of contacts seemed to depend mainly on personal interests. Country teams could have worked in a more systematic and strategic manner to make use of the FOs, their experiences and networks. FOs and their partners could be engaged as eyes and ears on the ground, monitors of ongoing national processes supported by Sida and as organisers of supplementary action and reality checks. Although FOs are limited by their respective mandate, vision and priorities, the information sharing could have been further improved and better utilised.

It should be noted that Sida's programs and priorities are wide, and activist NGOs will tend (although not exclusively) to operate within a narrow range of issues and priorities. In order to cover its priorities, the use of NGOs from a wider range of backgrounds is both appropriate and effective. There are for example Swedish NGOs in the areas of children's rights, disability rights, environmental protection/climate change, etc. which are already active in the region.

Alternatively, Sida could use consultants with a broader competency across a range of areas. This may be more practical to Sida (having fewer relationships) but such arrangements will probably not achieve the same quality of relationships as observed by the evaluation team and discussed by all partners interviewed during this evaluation. Local intermediaries could also be considered where there are transparent and accountable organisations or networks. Such arrangements tend to be more technical and will not contribute the same external inspiration, experience, moral and political support as the present modality. It may therefore require more resources from Sida.

Sida and its stakeholders need to discuss when and how Swedish NGOs should be used as intermediaries and partners in implementation of country strategies, when a consultancy is a better option and when direct funding to local CSOs (or via local intermediaries) is more appropriate and effective. The selection of and conditions for engagement of Swedish NGOs, consultants and "social entrepreneurs" must be more streamlined and transparent (see below for further discussion on this matter).

6.5 The modality in relation to Sida policies and procedures

The Western Balkan experience

The modality with three framework organisations is specific to the Western Balkans. The FOs were originally selected because they were the only three organisations with experience from the region that answered the call for help from Sida in the mid 90s. There have been no changes in the number of framework organisations despite other Swedish organisations being engaged heavily in the region (Forum Syd, SHIA, Save the Children) and despite recommendations in the 2006 evaluation that Sida should engage another organisation to cover the gender equality agenda better. Initially there were no general guidelines for the cooperation between Sida and the FOs. Due to different interpretations of roles and responsibilities, Sida developed guidelines in 2007. These have been gradually updated and developed since then, but their status is unclear and it seems that they are not really used. The parties still have different expectations on roles and relationships. With few exceptions the FOs work almost as freely as those engaged under the CIVSAM funding arrangement⁴⁴.

Parallel to the support via the three FOs, Sida/SEE has also supported a rather large youth empowerment/youth leadership program in the region. This program was first supported by Sida via Proni, a Swedish Foundation which later was taken to court for mismanagement of the funds. Today, the pro-

⁴³ Interviews with Sida program staff and FO staff

⁴⁴ Guided by "Sidas instructions for grants provided through CIVSAM"

<http://www.sida.se/Global/Partners/The%20Civil%20Society/Instruktion%20slutversion%20r%C3%A4ttad%20100702pdf.pdf>

gram is implemented by Forum Syd. It is unclear how and why Sida initially engaged the Proni Foundation as intermediary and why the conditions were different from those of the other FOs. The engagement of Forum Syd as a replacement also involves separate arrangements and other conditions compared to the three FOs.

Furthermore, in BiH, Sida is trying out a modality of using a local intermediary, which is supposed to replace OPC. This modality may be technically well functioning, but it is perceived as very demanding and inflexible in terms of reporting requirements. The modality is very project oriented and not yet part of a wider strategy for civil participation. The program is in its early phases but so far the program seems to be carried out as an isolated consultancy⁴⁵. The initiatives supported are spread on various issues and geographic areas and not sufficiently linked to ongoing processes and other donor initiatives, although many of them have engaged in putting in place agreements (Compacts) for cooperation between authorities and civil society. Sida should consider asking for a more focussed and programmatic approach, for example supporting initiatives that contribute more directly to an enabling NGO legislative/policy environment and transparency of municipal funding to NGOs. When using local intermediaries Sida must be more proactive in their engagement, setting of the ToR and monitoring of performance. This requires further personal resources at the Embassy/country teams.

A wider analysis of Sida modalities

The experiences from the Western Balkans probed a wider analysis of Sida's policies and procedures for support to and via civil society. We found that, Sida (at least at policy level) is definitely recognising the importance of civil society as a driving force for social change, democratic governance and human rights, and service provision for poor and marginalised groups. However, Sida appears to be struggling to find the most effective modalities to channel funding and support to this sector and to have adequate capacity in country teams to engage effectively with the sector. We have identified a number of mechanisms within Sida, all with different funding levels, different application and reporting requirements and different general conditions:

- Support through CIVSAM framework agreements with 15 Swedish NGOs/NGO umbrella organisations that fulfil certain minimum criteria.
- Support from Embassies/country teams directly to local NGOs or NGO networks. This is practice in most countries. In Tanzania guidelines for support to civil society were developed jointly by donors in 2007 (Good Donorship)⁴⁶.
- Support from Embassies/country teams via local intermediaries e.g. national issue-based NGO networks in Ethiopia, consultancy company in Kenya.
- Support from Embassies/country teams via Swedish NGOs, consultants or institutions as intermediaries, for example in Belarus, Ukraine, Turkey (using Raoul Wallenberg Institute).
- Support from regional or thematic departments via Swedish NGOs or institutions such as the FO modality and Forum Syd in Western Balkans, RFSU in Asia, etc.

The same Swedish NGO can work under a variety of the above mechanisms, and from time-to-time there is limited transparency in the way Swedish and local NGOs are selected and engaged by Sida (while consultants are always selected after a tender process). Although the new policy for support to civil society (2009) addresses some of these issues in the section on "Effective forms of support", the guidelines have not yet been operationalised in terms of different modalities.

⁴⁵ Interviews with partner, boundary partners and external observers

⁴⁶ http://www.civilsocietysupport.net/general_info/

It seems that Sida has two, partly inconsistent, ways of relating to civil society:

- 1) Promoting pluralism, i.e. civil society is a *good thing in itself* and should not be controlled and directed, except by the overall objectives and principles for Swedish development assistance. Swedish NGOs are expected to be value-based, committed to a cause, partly work on a voluntary basis, contribute 10% of the funding, effectively reach grassroots in partner countries and administrate small grants. Focus is more on commitment, values, inspiration and exchange than on professionalism (although this may change with more strict demands on Swedish NGOs).
- 2) Civil society as means to achieve certain ends, i.e. civil society is a necessary and *effective tool* that could help in the implementation of the Swedish country strategy which, together with their local partners, could play a role in monitoring of government performance in relation to budget and sector support provided. Swedish NGOs should be engaged to assist and supplement the bilateral and multilateral efforts, especially in the area of democracy and human rights. NGOs are to be the eyes and ears of the Embassy, contributing to contextual understanding and reality checks. Funding is 100% and no voluntary work is expected.

It is the view of the evaluators that Sida needs to discuss and define its various relationships with Swedish CSOs more clearly. There must be well defined criteria and reasons for when and how to cooperate with and use Swedish civil society organisations, institutions and consultancies as intermediaries, actors or advisors.

6.6 The modality in relation to the Western Balkan context

Alignment

Sweden's overall objective of reform cooperation with Eastern Europe is to 'strengthen democracy, equitable and sustainable development and closer ties with the EU and its fundamental values'. In its efforts to contribute to this goal, Sweden has different channels at its disposal:

- The bilateral foreign policy dialogue and Sida bilateral development assistance (including support to and through civil society – e.g. the Western Balkan modality).
- The UN funding and tools (including support to and through civil society).
- The OCSE and EU tools and funding (including support to and through civil society).
- The support through Swedish civil society to local civil society (CIVSAM).
- The trade and labour market policy.

This evaluation, which looked specifically at civil society support modalities, found that the coordination of the various channels Sweden is using is very limited and sometimes even leads to duplications and conflict of interest. In addition to the modalities where Swedish money is involved, other donors are also active, especially the US and its various modalities. The large and uncoordinated sums of funding provided to local civil society organisations by various actors and donors has created a sector which is more of an employment or consultancy sector than a civil society sector. The eagerness of donors to control funding and identify specific results has led to a tendering system where professional tenders rather than activists have been able to get money. It is not uncommon that local NGOs feel that they are more (or sometimes only) "accountable to their donors" rather to a constituency or target group/beneficiaries. Many organisations have become project implementing machines without a vision or internal driving force. Some NGOs have established "capacity building services" to help other NGOs to develop capacity to write up successful tenders, to "profile" their organisation and to be able to report back to donors according to the required format. Recently, the EU itself created such a capacity building program called TACSO, which will provide technical support to civil society. Among external

observers and stakeholders, there is a growing fear that they the funds eventually will only reach the already professional organisations⁴⁷.

In this context, the need for improved donor coordination, joint basket funding and acceptance of an overall progress and financial report is highly needed. This means moving away from uncoordinated, technical and results focussed “calls for proposals”, towards well-designed and transparent contribution systems, where the potential change power and sustainability is highly valued. The FOs have to some extent managed to move in this desired direction, especially compared to other donors. Sida and FOs could however pay more attention on the country level to coordination of civil society support. Especially coordination with, and influence on, EU funding to civil society is of utmost importance in the Western Balkan context.

Lessons

Civil society organisations are recognised by Sida as key actors in development cooperation. Civil society consists of individuals and groups that join together for a common cause. They are independent of the state and the market. They are non-profit making, self-governed and based on a common vision for change. The existence of a vibrant civil society and a free media has proven to be a strong driving force for social and political change and an essential part of monitoring of government performance. For this reason civil society is a substantial part of Swedish development cooperation. It has however not been easy for donors to support civil society without destroying its very essence of being value driven and self governed, especially not in countries with authoritarian, undemocratic and unequal systems and values.

It is well documented⁴⁸ that in the Western Balkans the NGO sector is donor driven and mainly seen as an important employment sector. It is a challenge for donors to channel support so that it reaches and empowers committed and effective change agents that really can make a difference for poor and discriminated people. Some general lessons have been learnt in the Western Balkan context:

- Using Swedish civil society organisations as intermediaries has had some advantages and added value compared to other modalities in terms of reaching the best change agents, providing moral and political backstopping, offering neutral ground, sharing values and experiences, stimulating regional and international networking etc.
- Local ownership of the agenda and a local driving force is a must for sustainability. This makes local contributions (volunteering, cash or kind) essential. There is a need for donor basket funding and core funding rather than project funding.
- Too much bureaucracy and formalisation of a the modality makes it difficult to reach grass roots and hamper innovation and contextual adaptations (but may reduce the risk of corruption and increase transparency).
- The methods chosen by NGOs must be tailor-made to each issue, sector and country context.

6.7 The dilemmas and challenges

According to Swedish policy (Pluralism) Sweden will promote representative, legitimate and independent civil society actors based on their role as “collective voice and organisers of services”. This role involves:

- Create opportunities for *organisations* and create *channels*, including *meeting places* for collaboration, through which individuals and groups who are poor and discriminated against can make their voices heard, raise demands for realisation of their human rights and influence the development of society.

⁴⁷ Several partners, external observers and some TACSO staff expressed these fears

⁴⁸ TACSO Needs Assessments

- Act as *proposers of ideas* and *watchdogs* of those in power.
- In general terms, and particularly under authoritarian regimes, act as a *counterweight* to and *force for democratisation* vis-à-vis the state.
- Offer *liberal adult education* to strengthen the capacity of individuals and groups who are poor and discriminated against to change their lives.
- Organise and carry out *services* of benefit to the community.

The evaluation team identified a significant number of NGOs supported by FOs that only met one or two of these criteria. Quite a number of partners comprise of professional staff with an academic background (“expert organisations”). Very few really organise poor and marginalised groups, but rather work on their behalf. The same is true of many Swedish NGOs. It seems that these “expert” organisations are able to achieve a lot if they truly represent and liaise with the people concerned. We noted, however, that sometimes the representativity and legitimacy of organisations is not obvious, and needs to be deliberately addressed.

We also found that the line between value-based organisations and consultancies is very fine. Many Swedish NGOs have started to perform consultancies as part of their work (when advocacy has been successful, duty bearers ask for capacity building assistance) and several consultancies or businesses have chosen to register as NGOs (with a handful of friends as board members) to be able to access EU and Sida funding for their consultancies and “aid business” ideas. Sida needs to consider this changing landscape when contracting value-based NGOs as intermediaries, so that the most relevant criteria are used for the selection. There are also other Swedish stakeholders that could be used as intermediaries such as universities, institutions, professional groups, etc⁴⁹.

It was also noticed that civil society in the studied countries is rather vibrant in areas such as religious groups, nationalistic groups, sports and culture groups. It seems that when civil society organisations are able to attract popular support, they have no problem to grow and develop. Creating an enabling environment and finding popular issues as door openers seem to be important for civil society credibility and growth. It may not be a lack of “capacity” that hampers development of civil society. Sida and FOs may want to consider this when designing their support mechanisms.

7. KEY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusions and Recommendations for Sida

Considering the context and Sida policies, the main conclusion is that the framework arrangement, using the three FOs, is a rational and practical model compared to other alternatives. The modality adds value in a number of areas, which derive from the quality of relationships established with partners. The FOs, in particular KtK and CRD, have contributed to many tangible and sustainable effects beneficial to the various target groups.

The evaluation identified the following *success factors*, which the three FOs demonstrate to a varying degree, i.e. the FOs:

⁴⁹ It was noted that Sida called for tenders from the private sector (September 2010) for “The management and implementation of the Innovations Against Poverty”, with the intention of engaging the private sector in “social entrepreneurship”. This is yet another modality, which may have its particular strengths and weaknesses.

- Are value-based organisations, driven by commitment to a cause.
- Practice what they preach in terms of democracy and human rights.
- Have the ability to understand and adapt to the local context and use emerging opportunities.
- Have the ability to identify the most effective local change agents nationally and locally.
- Are flexible and listen to local priorities.
- Have the capacity to contribute particular expertise, skills and networking opportunities in the areas being addressed.
- Are empowering partners in their own right – do not see them as project implementers, and are contributing to core costs.
- Are willing to pro-actively cooperate with other stakeholders to promote change.

Recommendation 1

Looking at the present context in the Western Balkans, with continued high levels of corruption (or lack of transparency and accountability) in both the public and private spheres, increased interference in the freedom of expression, unresolved ethnic conflicts, and grave violation of the rights of certain groups, there is a need for continued external support to and protection of organisations that promote and defend human rights. We recommend that Sida strengthens its support to such initiatives. Although Sweden plans to phase out its support to Macedonia, we recommend that Sida continues to support human rights initiatives there within the framework of the ALMACO program.

Recommendation 2

Based on the positive findings in this evaluation and the fact that Sida envisages a reduction of its own administrative budget, we recommend that Sida continues to use Swedish value-based NGOs as intermediaries for support to civil society, especially in contexts of conflict/post-conflict and in contexts where democracy and human rights are not endorsed or practiced by public authorities. In such contexts it is of extra importance to have external inspiration and experience exchange, neutral ground, and moral and political support and protection. In principle, for Sida, the modality is a good quality and flexible way to reach potential change agents and small grassroots organisations at a reasonable cost.

Recommendation 3

We **recommend** that Sida makes its selection of Swedish NGOs in a more transparent and strategic manner against a clear Terms of Reference. Invitations should be made to a wider group of organisations (including the present FOs) and selection should be made against a set of general criteria (e.g. legitimacy, commitment, value-based, administrative capacity, international and Swedish networks etc) and a set of specific selection criteria relevant to the particular assignment (e.g. competence, experience, technical expertise, contextual understanding etc.).

Recommendation 4

We **recommend** that the same selection procedures and reporting requirements should be applied by all Sida departments and country teams contracting Swedish NGOs as intermediaries.

Recommendation 5

The relationship between FOs and Sida can be improved. Despite guidelines that were developed in 2007, there have been different interpretations and expectations on roles and responsibilities. The turn-over of staff on both sides, the organisational changes at Sida and the difficulty of being contracted from Sida/SEE in Stockholm, while responsibilities are shifted to Embassies and country teams, have created a situation where FOs are not being used by Sida to their full potential. We **recommend** that

Sida makes more strategic use of the FOs in planning and monitoring of the country strategies. Sida must be more specific in its expectations on FOs and take initiative to joint strategising. While it will be important to allow the framework organisations to continue being activist and independent, they must also commit themselves to well defined consultancy tasks which fits within Sida's overall strategy for the regions/countries in question. Conditions and expectations should be more clearly spelt out in contracts (what is expected in terms of selection of local partners, local ownership, capacity development of partners, networking, contributions to development processes, support to Sida, etc.). Hence, these detailed contracts will make the modality different from the CIVSAM modality.

Recommendation 6

We **recommend** that Sida accept and support that FOs also have an independent role and their own priorities and activities over and above the ToR for the specific consultancy assignment for Sida. This flexible and independent role is a precondition for the added value of the modality. We **recommend** that 20% of budgets should continue to be untied and available to FOs in order for them to be flexible and respond to emerging opportunities and new challenges as defined by themselves (but within Sida policies and overall objectives). This part of the modality should be guided by the same principles as CIVSAM funding.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that Sida regularly assesses the situation in each country to choose the most appropriate modality. The potential added value of using a Swedish NGO, as documented in this evaluation, should be taken into consideration and valued in such assessment. The aim must always be to develop the local capacity to mobilise resources and to establish a conducive, local environment where there are transparent, accountable, independent and trusted funding mechanisms. While supporting such development, Sida should also consider using a Swedish NGO – National NGO partnership as a joint framework organisation. This would provide local NGOs with strong international support and assistance in developing the work and their profile while providing Swedish NGOs with a strong local component.

Recommendation 8

Regardless of using Swedish or local intermediaries, we recommend that Sida takes a pro-active role to ensure that the supported CSO initiatives have a programmatic approach, contributes to local capacity development, link up with and add value to ongoing processes, and have built-in sustainability aspects.

Recommendation 9

Sweden is an important donor to civil society in the Western Balkans. However, the EU is far larger and growing in importance as the accession process continues. We recommend that Sweden engage more actively in the effective use of EU funding to civil society in the Western Balkans and ensure that the support provided by Sweden is supplementary to the EU funds provided, for example, through IPA, TACSO and EIDHR⁵⁰ etc.

Recommendation 10

Being one of the bigger donors, we also **recommend** that Sweden take the initiative in donor coordination and joint strategising around support to various key areas, according to recommendations made by the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness⁵¹. Sweden could also use its position to guide the donor community towards a more Rights Based Approach (RBA), targeting both rights holders and duty bearers.

⁵⁰ The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/eidhr_en.htm

⁵¹ <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ACCRAEXT/Resources/AG-CS-SYNTHESIS-OF-FINDINGS-AND-RECOMMENDATIONS-ENGLISH.PDF>

7.2 Conclusions and Recommendations for Framework Organisations

As mentioned in our conclusions, the FOs have indeed contributed towards capacity development of civil society and improved human rights conditions in the Western Balkans. Apart from channelling funds to partners, the FOs have provided added value. The three FOs have worked with different approaches, at different societal levels, with different methods and with different kinds of partners, all with their specific benefits and limitations. The recommendations related to each specific FO are found under the respective FO section in this report. There are, however, some general observations and recommendations for all of the FOs.

Recommendation 1 – ensure transparent selection of partners

All FOs have managed to identify good potential change agents (partners) through their networks and local investigations. With the exception of OPC, they have not used open calls for proposals, as the support was built on relationships and processes rather than implementation of projects. This method of identifying partners seemed effective and made it possible to also include grassroots organisations that had not yet developed advanced structure and systems (i.e. KtK). At the same time, the approaches taken were seen by some external observers as not transparent and favouring already existing partners. When selection of partners is done largely through personal assessments, and not through open calls for proposals, the procedure needs to be documented, and transparent. The funding decisions must be taken and motivated by an independent group – not the assessor. We recommend that FO selection processes are carried out in a more open and transparent manner against a fixed set of selection criteria. However, these criteria may be more related to values and commitment than to formal requirements on structure.

Recommendation 2 – evaluate long term relationships regularly

The long term character of the relationships, together with the contributions to core costs of partners (CRD and KtK) were seen as some of the key factors in the capacity development of partners and the results achieved. At the same time, there seemed to be a risk of mutual dependency between FOs and their partners, both parties gaining credibility, experience and funding through the relationship. This makes it unattractive to phase out and finalise ongoing partnerships and move on to new opportunities. While recognising that change processes require a long term investment, we recommend that a) regular, independent assessments of partnerships are made and b) a time frame and a phasing out plan is discussed and agreed on from the start of the relationship.

Recommendation 3 – find a well balanced pro-activeness

The FOs have taken different degrees of pro-activeness in relation to partners and issues arising in the respective countries. While OPC and KtK have taken a low profile and stressed local ownership, CRD have been more proactive in proposing ideas, initiating coalitions, participating in joint actions, signing petitions, calling on authorities, organising training for lawyers and journalists etc. This depends on the different types of issues addressed by the FOs, but not only partly. The evaluation showed that an insufficient emphasis on being pro-active may reduce the effectiveness and added value of the FO contribution, while too strong an emphasis on being pro-active may disempower local actors and disregard local priorities. We recommend that FOs discuss openly with partners ways to find the best possible balance. It is our view that KtK could be more proactive while CRD could consider more carefully the alternatives, before taking their own initiatives. OPC needs to find a clearer focus of its program.

Recommendation 4 – improve the efficiency in field offices.

The FOs have used different approaches and organisations to support partners and Sida. Their expenditures for field offices, administration, evaluations and support from HQ vary greatly. OPC has spent approx. 4.7 MSEK per year (25% of budget, 120 000 SEK/partner), KtK spent around 11 MSEK per year (40% of budget, 250 000 SEK/partner) per year and CRD spent approx. 7.6 MSEK per year (33% of budget, 170 000 SEK/partner). The quality and quantity of the support provided by the FOs

to their partners and to Sida is not correlated to the size of these budgets. According to informants, efficiency is more correlated to the competencies, capacities and approaches taken by the FOs and their staff members, in Sweden and in the field offices. Low staff turnover, easy access and a team of staff with strong commitment, experience and specific competencies in the issues at hand (not only project administrators), contextual understanding and local language skills, as well as interpersonal and communication skills, are mentioned as important factors for efficiency. We recommend that FOs invest additionally in human resource planning and development. We also recommend that local and Swedish staff be used in combination, using the particular competencies and added values of each. We recommend local FO presence in each country, to improve cooperation with Sida country offices, other donors and key stakeholders.

Recommendations 5 – enter into multi-year contracts

The present arrangement where FOs sign one-year contracts with partners and require applications, reports and audits for their contribution takes significant amounts of energy and time from partners and from FOs. It also puts partners into a position of constant insecurity about the future and does not promote long term strategising. We therefore recommend that agreements with partners should be multi-year (2–3 years).

Recommendation 6 – support overall organisational development and promote basket funding

We recommend that FOs systematically contribute to the overall organisational development of partners to increase their ability to develop and sustain operations independently. To promote independence, and ownership by partners, we also recommend that FOs take the initiative, in dialogue with their partners, to promote coordination of donor contributions (basket funding), accepting an overall organisational strategic plan and overall narrative and financial reporting, where each donor contribution is a visible part.

Recommendation 7 – increase cooperation

The evaluators noticed that the three FOs had many issues in common and sometimes even the same partners, for example legal aid to women, legislation on right to information, LGBT issues, monitoring of corruption etc. The cooperation, however, was limited to a few formal occasions. The joint office in Kosovo is a step forward, but so far this is only a physical arrangement. We also noted that opportunities to liaise with other interesting initiatives and other donors were not often explored. The fear of losing independence also made FOs a bit reluctant to cooperate too closely with Sida. We strongly **recommend** that FOs increase cooperation with each other, with other ongoing related development initiatives and with Sida.

7.3 Looking Ahead

There are a number of trends and dilemmas that Sida needs to take into consideration while designing future support to CSOs in the Balkans (and elsewhere). Sida would do well to further discuss these dilemmas internally, and with current and potential FOs.

- A large part of the added value of the Swedish FOs has been the flexibility, activism and commitment demonstrated. The value lies in the fact that FOs take own initiatives, do more and sometimes in a different way than agreed. They have their own agenda and driving force. This makes FOs different from consultancy firms, which basically are expected to do what they are contracted to do. A more tightly regulated consultancy relationship between Sida and the FOs may negatively affect these present FO qualities. At the same time, the overall effectiveness of the Swedish contributions in a country would be substantially improved if there was a more focussed and strategic cooperation between the civil society initiatives and the bilateral Sida initiatives. Ideally, there should be joint strategising around certain issues, however finding a balance between the activist role and the consultancy role of FOs is a key challenge. The key question is whether it is possible to

find a system that allows difference and flexibility but still have minimum requirements on structure, delivery and results?

- Local ownership and a local driving force are key factors for a sustainable social change process⁵². At the same time, supporting only the ideas brought up locally may result in fragmented and uncoordinated initiatives that do not reinforce each other and bring more substantial aggregated results. How much can donors influence development strategies and priorities before the local ownership is lost? Only through transparent and sensitive dialogue between donors (often with money and power) and their partners (often without money and power) can a balance that considers both local ownership and overall effectiveness be found. Donor coordination and basket funding will help CSOs to develop identity and independence. At the same time, this makes it even more difficult to attribute certain results to the Swedish contribution, which is required by Sida. Hence, the problem is how Sida deals with this contradiction to find a workable balance?
- It seems that civil society organisations increasingly, both in Sweden and elsewhere, are becoming professionalised (due to increased demands on formal systems, structures and competence) and driven by the same principles as commercial companies (market shares, profiling, tendering processes, etc). They are not always guided by a common interest but by availability of donor funding. CSOs in the Balkan countries are often described as “a good employment sector” and “donor driven”. Some Swedish organisations can be labelled in the same way. How can Sida ensure that supported and contracted CSOs have true commitment to a cause, a value-based driving force and accountability to a real constituency? Is it at all possible to combine this activism with demands on professionalism, systems, structure and delivery of particular results? According to Sida’s definition, civil society is “*an arena, distinct from the state, market and the individual household, created by individuals, groups and organisations acting together to promote common interests*”.
- The grassroots organisations and activists that work voluntarily and with a commitment to social change often fall short of meeting the strict donor requirements of structure, planning etc. The best change agents risk being disregarded by the EU and other large donors as they cannot compete for funding. Sida can, with the help of the right kind of intermediaries, reach these organisations and put more reasonable demands on them. The framework organisations have shown that it is possible to identify potential change agents, have flexible requirements, and develop capacities in dialogue and work in partnership for change. At the same time, this less competitive funding model risks becoming a comfortable, non-transparent, stagnating relationship without innovation and openness to new initiatives and organisations. There is a need to further discuss how to find a contribution model that can reach change agents without sufficient formal capacities and still keep a high level of transparency and openness to new initiatives.

⁵² ‘successful Projects, what makes them work’? <http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/gladnetcollect/315>

Annex 1 – Answers to the questions in the Terms of Reference

Task (what)	Response
Outcome (impact): Both outcome and impact refers to the effects (change) brought about by the intervention(s)	
To what extent is there an impact in the respective country, given the FOs objectives as defined in the application approved by Sida?	Some impact is visible – further details can be found in the relevant section on outcome and impact page 34–36, as well as in the annexed Country Reports.
To what extent does the impact influence or contribute to the countries’ agenda for EU accession?	CRD – activities provide some impact in relation to EU accession, notable in relation to competencies of lawyers and journalists, improved legislation, freedom of expression and conditions in prisons. KtK – activities contribute to some extent to the EU accession agenda, notably in relation to improved systems for dealing with trafficking and gender based violence and increased political participation of women. OPC – contributions to the EU accession agenda are limited, but the knowledge of and contacts with EU have increased among targeted communities and youth groups.
To what extent does the impact influence change in processes or policies at a local or national level?	Some change is visible – KTK and OPC mainly contribute to changes on local level, while CRD is more focussed on national level processes. More information is found in the relevant sections on outcome and impact, as well as in the annexed Country Reports.
What positive and negative unexpected impacts can be seen from the support?	As a positive, the support has assisted in developing the capacity of the Swedish resource base.
Does the support reach the poorest groups in the societies?	KtK’s support is most noted in this regard, although CRD’s work on documentation, particularly with the Roma and IDP communities, is also important. Further detail is found in the annexed Country Reports.
What are the differences in preconditions for a vibrant civil society in the region (e.g. enabling and impeding factors)?	Impeding factors: donor driven, too much support to professional CSOs at the expense of activist and member organisations, lack of transparency in national/ municipal funding, significant political involvement, CSOs taxed as profit-making bodies, a somewhat high level of overemphasis on population centres Enabling: taxation, recent legislation and policy changes, impetus provided by the EU and bilateral donors, international funding assistance (if given in an empowering manner)
Organisational learning. The evaluation will address learning processes in the FOs and in the FOCPs.	Improvements demonstrated both in FOs and FOCPs. There has been a mutual learning situation between FOs and FOCPs. The RBM consultants input and the system audits have also been used for learning, while some of the previous evaluations have not been used as much as expected.
Relevance: to what extent to which the objective and activities of the interventions are in line with stakeholders requirements, rights and needs and whether the objectives (or its design) are still appropriate given changed circumstances	
To what extent has the FOs’ continuous analysis and evaluations contributed to an updated work plan, relevant to the country context?	All have improved to some extent, although both OPC and KtK would benefit from a closer alignment between their analysis and their work plan. KtK and OPC could also improve their stakeholder analyses.
To what extent have the chosen projects and organisations been relevant as compared to the FOs’ analysis?	As above, and as detailed in the Country Reports and in the relevance and effectiveness sections, there is a correlation between analysis and projects, but, specifically for KtK and OPC, a more strategic correlation would impact on the effectiveness of the work of the FOs and on the outcomes and impact of the support.
To what extent has the FOs’ analysis and work plan been relevant to the implementation of Sida’s policy for civil society?	The FO analysis and work plan coincide with the priorities and strategies of Sida. As is detailed in the body of the report, FOs and Sida would all benefit from a greater cooperation, and coordination, in strategy, in sharing of information and practice and in project development and implementation.

Task (what)	Response
Effectiveness: In this evaluation the term is mainly be used as a aggregated judgment/assessment about to extent to which the interventions have attained or are expected to attain the its major objectives, in a suitable way	
Do the FOs choose the right processes to influence, given the possibilities to achieve a change	CRD and KtK use the right processes, to a large extent. OPC's approach is less effective in this area.
Do the FOs reach a critical mass, given the possibilities to achieve a change?	KtK potentially does with grassroots women's organisations, and CRD with some impact it has in the area of legislation and freedom of expression, but beyond this critical mass is not reached. The contributions are generally rather small compared to other investments. To reach critical mass strategic alliances are needed.
Given that several FOCPs receive grants from other sources, to what extent are the FOs' administrative systems designed to relieve the FOCPs total administrative work load?	FO administration systems are not designed to relieve FOCP total administrative workload. There is seldom donor coordination and acceptance of joint reporting, although CRD has some good examples. This is an area of improvement.
To what extent do FO field representatives contribute to a relevant context analysis and project portfolio?	FO field representation is significant to the effectiveness of the work of FOs, both in terms of analysis and implementation. It goes without saying that some individuals are more effective than others, but the role and experience of field representative and country office is critical to FO effectiveness.
How can Swedish support be better aligned with that of other donors, e.g the EC, still contributing to pluralism?	Feedback received during the evaluation would indicate that maintaining Swedish priorities, with the relatively small and focused program, adds value to other donor activities by addressing the issues and priorities seen by local actors. Sida should continue to support a separate civil society program. It should however be better coordinated with programs funded through EC, USAID and other donors to be more strategic and add specific value.
Cost efficiency: In this evaluation cost efficiency is defined as be justified by its results" with a focus on potential value (results) of other use of the allocated resources	
Given the outcome, has the support been cost effective in comparison to other forms of support?	The FOs have different levels of overhead expenditure depending on their different approaches. OPC spends only half of that of KtK. There is only limited correlation between costs and effectiveness. There is room for improvements in cost effectiveness in all FOs and the report specifies certain areas where improvement can be made. At the same time, it would have been more expensive (and actually not possible) to buy the same services from a consultancy firm.
What is the added value of the FO in comparison to other forms of support?	This issue is discussed extensively within the Country Reports and the body of the report, page 36–42. FOs add value in a range of ways, including networking, analysis, experience, linkages with Swedish and other international knowledge and practice.
Given that Sida will look at alternative forms of supporting and financing civil society organisations in the Western Balkans, what recommendations can be made looking at the experience with direct financing in Bosnia-Herzegovina?	The direct financing mechanism is analysed in detail in the BiH country report. It was found that the modality still has some problems in its design. Although the projects supported achieved their objectives, the modality is not programmatic, it is not aligned with other ongoing initiatives in the same field, and it does not necessarily reach grass root initiatives. The modality is more a technical transfer of funding, not adding particular other values. When using local intermediaries Sida must be more proactive in its engagement and setting of ToR.

Task (what)	Response
Sustainability: The team will assess the sustainability of the abilities developed and the changes achieved.	
To what extent is the achieved impact sustainable?	Program and institutional sustainability has been achieved to a certain extent. The wide range of activities and approaches each have differing possibilities for long-term success, but the work done, particularly at a grassroots level by OPC and KtK and at a legislative and policy level by CRD is likely to have lasting impact. The involvement of volunteers increases the likelihood of sustainability and value-based motives. KtK partners are still heavily financially dependent on KtK. Generally speaking, most partners require on-going financial support from external donors, especially the watch dog organisations.
The FOs have worked with a long time perspective. How has that influenced the conditions for a sustainable impact?	With the reservations expressed in the report related to dependency, the long-term perspective is effective, and contributes to the sustainability of the program impact.
Looking at the perspective of organisational strengthening, what impact can be seen at organisations after the FO's support has ended?	The KtK program at the local level is particularly notable in terms of organisational strengthening. CRD also makes significant contributions to the strength and development of organisations. Many partners of these two organisations have a stronger likelihood on on-going success as a result of the support provided. As the OPC approach is more project oriented, such organisational impact is not as visible.

Annex 2 – Terms of Reference

18 Feb, 2010	

Evaluation of support to the civil society in the Western Balkans

1. Background

In the end of the 1990s, Sida-EUROPA (hereafter Sida) created a framework for support to civil society organisations in the Western Balkans¹, through Swedish non-governmental organizations, hereafter framework organizations (FO).

Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation (KtK), the Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)² and Olof Palme International Centre (OPC) were chosen as partners. The framework agreement between Sida and the respective FO stipulates that the FO has the responsibility to choose cooperation partners, to have systems for assessment, support and to follow up. Therefore, one important role for the FO is to decide which local projects, initiatives or associations Sida should invest in.

As for the content of cooperation, CRD prioritizes local NGOs working to strengthen access to justice, freedom of expression and to decrease discrimination. OPC supports democratisation and the strengthening citizens' participation in decision making by enabling civil society organisations and local administrations to benefit from and participate in the process of EU integration. KtK works to empower women in order to promote democracy and sustainable peace.

An important idea behind the framework system is that support to civil society is most fruitful when channelled through other civil society organizations. The system has also the advantage that Sida can channel support to a large number of smaller organisations, and has been able to delegate responsibility

for the administration to the FO's. The benefit of using the existing Swedish framework partners is also the possibility to make explicit use of their expertise and long experience from the field, thereby contributing to civil society on a variety of levels.

Most of the current agreements between Sida and the FO's run from Dec 2007 to the end of 2011. The 17 existing agreements comprises in total nearly 250 mSEK for the 4-year period. Up until 2007, Sida and the FO's made agreements on annual basis.

The overarching goal for Sida's appropriation for Reform Cooperation in Europe is to support strengthened democracy, equitable and sustainable development and approximation to the European Union and its values. The future membership in the EU for the countries in the South Eastern Europe is a priority for the Swedish government.

A range of donors and organisations in the South East Europe are active within the area of Human Rights and Democracy, although several governmental donors are decreasing their support. This gives Sweden an important role as a major donor within the sector.

Much has changed in the region since the framework system was created. In many countries and in many areas there is a broad range of different types of CSOs, of which some are beginning to reach a high professional level. Much has also changed within Sida: the creation of Country Teams has switched focus from a regional level to a national level. Many work tasks are decentralised from HQ to the field, giving programme officers in the field more responsibility and also better opportunity to monitor support.

2. Definition and rationale

The definition of civil society that the support rests upon reads "an arena – separate from the state, the market and individual households – in which people organise themselves and act together to promote their common interests"⁵³.

According to Sida's guidelines for civil society Sida shall promote the development of a vibrant and democratic civil society, because civil society has potential to:

- **Empowering poor people:** By meeting in networks and groups people working within civil society can develop social *capital*, which comprises trust, norms and confidence. This benefits economic development.
- **Promoting democracy:** Civil society can *spread knowledge* of how the democratic process functions and can serve as a channel for people's political interest and commitment, and offer an *arena* for participation by those who are not represented by traditional political parties. Organizations in civil society can also contribute to accountability, offer support for and validation of policies, and in certain cases, contribute to their implementation.
- **Promoting peace and security:** In fragile states with weak democratic structures and insufficient communication among different groups, conflicts have the greatest risk of violent outcome, not least when people are mobilized against each other in the name of collective ethnic or religious identities. The organizations and networks that uphold standards and attitudes for peaceful co-existence can play a central and constructive role in such societies.
- **Developing a global arena:** More and more organizations are working within international networks. For many of these organizations, this international networking is essential for influencing national development⁴.

⁵³ Sida's Policy for Civil Society, SEKA (2004), valid when the support was approved

As stated in Sida's Policy for Support to Civil Society, a strong civil society is an important element in the development of democratic societies as well as in poverty reduction efforts. Regardless of the primary aim of the contribution, Sida shall aspire to promote the development of a vibrant and democratic civil society in which people have the opportunity to act together in order to influence the development of society and/or improve their living conditions. A project may therefore both be a support to certain work of a national organisation and to strengthening the organisation as part of the civil society.

The main guiding document for Sweden's development co-operation with a specific country is the cooperation strategy. This document sets the priorities for all Swedish development cooperation with the country⁵. The country cooperation strategies however give vague indications of results expected and modalities for support to civil society.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The relation between Sida and the FO is regulated by

- *Guidelines for Support from Sida/SEE to Non-Governmental Organisations in South East Europe through Framework Organisations*" (annex 2.3)
- agreements (in principle identical)
- Sidas Policy for Civil Society, SEKA (2004), valid when the support was approved
- applications or updated applications from the FO's, including the FO's strategies, context analysis and action plans

The main role of the FO is to:

- Identify national organisations working towards the objectives of the Swedish cooperation strategy and in line with Swedish priorities,
- Identify areas that are relevant to the objectives of the cooperation strategy and the Swedish priorities,
- Elaborate an overall strategy, giving guidance to the specific work and methods used in the cooperation with national organisations
- Transfer knowledge to local partners and provide other relevant support to the national organisations, e.g. capacity development, counselling and networking,
- Assess the capacity of national organisations, review proposals and propose financing,
- Administer the Sida financing to the national organisations and provide the necessary project management in order to ensure a high level of quality,
- Sign agreements with and follow-up and evaluate the work of the national organisations.
- Report towards the specific project objectives and the objectives in the Swedish cooperation strategy.

4. Results-Based Management

For the sake of supporting the FO's, and subsequently also their cooperation partners, in the work to systematically improve their abilities to work with Results-Based Management (RBM), Sida has commissioned a long term support in form of a consulting team. The overall objective is *to support the FO's in developing their systems for Result-Based Management*. It is not a control of achieved results, but there is a focus on the project logic leading to results.

5. Purpose of the evaluation

The support to the FO's work is regulated by an agreement that expires by the end of 2011⁶. The evaluation is to provide Sida with an *overall summative judgement* as a basis for a discussion about future support to the civil society to respective country in the Western Balkans as regards methods, organisation, cooperation partners and regulatory framework.

The main purpose is twofold:

1. To evaluate the outcome⁷ and impact, relevance, effectiveness, cost efficiency, and sustainability of the support.
2. To provide recommendations as well as a basis for discussion on Sida's future support to the civil society in the region. This includes selection of modality and cooperation partners.

An important perspective to evaluate to what extent the FO's bring an added value as compared to other possible forms of support. By examining this, the evaluation can also test the thesis that "support to civil society is most fruitful when channelled through other civil society organizations"

A secondary objective is to contribute to the learning of the FO's and their counterparts.

6. Scope of the evaluation

Assessment of the support through the FO's during the period 2005–2009. Assessment shall be made primarily of finalised projects. The evaluation shall be made of the FO's work in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo. The support to Montenegro is being phased out and has received only a very limited support in last years.

The evaluation rests upon the assumption that civil society organisations can contribute to a change in processes or policies at local or national level.

7. Issues to be covered

A. Outcome and Impact

1. To what extent is there an impact in respective country, given the FO's objectives as defined in application approved by Sida?
2. To what extent does the impact influence or contribute to the countries' agenda for EU accession?
3. What positive and negative unexpected impacts can be seen from the support?
4. Does the support reach the poorest groups in the societies?
5. What are the differences in preconditions for a vibrant civil society in the region (e. g. enabling and impeding factors)?

B. Relevance

1. To what extent has the FO's continuous analysis and evaluations contributed to an updated work plan, relevant to the country context?
2. To what extent has the FO's analysis and work plan been relevant to the implementation of Sida's policy for civil society?
3. To what extent have the chosen projects and organisations been relevant as compared to the FO's analysis?

C. Effectiveness

1. Do the FO's choose the right processes to influence, given the possibilities to achieve a change?
2. Do the FO's reach a critical mass, given the possibilities to achieve a change?
3. Given that several FOCP's receive grants from other sources, to what extent are the FO's administrative systems designed to relieve the FOCP's total administrative work load?
4. To what extent do the FO's field representatives contribute to a relevant context analysis and project portfolio?
5. How can Swedish support be better aligned with that of other donors, e.g. the EC, still contributing to pluralism?

D. Cost efficiency

1. Given the impact, has the support been cost effective in comparison to other possible forms of support?
2. What is the added value of the FO in comparison to the added value of other forms of support?
3. Given that Sida will look at alternative forms of supporting and financing civil society organisations in the Western Balkans, what recommendations can be made looking at the experience with direct financing in Bosnia-Herzegovina?

E. Sustainability

1. To what extent is the achieved impact sustainable?
2. The FO's have worked with a long time perspective. How has that influenced the conditions for a sustainable impact?
3. Looking at the perspective of organisational strengthening, what impact can be seen at organisations after the FO's support has ended?

F. Other questions

1. What recommendations can be given to Sida as regards future support to the civil society in respective country?

8. Time schedule and reporting

Inception Report

An inception report shall give a fine-tuned methodological view on the continued work, and specifically as regards impact and cost efficiency. The report is to present an approximate baseline, relevant to the strategies and objectives of the FO's. The baseline is to be constructed on basis of the FO's planning documents as well as from other sources.

The inception report shall also present appreciated use of available resources (time use and budgetary adjustments from the tender accepted by Sida).

The inception report shall present an approach to making a representative selection of programmes, projects and FOCP's. This means that all single projects will not have to be included in the evaluation.

The inception report shall present a division of work among the members in the consultancy team. The inception report shall not exceed 25 pages. The inception report shall be presented to Sida no later

than 14 days after the signing of the contract. Sida shall comment and give its approval within 8 days from that date. Further, the inception report is to specify in more detail the use of interview technique.

The Final Report

A draft final report is to be sent to Sida no later than 9 Aug. 2010. The consultant is to present the draft report at a seminar in Stockholm with the aim to invite the FO's and others to comment. Sida will provide comments within two weeks from that date.

The final report is to be presented no later than 15 Sept. 2010. The consultant shall include an option to present and defend the final report at a seminar organised by Sida. In agreement with Sida, the consultants can invite representatives from former transition countries (Estonia, Lithuania or Bulgaria), giving a view on conditions for civil society in the latter part of the transition period.

The final report shall contain a contrafactual discussion, as well as a discussion on attribution/contribution in relation to main findings.

The report shall be written in accordance with, and will be assessed by Sida in relation to, OECD/DAC's Evaluation Quality Standards (appendix C). The report is to be based on these Terms of Reference, following the guidelines in "Format for Sida Evaluation Reports" (appendix D).

The final report shall not exceed 50 pages, excluding annexes. It shall contain four departments; one for each FO and one summarizing findings and recommendations to Sida and to the FO's respectively. Findings, analysis and recommendations for each evaluated country shall be put in annexes.

Recommendations shall be made towards the background of "Pluralism – Policy for support to civil society in developing countries within Swedish development cooperation", available for download from www.sida.se.

Recommendations to Sida shall be made bearing in mind possibilities for a time efficient management for Sida and embassies. Sida may request the consultants to present the draft or the final report also in the Western Balkans. In total, the budget shall include participation in up to three seminars in Stockholm and elsewhere.

9. Methodology

The evaluation is to take its point of departure in the FO's strategies, plans, activities and reporting for the period 2005–2009. Outcome and impact shall be presented in comparison with baseline.

Each of the three organisations shall be evaluated independently, with the aim to establish knowledge leading to common recommendations and thesis.

The consultant is supposed to make interviews with boundary partners as well as with the FO's cooperation partners (FOCP). Findings are to be shared in written with the FOCP's and these shall be given a possibility to give feedback on the findings.

Swedish embassies and section offices shall be a dialogue partner for adjusting the relevance of the study in the country context. This implies that studies may have a somewhat different focus in different countries. The embassies and section offices shall be kept informed about the consultants activities in respective country, and shall be given an opportunity for briefing after concluded work at country level.

The knowledge and experiences of the FOCP's are to be used to build understanding of the context. When relevant, interviews shall also be made with knowledgeable independent actors that have been outside the scope of the FO's support. The consultant can also use other sources of information and baseline data, relevant to the FO's work.

Annex 3 – Country Report Albania

By Joakim Anger and Lona Iloja

This report comprises one of the five country reports which together make up the detailed commentary from the Evaluation of Sida's Support to the Western Balkans 2005–2009. The report describes the situation in Albania at the beginning of the period in question, changes of importance during the five years, and the situation currently, including comments and reflections from civil society and other actors on the situation at the time of the evaluation, in June 2010. The report then discusses the approach and work of each of the framework organisations who have been responsible for providing Sida's civil society support during the period. This discussion follows 5 key development assistance criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The report then looks at the delivery modality for Sida's assistance in Albania – the approach of using three, Swedish NGOs as implementing partners to determine program priorities (within the Sida strategic framework) and to determine grant recipients and processes – and comments on the efficacy of the approach. The three Framework Organisations (FOs) are the Olof Palme International Centre (OPC), Civil Rights Defenders, the former Swedish Helsinki Committee (CRD) and Kvinna till Kvinna (KtK).

The field work of the evaluation included seven days of interviews and focus group discussions with representatives of framework organisations, representatives of the cooperation partners of framework organisations, representatives of boundary partners (people/ organisations with a direct or indirect relationship to funded organisations/ projects) and external experts/ observers. The complete list of interviewees is found at the end of the report. The report is to be treated as one of five country inputs to the overall report and will thus not be regarded as a standalone report. Summative judgements and overall conclusions can be drawn mainly on the overall regional level as the country sample was too limited (only two organisations per FO) and therefore not entirely representative of the FO intervention in each country.

The conclusions and recommendations in the country report are to be seen as points for further investigation and it is essential that the reader also carefully studies the overall report to get a full picture.

1 Context analysis

The context analysis below serves as background information and will put the work of the organizations in the perspective of the general development. The context analysis It will thus not be used as baseline for the analysis⁵⁴, but rather give an idea on which political /social environment the organizations have operated.

This section is based on various written documents (e.g. applications from FOs, EU progress reports, Freedom House reports, TACSO country reports on civil society) and interviews with key experts.

1.1 Governance and democracy

In 2004 Albania had held elections that were regarded as democratic by the international community and international election observers. Available statistics showed that 52% of the constituents used their right to vote. The political scene however was dominated by two main parties, each focused on its leader, each with little internal democracy and neither with any real commitment to democratic reform. See OPC's application to Sida (2005) for further discussion.

⁵⁴ In the inception report it was anticipated that the context analysis to a certain extent could be used as a baseline. However the correlations between outcomes observed and impact are rather unclear which means that discussions on effects of the support mainly will deal with outcomes, i.e. how boundary partners have changed their agenda, actions, behavior.

Since then, a gender quota for political parties has been introduced, and has shown results, although it is as yet unclear if the change is fundamental or “window dressing”, and the new electoral code and actual conduct of voting in elections demonstrated positive changes in the 2009 election. Voter registration has improved as well.

According to Freedom House, Albania is considered as partly free in terms of civil and political rights, as it stayed at a rating of 3 in 2008 and 2009. A new law on legal aid was adopted in 2009, following broad consultations. Government is generally unaccountable to the population, and issues remain in the relationship between civil society and government, with little consultation undertaken with appropriate interest groups in the formulation of policy and direction. Government administration continues to be weak, and incapable to a certain extent of fulfilling its obligations towards civil society, citizens and in response to requirements of EU integration. While the media sector is able to express itself freely, a high level of self-censorship among journalists is prevalent, coupled with relatively low journalistic standards. A media ethical council was formed in 2006 to oversee the journalistic Code of Ethics, but the council as yet does not function as a media regulatory body. Further discussion can be found at CRD’s Update of the Plan of Action for Albania 2010–11.

The major issues at the moment relate “to policy formulation (and) coordination with civil society (which) remains weak. The inter-ministerial consultation arrangements on draft laws work poorly in practice. The existing requirements for public consultation on EU-related policy work, under the government rules of procedure, are not fully applied.

The weaknesses in implementation of legislation and in enforcement of judicial decisions need to be addressed.”⁵⁵ From the government’s side, often the main explanations on why laws are not being implemented are because funds are lacking. However, our interlocutors point out that in many cases the timing for the legislation is not good and/ or ripe.

Although funds could have been in place, state institutions often work very inefficiently or/ and lack the capacity to absorb funding. This is not to say that legislation *per se* is ineffective, but rather that advocacy organizations need to take into account the realistic possibilities for implementation when drafting and pushing for changes in the legislation. At times, there is a risk that the goals are too ambitious leading to backlashes.

There is a general pattern in Albania that laws only come about when, under strong pressure from donors, domestic advocacy groups and EU, they are adopted in the parliament. However, laws that whose implementation have a cost attached are generally not being implemented or are being implemented only to a limited extent. In fact, there is among some of our informants a concern that the legitimacy of democracy as a decision-making process will deteriorate even more if more laws are adopted but never (or seldom) are implemented according to plans.

1.2 Gender equality

In 2004 the situation with regards gender equality was poor, with key issues being domestic violence and trafficking, and the strong emphasis on traditional roles and relationships, which impact on attained levels of education, role in society, employment. Women had little power or presence in political life (for example, 3% of MPs were women). Women’s organisations found little structural support in society, resulting also in their need for strengthening processes, as organisations and as a group in society. The focus of international development agencies was on the strengthening of women’s networks, the links between women’s groups and the organisational and administrative capacity of women’s NGOs.

Since then, new laws have been introduced for the protection and equality of women – with a law on gender equality introduced in June 2008 with a 30 percent quota for women on party lists, resulting in

⁵⁵ European Commission Albanian 2008 country report

immediate results in the June 2009 election. The country also adopted a national strategy on gender equality and domestic violence in 2007 and Albania reported to CEDAW for the third time in December 2008. The Gender Equality Strategy 2007–2009 is currently being evaluated and revised. A new draft is expected to be ready in October 2010.

With regard to women's rights, some progress can be reported. The national strategy on gender equality and the eradication of domestic violence, together with a three-year action plan, were adopted in December 2007 including provisions on vulnerable women such as trafficking victims. According to police sources trafficking decreased sharply in 2007, although NGOs claim that many cases went unreported. Several trafficking networks were dismantled. In May 2008 the Domestic Violence Law was amended. A new unit on domestic violence was established within the Ministry of Labor.

The major issues at the moment are poor health and poor structures of reproductive health and the prevention of domestic violence, the strengthening of women's organisations and their ability to work effectively as organisations and in networks to improve the functioning of the new laws, and supportive activities such as lobbying.

According to Kvinna till Kvinna, "Several steps have been taken in the last years to improve the human rights situation for women in Albania. Despite this the human rights situation for women and girls is still poor. Violence against women, early marriages, low access to health care for women (in particular concerning reproductive health), low representation of women in decision making/politics are remaining problems in the country. There is still a great need for strong women organisations to push the development, to lobby the government to speed up the work on improving the women's human rights situation in the country."⁵⁶

1.3 Human Rights

In 2004 the situation was of particular concern in relation to discrimination against minorities, particularly the Roma community, who comprise 7% of the population. As with the experience of Roma across the region, in Albania the community suffers from low levels of education and employment and difficulties in accessing appropriate health services. The Roma population is in particular danger from human trafficking and child labour. A second, critical issue was the treatment of detainees, particularly children and young people, who are often not treated differently to nor kept apart from the adult population in detention centres. There were on-going concerns with the use of torture, by police and within the prison system, coupled with over-crowding within the detention system.⁵⁷

Since then, issues continued with overcrowding of prisons and detention centres, although new centres are under construction. "These new establishments, designed in accordance with European standards, should help reduce the overcrowding. While freedom of expression is guaranteed by the constitution, the development of an independent media is hampered by the close relationships between business, crime and politics. According to the EU, "Selective pressure was put on opposition-oriented media, including accusations of alleged funding from organised crime groups."⁵⁸

On the one hand, the child's right to access to education has improved but on the other hand the use of child labour remains prevalent. As pointed out in the EC's most recent Albanian progress report; "Albania has an adequate level framework for guarantee the promotion and enforcement of human rights. However, existing legislation is often not enforced, in the field of prevention of torture and ill treatment, gender equality, child protection and discrimination."

⁵⁶ KtK Application for additional funds Albania 2010.2011

⁵⁷ European Commission Albania 2005 Country report

⁵⁸ European Commission Albanian 2008 country report

The major issues at the moment relate to the justice system and the enforcement of human rights. The access of women to the justice system is weaker than that of men, a problem of significant concern “considering the existence of trafficking in Albania and the common practice of domestic violence. The Domestic Violence Law makes it possible for victims to apply for State-financed legal aid. Though, in reality there is a lack of sufficiently qualified lawyers that supply such legal aid.” “Albanian legislation provides for free legal aid for first and second instance courts, but the system does not work effectively, particularly for minorities, such as the Roma.” Treatment of detainees remains a concern, as is the lack of “progress on establishing a proper legal definition of discrimination or specific anti-discrimination legislation. There is continuing serious hostility in public and the media towards the LGBT community.” Notwithstanding an adequate legislative framework, this “existing legislation is often not enforced, especially in the field of prevention of torture and ill treatment, gender equality, child protection and discrimination”.⁵⁹ However, in February 2010 a non discrimination law, in compliance with European human rights standards, was adopted. It is considered to be a comprehensive law including a strong mechanism for its implementation.

1.4 Civil society role and capacity

During communist times, there was no civil society according to the Sida definition⁶⁰ of civil society, despite of the fact that numerous organizations and networks existed. They were mainly professional ones but also for specific groups such as youth, women, veterans, etc. People were forced to be part of a social group, a network, an organization, or they would be considered enemies of the state. Religious institutions were not allowed to work after 1967 and practicing religion was forbidden by law. After years of isolation, Albania suddenly got the attention of the international community when a democratic regime was established in 1992. Foreign funding soon flooded the country, particularly after the fall of the pyramid schemes and the Kosovo crises in the late 1990s. The initial development programs consequently focused on economic reconstruction, infrastructure development, agriculture and social safety-net programs. In the 1990s, Albanian NGOs emerged after the fall of the dictatorship; international donors have been by far the most important financial contributors. The activities of Albanian NGOs have changed over time. After the Kosovo crisis in 1999, the CSOs oriented themselves increasingly towards providing social services. Almost all bilateral donors have provided some support to civil society. Multilateral donors also have large programs for support to civil society.

“The legal framework for civil society organizations remains open and non-restrictive. However, civic engagement remains low. Albania has only a limited number of influential NGOs and policy institutes. Recent data put the number of CSOs in the country to 3000, most of which work outside of Tirana. However, it is believed that only up to 800 organizations are active⁶¹. Yet, according to our interlocutors with a good overview of CSOs, stated that less than 50 CSOs in the country in reality have the capacity to carry out high quality work, which means that the options for the Swedish FOs and other international donors are rather scarce.

Over the last 15 years CSO organizations, particularly in Tirana, have developed dramatically in respect of capacity. The NGO sector has become increasingly involved in policy-making and there is now a core group of approximately 20 public policy NGOs that are working with government in setting policy priorities and in formulating and implementing laws. Yet, “Civil society needs to further increase its capacity for advocacy and public relations, networking, and development of partnerships with the government and the private sector. Also, financial and management capacity have to be strengthened, aiming at future sustainability of the sector.”⁶² Although capacity among many CSOs is still low, the lack

⁵⁹ European Commission, Albania 2009 Progress report

⁶⁰ Sida’s defines civil society as an arena, separate from the state, the market and the individual household, in which people organize themselves and act together in their common interests.

⁶¹ See for example Needs assessment of civil society in Albania, TACSO, 2009

⁶² European Commission, Albania 2008 Progress report

of capacity and resources of the government are often much lower. In fact, according to our interviewees, many social services that have some quality are provided by donor funded CSOs.

The large, majority Albanian CSOs have centralized structures and lack of members and democratic traditions. Often the organizations are led by a strong leader that is not promoting a younger generation to take more responsibility. In the coming years the generations shift will necessarily become a crucial issue for many of the current CSOs in Albania.

Currently, Albanian civil society is very donor-driven. The dependence on donors has in many cases led NGOs to work more on project basis with a bias to where funding can be found, rather than following their core mission strategic achievement plans. In this sense, many organizations are reacting to a market need rather than playing the role of organizing the interests of the people. Many NGOs are in fact rather working on a consultancy basis than on an NGO, membership basis, providing services in terms of social work and human rights. According to some of our interlocutors, Tirana based NGOs have been labelled “super sub-contractors” that are reacting to the market needs much like consultancy firms would do. Also among donors, the general trend is that many donors (against recent declarations on the Program-based approach) are treating and using NGOs as subcontractors for implementing “their” (i.e. donor) projects. The risks (or perceived risks) of corruption and misuse of allocated funds is, among other donors, the main argument for tightening control of funding in Albania.

The decrease of foreign funding has also further led to significant competition between NGOs, and a lack of cooperation and collaboration between them. The coordination mechanism to enhance civil society participation in policy making remains weak.

The government has decided to set up a fund for civil society (managed by the Agency for Support to Civil Society). Although this decision to set up the fund was made by the government 2 years ago, only recently a director has been appointed and staff has been selected. However, the agency has still not disbursed any funds (August 2010). Before it began work, the board members of the fund (5 persons from civil society and 4 from the government) were alleged to be politically affiliated, affecting the credibility of the fund. It remains to be seen which type of organisations that will have access to the funding.

1.5 Sida

The Swedish country strategy for Albania 2009–2012 includes two sectors:

- Democratic governance and human rights and
- Natural resources and environment.

In the area of democratic governance, the Albanian Government aims to restore transparency and offer a comprehensive program of institutional reform oriented towards European standards to consolidate the democratic system and the observance of fundamental human rights and freedoms. The overall objective for the democratic governance and human rights in the Swedish Strategy is: “openness and thorough reforms in pursuit of European standards and enhanced democracy, and the protection of human rights and freedoms”.

Swedish objectives for this sector are:

- Enhanced efficiency, openness and transparency in the Albanian administration.
- Improved opportunities for Albanian citizens to take part in and influence the reform process and the EU integration effort.
- To ensure that Albanian civil society has greater access to a legally secure and efficient police system that is under civilian control and subject to civilian monitoring.
- Increased participation of women in the political and administrative spheres.

Currently, the total number of Albanian partners is 21 and the annual funding amounts to approximately 11 million SEK. The support provided to CSOs is targeting projects that are part of the core mandate of the organization. Donor coordination in this area is almost non-existent and a mapping of donor support is lacking. Only recently there was an initiative from donors with the aim of coordinating support to civil society and possibly merging funding.

Currently, there are preliminary ideas of take advantage of CSO competence in all of Sida's contributions, as these groups often have knowledge and capacity which is lacking in the governmental structure. In this way, joint support to public administration and the relevant sector of the CSOs can take place, to either complement (as service provider) *or* monitor the work of the government, on behalf of the citizens and interest groups. However, as stated above, there are comparatively few professional CSOs currently active in Albania that could play this role.

2 KVINNA TILL KVINNA

2.1 Background

As clearly stated in policy documents of KtK, the mandate of Kvinna till Kvinna is mainly (or only) focused on support to women in regions affected by war and conflict. KtK has supported and collaborated with organizations in Albania since 1999. Initially, the fear that the conflict in Kosovo would spread into Albania was the main reason for setting up a program in Albania. The head office in Stockholm has recently taken the decision that the Albanian program will be phased out the coming year and be finalized in December 2011.

A permanent office was established in 2002 and is now staffed by a full time coordinator working together with a half time coordinator in Stockholm. Currently (for a shorter period of time) there are 3 staff at the field office in Tirana.⁶³ During most of the evaluation period only Swedish representatives have been working and living in Albania.

KtK always cooperates with local women's organizations that generate projects themselves on the basis of the needs in their society. The KtK method basically consists of long term core funding with a continuous and active capacity building component arranged by the KtK staff. The reason for *choosing a long term core funding* operational support, is explained by KtK to be a "sustainable way to give a partner organization the possibility to develop and efficiently achieve changes in the society where it acts and in the end reach its vision".

KtK has 8 partners in Albania, Gender Alliance For Development Centre (Tirana) Agritra –Vizion Centre (Peshkopi) Association Of Women With Social Problems, (Durrës) Gruaja tek gruaja, (Shkoder) Jona (Saranda) Une Gruaja (Pogradec), Vatra (Vlora) and Women's Forum (Elbasan). The partners receive between SEK 250 000 and 330 000 annually. About half of the partners are currently 100% dependent on funding from KtK. Apart from the Gender Alliance for Development Centre, which is a strong advocacy organisation for women's issues based in Tirana, other partners are evenly spread out in all corners of the country.

The overall objective for KtK in Albania is to contribute to "a strong women's movement contributing to the democratization of the society by advocating for respect for women's human rights in all areas of life. The program consists of 6 thematic areas.

- Women in peace processes.
- Promotion of women organization.

⁶³ In the HQ in Stockholm it is said that KtK now are increasing its presence in Albania because of the decision to withdraw.

- Promotion women participation in decision making process.
- Raise awareness about human/ women rights.
- Work against violence and sexual abuse.
- Women's physical and mental health.

KtK's Albanian program has many (13) objectives. However, because of the lack of clear baseline data and clear indicators, it has not been possible to evaluate to which extent KtK and its partners have reached its objectives. In fact, it is not fully clear what KtK want to achieve with the Albanian program, as a whole. The partner organizations often have, individually, a clear mandate and objectives. However, the KtK program on the whole lacks such clarity. The many thematic areas and objectives of the program reflect this fact.

The outcomes referred to below have mainly been expressed by boundary partners and in questionnaires sent to the partner organizations. Within the framework of this evaluation the team visited the Association of Women with Social Problems in Durres and Gruaja tek gruaja in Shkoder.

2.2 Outcomes

When KtK started its work in Albania, there were hardly any gender equality organizations active in the rural areas of the country. The core support that KtK has provided to these organizations has now led to the establishment of a network of gender equality organizations in rural areas. According to several external interlocutors, this is, in itself, one of the most important achievement (effects) of the support.

Women's organizations supported by KtK have provided essential services for vulnerable women such as legal, medical and psycho-social support. Also, the organizations have been pushing for changes in legislation and implementation of legislation. For example, the network, and particularly Gender Alliance in Tirana have been instrumental in pushing for changes on the Act of Gender Equality. Also, in different ways, locally based organizations are trying to push for the implementation of the legislation. On the local level, the KtK partner organisation in Durres, advocated for fought and succeeded in setting up a *gender equality centre* (in the municipality in accordance to the law on gender equality). However, after the centre eventually was set up, the organisation now has an important monitoring function overseeing that the centre actually works according to plans. This is one interesting example how a partner of KtK has moved on being a service provider to advocate for the local governmental authorities to take their responsibility and lately monitoring how the government actually are implementing the services.

In the questionnaire, partners claim that among other outcomes they have facilitated many change processes (outcomes),

- the opening of the Office for Gender Equality and Domestic Violence in some of the municipalities where partners work.
- The signing of several collaborative agreements with state institutions in support of the rights of women, and especially of trafficked victims, and approval by the government for financial support for trafficked victims.
- The removal of taxes by the government for the Roma community.
- Mitigation of the patriarchal mentality in rural areas, particularly of the Roma community.
- Established information and mobilization structures for rural women and the community in general (mini-centres and contact persons).

- More women in the City Council in many of the communities where KtK have activities.
- Introduction of methods of participatory budgeting in several municipalities.
- The most important results have been changes in relationships with all target groups, inside organizations, local government and other NGOs; the work of our activists with the community etc.

It seems clear that the KtK partners have been instrumental in facilitating these change processes at the local level. However, in what respect these, often locally based, effects (outcomes) will have in impact on the broader societal level is difficult to assess. The likelihood of long term societal effects very much depends on external factors outside the control of KtK and its partners. (See also the section on sustainability below.)

2.3 Relevance

Although the objectives of KtK correspond well with Sida's overall values and goals on the rights perspective, KtK is (according to their own statutes and mandate) focused on women in post conflict situations and not more general gender equality issues. Hence, since Albania is not a post conflict country, it has sometimes been difficult for KtK to motivate its existence in Albania on the same grounds as in the other countries in the Balkans. Due to the lack of other Swedish partners active in the areas of gender quality, the Swedish representation in Albania is looking for possibilities that KtK could also work on more general gender issues, such as women economic empowerment (WEE). Also, KtK has generally been somewhat reluctant to facilitate cooperation outside its core mandate although their partners have (eg. WEE) as one of the main activities. Furthermore, WEE should be considered as major human rights and social justice issue since women participation in decision making process cannot be achieved without dealing with women's economic empowerment. It is therefore recommended that KtK and the Swedish Embassy improve their cooperation regarding how to take advantage of the resource base of KtKs partners.

In general, the core support strategy that has been implemented by KtK for many years is very much in the forefront and in line with the current Swedish policy on civil society (and the Accra Agenda for Action) where it is clearly stated that a program-based approach and core budget support should be prioritized over project support. This approach has naturally contributed to local ownership of the organizations.

In selection of their partners, KtK usually start the relationship by learning more about the organizations profile, strengths and weaknesses. After gaining a better understanding of the organization, KtK usually begins a long term relationship, very much built on trust and a long term commitment. In this sense the organizations grow together and the partner organizations (also those that have several other donors) very much feel that KtK is more of a partner rather than a traditional donor.

During the last ten years, the political situation has changed dramatically in Albania. As stated in KtK's general policy documents, support to partners should be built on the needs identified among the partner organizations. The interviews with KtK partners confirm that this policy to a certain extent is being implemented, however in the initial discussions with partners, KtK also clearly point out within which statutes/ mandate the organization is operating. Not being a post conflict country, needs have always looked different in comparison with other countries in the Western Balkans. Hence, the focused mandate of KtK has sometimes limited partner's possibilities for work with other relevant gender equality issues in Albania. This is one of the reasons that KtK have decided to pull out of Albania after 2011.

The partner organizations of KtK have since 1999 have been integrated into a partnership network. The geographic location of the different organizations means that there is not a strong competition among its members. During the first years of existence of the network, it mainly met to exchange ideas and to give inspiration to the other organizations. However, for many years the meetings were planned

in an *ad hoc* way, with no clear agenda on what to achieve. For the last year and a half, the network is more structured. For example, one of the partners is acting chairperson for 6 months, each calling meetings and having responsibility for setting the agenda.

Although the political conflict is severe, there is according to the informants a low risk of armed conflict. According to the KtK themselves, this is another of the main reasons they are planning to withdraw support to Albanian organizations after 2011.

2.4 Effectiveness

It is the consultant's assessment that the network has not yet made full use of the comparative advantage it has, to act together at the national level. With local voices around the country, the network is strategically important and there is still room to work more strategically on how this should be done. The KtK field office could be much more instrumental in making this happen. It is therefore recommended that the KtK field office further facilitates the network to interact with key stakeholders such as donors and relevant governmental bodies. It is also crucial that the organizations in the network better understand that it is only together (and not individually) that they can make a difference and bring about change. Enhancing this understanding is also an important task for the KtK field office.

Although the political, socio-economic situation has changed dramatically in the last 10 years, the goals and activities of many of the organizations remain more or less the same. It is of course positive that KtK is listening to its partners in what they would like to do, but this should not constrain the KtK field office to have *strategic discussions* with regards to how to adapt the missions and objectives of partners based on the changed circumstances. The field rep office could, as we see it, be more instrumental (challenging) in promoting that the activities of the partners are more up to date and relevant. It is thus recommended that KtK, during the phase out period in Albania, further enhances the network's ability to adapt to changing circumstances in the current context.

With the network spread out in strategic parts of Albania, KtK are able to reach stakeholders all over the country. In many of the cities where KtK are operating, partners are the leading women/ gender organisation. In this sense, KtK is very much reaching the few organisations (the critical mass) active within this area.

According to the partner organisations, KtK financial management systems and reporting systems are straightforward. According to partners with many other donors, application procedures are also straightforward. Also, the support is along the lines of a program-based approach, i.e. core support to the organisation and ownership by the organisation in how to carry out the program. Still, for organisations with many donors, the different reporting systems remain burdensome, although being one of the major donors; KtK has not been in the position to promote a more general approach on these matters.

2.5 Efficiency

So far only Swedish staff has been employed in Albania. In other countries in the Western Balkans, e.g. Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia, the mere perception of being biased if coming from one or another ethnic group could be problematic. In these countries it is understandable to select more "perceived impartial staff", such as Swedish citizens without any perceived vested interest. In Albania (as well as in Serbia) these problems do not exist to the same extent and it could therefore be questioned if there is need for Swedish (and therefore much more expensive) staff in Albania. The field presence of these relatively expensive Swedish staff also calls for a more active agenda. It is therefore recommended that the expectations, roles and responsibilities of the field representatives and the head office are further clarified.

2.6 Sustainability

Mobilise trust, support and resources

The partner organisations have in general a high degree of visibility in the community, in many cases thanks to the personality and charisma of the leader of the organisation. Many of the KtK organizations are dependent on the one leader of the organization. Often the organizations are not referred to as with their proper name, but rather (the name of leader)'s association. In organizations that have been visited there is also very good, competent younger staff that currently work in the “shadows” of the leaders of the organizations. For long term sustainability of these organizations, there is an apparent need that these younger employees gradually take on more responsibilities.

Although some partners have recently found other sources of funding, about half of KtK's partners are still rather financially dependent on KtK. Before KtK phases out its support to Albania, it needs to work more systematically on how the organisations, together as a network, can attract funding from other financiers. Currently there is no clear *exit strategy* and many of the partners will soon have acute financial problems if they cannot receive funding from somewhere else.

Other donors (e.g. UNIFEM) have successfully supported women's organisations through a small consortia where stronger and weaker organisation apply together, for example, for IPA funds. This could be an option for partners in the future and KtK could be facilitating such a process.

Also, as mentioned above, according to its new preliminary strategy Sida will try to involve CSOs more during both the assessment phase and the implementation of Swedish support. The national network of women organisations that KtK have worked with could be very helpful in this regard. It would be natural and is **recommended** that the Swedish Embassy, partners and the field representative of KtK conduct a workshop to identify concrete ways for the partners to be involved in implementing Swedish support after KtK has withdrawn from Albania.

Build alliances/networks

With the network spread out in strategic parts of Albania, KtK are able to reach stakeholders all over the country. In many of the cities where KtK are operating partners are the leading women's and gender organisation.

Some interlocutors have pointed out that KtK and their partners could be much more outgoing and active in the current debate on women's issues in the country. However, KtK have just recently started to make use of their extensive network in a more strategic sense, using the organisations most important comparative advantages they can provide clear leverage. With the presence of long term personnel, one can expect that KtK would take a clearer stand, together with their partners, on certain political issues. It seems that the KtK field office in Albania does not fully understand, or underestimates the potential of the network in promoting issues on a broader societal level. Hence, in order to be effective, it is recommended that KtK take the lead (or promotes a partner organization to take the lead) to make use of the network's comparative advantage and the windows of opportunities that open.

Swedish policy expressed in the country strategy in many cases coincides with the standpoint of KtK. Although the KtK field representative regularly meet with the Swedish Embassy in Tirana, discussions could be much more strategically oriented, taking advantage of the unique information that KtK has on key priorities of the Swedish support.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ The network is 100% funded from Sida, it would be natural to have a dialogue on challenges and possible ways ahead on gender issues in the country.

Interact with and influence authorities

The partners of KtK are interacting on both the national and local levels with influential authorities. The Gender Alliance for Development has been instrumental in pushing for legislation on gender equality and has been assigned as advisor on gender issues.

Furthermore, the effects of interaction with local authorities are often as important for the beneficiaries. For example, on the local level KtK is in many cities a strong voice for women's rights. In Durrës, for example, the KtK partner has been very instrumental during the last year in pushing for a gender equality centre to set up of (which, according to the current law, should be set up in every city). Now, when the centre is set up, the organisation advocates strongly with local politicians that the centre receive appropriate funding and staff to actually carry out services entitled too citizens by law.

However, even though there are many good examples of the individual partner organisations interacting with authorities, the network could be more strategic in working together to bring about change. KtK field representatives should be able to facilitate such processes.

2.7 Conclusions

Over the years many of KtK's partners have developed from associations that mainly provided social services (e.g. support to victims of domestic violence) to local watchdog organizations and advocates for women's rights.

The support of KtK is mainly directed towards organizations operating in different parts of the country. Many KtK partner organizations are genuine grassroots organizations that with KtK support have been able to start and to then facilitate change processes, particularly at the local level. It is clear that these organizations are important for women living in rural areas and smaller cities. In this way, KtK partners directly reach poor, vulnerable groups with their support. As a nationwide, strategic network KtK, together with other organizations, should have been able to play a more important role on policy issues and political matters than has been done so far, and the field representatives could be more instrumental in making this happen.

3. Civil Rights Defenders

3.1 Background

CRD has supported and cooperated with organizations in Albania since 2000. CRD has for the last five years supported a range of different organizations in Albania mainly within the field of rule of law, freedom of expression and non-discrimination. In Albania, CRD have had no field office which has somewhat affected the priorities and selection of partners in the country (see further below).

Currently, five organizations play a major role in the support. The Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC), the Tirana Legal Aid Society (TLAS), the Centre for Legal Civic Initiatives (CLCI) and the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (ADRF) and Albania Media Institute. The majority of the projects in the current portfolio deal with legal aid services. The only clear-cut watchdog organization is the Albanian Helsinki Committee.

The CRD program consist of supports three thematic areas

- The *rule of law program* have the objectives to a) increase people's access to justice by supporting free legal aid initiatives and to promote legal reforms within the national legal aid system b) strengthen monitoring functions of human rights NGOs in relation to the judiciary in order to improve state compliance with human rights obligations. The Albanian Helsinki Committee is a key actor working with these issues.

- *The freedom of expression program* aims to a) increase and strengthen the sustainability of one media support organisation b). Improve self-regulatory mechanism for media.
- The *anti discrimination area* has the aim to a) improve access to justice and legal awareness for Roma families. b) Improve access to justice and legal awareness for PWDs and their families c) Strengthen the LGBT movement in Albania. Tirana Legal Aid Society, TLAS, has been a key partner within with regard to access to justice for Roma while ADRF has been the key partners in regards to access to PWD's.

Within the framework of this evaluation the team visited and interviewed personnel from the Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC), the Tirana Legal Aid Society (TLAS) and some of their boundary partners.

3.2 Outcomes

As late as 2007, there were no clear mechanism in Albania that specifically dealt with human rights violations. The support from CRD to the Albania Helsinki Committee (AHC) has made it possible to set up mechanisms to deal with human rights cases, including a legal aid department to which the public can turn in cases of human rights violation.⁶⁵ The very fact that these mechanisms exist and are reported to be widely used is in itself an important effect of the support.

Among the boundary partners interviewed it was for example claimed that the training activities by the AHC has in an "apparent way improved the prison administration capacities on issues of treating juveniles in the penitentiary system". Also, the monitoring process in penitentiary institutions has led to adequate concrete measures being taken to improve the treatment of juveniles and women in the Albanian penitentiary system.

Another effect mentioned by an official at the Ombudsman institution was that the cooperation between AHC and the Ombudsman institution is crucial and has given the ombudsman function more credibility – the collaboration is mentioned in all of its reports. The AHC and the ombudsman institution have even in some cases carried out surveys and come to a common position regarding certain human rights violations. Both organizations have also signed media petitions together regarding certain human rights evaluations.

The ombudsman official also verifies that there have been improvements in how women and juvenile prisoners are treated thanks to the support. Albeit with a different mandate, the ombudsman official also claims that there is mutual need for collaboration between AHC and the Ombudsman institution. The Ombudsman institution provides a natural entry point to the government while the competence/ capacity/ knowledge of AHC and its network is indispensable for the ombudsman institution.

Regarding Tirana Legal Aid Society, TLAS, different ministries (particularly the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) claim that the organization has been important in providing legal aid to vulnerable groups, particularly Roma. TLAS lawyers have (with DRC contributions) dealt with several hundred cases of, for example, birth registration, divorce and housing issues. The governmental officials have (as expected) been very thankful for the legal aid services that are provided by the partner organization.

CRD Partners have been instrumental in several new laws and strategies, for example the Law on Legal Aid, 2009 (where TLAS was among the key players) and the Non-discrimination Law (2010 where AHC was very active). According to the Law on Legal Aid, it will (if implemented) be possible to apply for state financed legal aid in civil and administrative cases. However after the Law on Legal Aid was adopted the roles between the state and the partner organizations are now different and TLAS is slowly

⁶⁵ That, said also before 2007, AHC dealt with HR violations in different ways, mainly through monitoring and advocacy and through legal counselling, but during the last 3 years it is done more systematically.

adapting to its new role as a monitor of implementation of the law. TLAS need to further enhance its monitoring function so that the laws actually are implemented, and CRD is pushing TLAS to take on this “new” role. TLAS (and other organisations) new roles as watchdog organisations is naturally changing the relationship between state officials (duty bearers) and the organisations – something which is expressed as being uncomfortable, as it means the organisations often need to go against the same state officials (duty bearers) that previously very much appreciated the social services provided by the organisations.

Partner organisations state the following major effects of their work (for further information, see questionnaire)

- Increased access of marginalized women and girls in the justice system through provision of free legal aid for the victims of gender based violence.
- Providing free legal assistance for this community has had a direct effect on this target group. Several hundred violated women and girls have been supported with free legal assistance.
- Set up of a National Disability Information Centre (first of the kind in Albania).
- Amendments to the electoral code in order to guarantee participation in elections for people with disabilities.
- Organizing an advocacy campaign that influenced the Albanian Government to draft and approve the National Strategy for People with Disabilities and monitoring and writing monitoring reports on the implementation of the strategy.
- Assistance on the Draft Law on “Intellectually Disability Status” and several other legal proposals in different legislation in the area of economic assistance and social services, education, health care, housing and accommodation.
- Improvement of access to justice for people with disabilities through the legal aid program – a large number of beneficiaries of the program.
- Improved monitoring of the respect for a fair trial standards in 13 courts in Tirana, Durres Shodra and Vlora.
- Improvement of the existing legislation, as well the drafting of the new legislation has had effects in communities, including getting important amendments to laws on civil status and in the establishment of a nationwide legal aid program.
- Inclusion of paralegal services for administrative cases, legal services for court cases, “lawline” services for legal advice over the phone, clinics to enable individuals to represent themselves before state authorities, and mediation for alternative dispute resolution. The project has had more than 2000 direct beneficiaries.

3.3 Relevance

The media in Albania is very much perceived as being politically affiliated, biased and basically not credible. Ideally, an open, free and well functioning media is necessary in any well functioning democracy. This very fact makes independent non-politicized watchdog organizations even more crucial. On a national level, there are very few strong watchdog organizations. The Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC) is, according to external experts, the only significant watchdog organization within the field of human rights. Although AHC is still perceived as impartial by many, there is a fear that the decision of the former head to start a political career in the opposition party has somewhat tainted the credibility of the organization.

A strong, independent watchdog organization is crucial for the future democracy process in Albania. For the foreseeable future, these types of organizations will depend on foreign funds. Organizations such as AHC also need a credible foreign partner that can speak clearly on violations of human rights, irrespective of other political concerns. In this sense the, the cooperation between AHC and CRD is suitable.

In Albania, CRD have chosen not have a field representation and partner organizations as well as other stakeholders are in general of the opinion that CRD do not need representation in Albania. The partners of CRD are often strong, well-funded organizations which do not need the same type of support and monitoring that many weaker organizations need. Consequently, CRD have selected partner organizations which are strong and professional Tirana-based organizations. The lack of presence outside Tirana is problematic, but at the same time a logical decision since there is no field office in country. That said, some of the partner organizations are carrying out activities in other parts of the country.

The lack of a country office has hampered the organization's ability to follow developments closely and to quickly adapt to changes and make use of windows of opportunity that open for the network as whole. In this sense, CRD relies very much on the analysis of their partner organizations. The CRD representative however also relies on independent sources, e.g. the Swedish Embassy and other donors/actors active the human rights field.

Although CRD partners also receive funds from other donors, CRD has allocated its funds to broad projects developed in dialogue with the partners. This has given the partners organizations a certain degree of flexibility to actually carry out activities that have not been anticipated. This is particularly important for watchdog organizations, which cannot function properly without a mandate to allocate funding when there is an acute need to act.

3.4 Effectiveness

CRD focuses its support on professional, often capital city based, organizations. These organizations have the ability to make changes to national legislation. However, from the effectiveness perspective, it is crucial to get a better understanding if more long term effects are achieved in changes and improvements to legislation. Although DRC currently supporting activities with the purpose to facilitate the implementation of the legal aid and anti-discrimination law, external experts claim that more efforts should be done to implement the existing laws (rather than to push for new legislation)⁶⁶ That said, the true challenge for many of CRD partners is not to get new laws passed but to get the Ministry of Finance to actually allocate funding for the implementation of the law. It is therefore recommended that CRD and their partners in the near future more thoroughly and strategically work to find ways to lobby for and support the government in implementing legislation, for example the new anti-discrimination and legal aid laws, eg. through push and assist the Ministry of Justice to convince the Ministry of Finance on what areas should be prioritized.

According to the general strategy of CRD, partner organizations can carry out social services (e.g. legal aid) if it done to gain legitimacy to also carry out advocacy work- there is a notation that carrying out social services gives you the "right" to complain. However, the *identity* of being a watchdog organization on one hand and being a social service provider on the other could be problematic. The question of whether or not a partner organisation, after a law has been adopted, should focus only on its "new" monitoring/ watchdog function or can still carry out legal aid services (that may not be provided by the state in any case) is for many of CRD's partners in Albania considered a genuine dilemma. On one hand, if the CSOs continue to provide social services, the pressure on the government will decrease

⁶⁶ For example in 2010 DRC and its partners (HC and TLAS) are involved in setting up a structure for implementation of the laws as well as working with awareness raising activities.

and they will most likely be reluctant to provide state funding to such activities. On the other hand, if CSOs are not providing social services, the government (whose legitimacy rests on factors other than implementing adopted legislation) may decide that the area will not be prioritised and thus funded for. Then, of course the real losers are the poor and vulnerable groups who have a new law on paper but in reality only an empty shell.

3.5 Efficiency

CRD do not have a field office in the country and handling the program part-time from Stockholm is not as costly as setting up an office in the country. In fact, partners and other stakeholders claim that there is no real need for a field office in country as the responsible person in Stockholm has regular contact with partners through e-mail and phone and visits the country at least a couple of times a year. Partly this opinion reflects the fact that CRD never have had a field representation in Albania, and thus the partners do not have anything to compare with. However, from a principal perspective, what *added value* would a field office bring to the support?

Although CRD have chosen a relevant set-up and structure to support their partners given the practical pre-conditions, it is **recommended** that CRD *consider* having a field presence in Albania⁶⁷. A field representative would be beneficial as the function could:

- Follow the development within the area of human rights more closely – making use of windows of opportunity that open.
- Tighten the network and be able to make joint statements in the media.
- Better follow-up of and monitoring of the activities of partner organizations.
- Be able to see and support initiatives outside Tirana.
- Be a better/ more informed speaking partner to Swedish actors such as Sida in Stockholm and the Swedish Embassy on the human rights situation in the country.

Furthermore, CRD watchdog partners live under severe political pressure and on many occasions need CRD and international backing for security reasons, and to simply have the courage to stand up to political pressure. This could of course also be the role of the Swedish embassy in Albania; however, the *comparative advantages* of letting CRD take on this responsibility is that

- CRD has the competence within the subject area of civil rights violations to write statements and petitions, etc.
- It gives the Embassy the ability to not be directly engaged politically in sensitive human rights cases and to risk influencing other relations with the government.

3.6 Sustainability

Mobilise trust, support and resources

In general, partners have a higher levels of visibility locally, and significantly higher levels of support and involvement in local (and national) activities and initiatives. Many of CRD's organizations are popular among international donors and have consequently also to other funding sources

Since the capacity of government within this sector remains weak, some of the organizations that mainly deal with legal aid could in the long term perspective be (if funds are allocated) interesting partners for the government to contract to carry out certain social services.

⁶⁷ Potential benefits vis-à-vis the costs for having a field presence need to be thoroughly analysed by CRD in Stockholm

However, it is not likely that a clear cut watchdog organization such as AHC would be eligible for funding from the state. In order to keep its independence they should even be reluctant to accept such funds. Therefore, for the foreseeable future such organizations need support from an independent/ international actor.

Build alliances/networks

There is no formalized network among the DRC partners in Albanian, although partners being a part CRD support meet regularly to exchange ideas and cooperate when they have common areas of concerns.

Interact with and influence authorities

The partners of CRD are interacting mainly on the national level, with influential authorities. As mentioned previously, the partners of CRD have been very instrumental in lobbying for new legislation. Now the main challenge is to implement these laws – the different capacities of the CRD network will most likely be important in this regard.

3.7 Conclusion

CRD partners that are working in both social services (e.g. legal aid) and clear cut watchdog activities have demonstrated many times that they have achieved changes in legislation and assisted numerous individuals with legal aid.

With the assistance from the RBM consultants CRD have, during the past couple of years, been improving the way they are show results at the outcome level. Perhaps this is not such an achievement, as CRD partners are often professional, consultancy-like, capital city based organizations that are used to keeping updated with different donor requirements. The overall question is if these organizations, albeit showing clear results, are part of what in the Swedish policy framework for support to civil society can be considered *genuine* CSOs.

4. Olof Palme International Centre (OPC)

4.1 Background and history Description on background

OPC started to work in Albania in 2002 and is, in the broad sense, working within the field of democracy development and human rights. As pointed out by OPC, “both the linkages between ordinary citizens and civil society (as advocates of citizens interests) and the level of interaction between civil society and government is underdeveloped” in Albania. As a result, a large majority of citizens are “unconnected to political processes”. According to OPC, a major challenge (and opportunity) of democratic development for Albania is the ongoing process of accession to the European Union and how to involve the CSOs in this process. The country specific objectives are the following;⁶⁸

- Citizens are able to influence the local political agenda.
- Contribute to elected representatives being more accountable to citizens.
- Contribute to a member based civil society.
- Citizens and civil society organisations participate in EU integration.

OPC partners in Albania have focused their work on children’s rights, Roma participation, and political mobilization of citizens. The objective of the projects has been to raise the capacities of women, youth and minorities to participate in the electoral and political processes. The organizations are working mainly with different types of training activities to raise awareness, but also in some watchdog functions.

⁶⁸ See OPC Albania application 2008–2011

OPC selects and supports “ideologically-based organisations that combat the injustices and inequalities in politics and social life, promoting democratic participation and good governance”. The support is channelled through well-established CSOs such as Mjaft, CRCA and Agenda Institute OPC is working with a wide range of organizations, both professional organizations/ think tanks and grassroots organizations operating in different parts of the country and grassroots level organisations such as New Epoch in Fier or Youth in Free Initiative in Kukes.

Since 2006, OPC has a fully operational head office in Tirana. The program is managed by a dynamic Albanian citizen and supported by the Swedish head and regional office staff in Sarajevo. In fact, the field office representative is very much the glue holding the programme together.

Within the framework of this evaluation the team met with Agenda Institute and the Association of Informal Areas (former Youth Group of human Rights).

4.2 Outcomes

Since, OPC works with so many different organizations, it is often difficult to say anything certain regarding the effects of the activities. The chains of results, i.e. the correlation of what the organization is doing and expected and claimed achievements (outcomes) are sometimes difficult to distinguish. As well, the organizations supported by OPC generally have several other donors and external actors, making it difficult to estimate the attribution of the Swedish funds.

That said, the activities and projects funded by OPC may very well contribute (on the margin) to several change processes ongoing in the society, and boundary partners that were interviewed were all very content with the training, and claim that they and their organizations found the training very useful, and that it had been instrumental in, for example, strategic planning processes. As the activities been rather scattered around however, it is difficult to measure outcome, and if OPC wants to achieve clearer, more measurable results, it is recommended that OPC select their partners more strategically so they reinforce the work of each other.

The active field representative of OPC was seen by several external observers as influential in its efforts to facilitate processes between different actors within the network. The field representative has, since the field office opened, enhanced networking between actors and thus facilitated the set up of the network. In fact, without the efforts of the field office representative, some of the informants claim that that the program would not be perceived as a coherent program at all, as the partners of OPC fit together only loosely.

The organisations themselves claim among other things the following effects from the support:

- Organisations have influenced local authorities to provide support for youth activities – they are more open to consulting with and getting young people’s ideas in the decision making process.
- The increase in numbers of women MPs, the increase of participation of women in election as candidates, establishment of quota 30% in the new electoral code for participation of women in politics.
- A change of comprehension among people and governmental officials about what young activists are able to do in politics.
- Notable results on the Ministries’ compliance with the Law on Public Information, e.g. the rate of information that Ministries publish on their website as a legal obligation has increased and the quality of information has improved.

In general, the effects of the support is rather vaguely formulated and very much depends on other external factors outside the control of OPC and its partners.

4.3 Relevance

In general, the subject area of the partner organizations, e.g. political participation, young people activism is politically valuable and crucial for the development of a viable democratic state.

The problem analysis of the Albania program and its connection to the expected outcomes and activities has improved during the past few years. However, because of the great variety of partners there is a “missing middle” in analysis of what the organizations could do together as a network. The perceived outcomes of the partners are often rather isolated, and not connected to each other. It is therefore recommended that OPC take full advantage of the network that has been created to identify the common causes and objectives of the program (i.e. network) as such.

According to some of our informants, the OPC network is seen as politically affiliated to the left. The question is, in what respect this could/ should be seen as a problem? In fact, one important added value of the OPC network is that partner organizations have a common understanding of what constitutes a good and democratic society.⁶⁹

OPC partners work on both the national and local levels to promote change. However as mentioned above, the leverage of the support and its potential effects would have been greater if the organization worked with a more focused approach within the same area. Hence, with the disparate portfolio of OPC it, will be difficult to reach a critical mass within a certain subject area. However, together with other donors that are supporting the same organizations, OPC is contributing to the effects of many different initiatives (which are inherently more difficult to follow up).

4.4 Effectiveness

OPC find their partners through “call of proposals” that are regularly advertised. OPC is foremost providing funds to specific projects rather than providing core support to their partners. Hence, in comparison with the other FOs, OPC works more as other “foreign” donors supporting specific project initiatives. However, that said, OPC is perceived as being more flexible and more easy to work with than most other donors (that their partners have). There is also an appreciation among partner organizations of belonging to a network which particularly values the exchange of ideas among different types of organizations in the region, as well as individuals working in human rights and with young people.

The activities undertaken by OPC partners are mainly different training activities, most of the OPC partners are thus *not* implementing partners themselves, but rather intermediaries that carry out training for other implementing actors. The effectiveness of such a set up can be questioned.

4.5 Efficiency

In general OPC provides a cost-efficient delivery of Sida funding. Often OPC funding is directed to single components (projects) of a partner organization’s work. This is indicative of the type of organization and support provided by OPC, i.e. stable organizations where OPC provides project support in specific areas. As a result, the administrative cost of the support is generally lower than in comparison with the other FOs.

As previously pointed out, the most important added value of OPC’s support in Albania lies in the fact that it has been channelled through a dynamic and inspiring field office representative in Tirana that has found ways to allocate support, making use of windows of opportunity in the context.

⁶⁹ It should be noted that these fundamental values of democracy and political participation are shared by both current and former Swedish governments (irrespective of party colour)

4.6 Sustainability

Mobilise trust, support and resources

Many OPC partners have a high level of visibility both nationally and locally. OPC's partners generally have other donors and the support from OPC comprises about 10% of the funding base. Although the partners also have many other donors, OPC is one of the few donors that have invested resources in the network, e.g. national and regional meetings. Many of the OPC partners are rather strong on the "aid market" and it is not unlikely that a network be able to attract, for example, IPA funding.

Build alliances/networks

Without the support of OPC the organisations would most likely not form this network. Albeit the organisations are disparate, the network provides an important base for the future.

The network of organizations being a part of OPC is operational and meets regularly to exchange ideas. As stated above, the field representative has been instrumental in creating and facilitating the network among different organizations. Hence, without an active field rep there are doubts the network would hold together. Although the majority of organizations share the same basic values about what a good society is, the organizations do not have a natural common cause and would most likely not form a network if it were not for OPC being their common donor.

Interact with and influence authorities

The partners of OPC are interacting with both national and local authorities. However as mentioned previously, the partners are mainly training institutions implying that they interact with local officials mostly as trainers, and not in monitoring/ advocacy functions.

4.7 Conclusions

The support to OPC is mainly channelled through professional and more grassroots organizations conducting training for other CSOs and for governmental authorities on the local and central levels. While CDR and KtK have a more long term partnership, often manifested as core support, OPC supports different project and works in this way more like many of the international donors active in the Western Balkans. The somewhat scattered support to many different partners (that also have many other donors) have made it difficult to assess what has been the effect of the Sida/ OPC funded interventions. Also, it is difficult to see how the different organizations in the network are reinforcing each other.

5 Overall conclusions and recommendations (Albania)

One of the most important added value of the FO modality is the networks that are created around issues: women's rights (gender issues), defending human/ civil rights and political participation. During the last couple of years the networks around FOs have increased their activities and have been more dynamic. However, the knowledge and information attained could be even better utilized in relation to key stakeholders, such as the government international actors. The FO networks in Albania are rather well known, e.g. the network of KtK is well known among the stakeholders within the area but according to our interlocutors could be more outspoken and take a more active role in the debate on gender equality issues. OPC is known as a network for political participation and has been active as such during the last couple of years, much thanks to the field representative. CRD has had no real intentions to promote a network among its partners, however the individual organizations are well known. This may reflect the fact the CRD do not have a field representative in Tirana. In general, it is **recommended** that the FOs use the networks more strategically, for example by gathering partners to a strategic workshop where a stakeholder and SWOT analysis is done on the network as whole. Intensified network building will

- Assist the organizations in becoming eligible for funding from other sources.
- Assist the network, as a network, to become a stronger voice in society.

The Swedish embassy in Tirana and the FOs regularly share information regarding development of the portfolio from a technical point of view. However, although FOs often have key expertise within prioritized areas of the Swedish support to Albania, the Embassy has so far not been able make better use of this strategic network information in development of strategies and policies. This is of course a sensitive area, touching on the independent mandate of the FOs. Still, the advantages of an improved dialogue and better information sharing on the subject areas would be **recommended**. Hence, the preliminary ideas from the Swedish Embassy in Tirana on involving and mainstreaming CSO competence in the Swedish support should be further promoted. The competence of the CSOs in the FOs' networks (particularly within the areas of cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and a Rights Based Approach) could be instrumental in *preparatory* (e.g. social impact assessments), *implementation* and the *monitoring* phase of investments in the areas of both natural resources and the environment and democratic governance and human rights. It is **recommended** that the different ways that FO partners could be included in such processes be further investigated.

Currently, when many bilateral donors are withdrawing their support to civil society in Albania, many CSOs look towards EU/ IPA funding. As noted in the context analysis, a special mechanism (TACSO) has been set up to provide training to apply for funding. However, if the strict requirements set out by the EU will be the norm; this will inevitably lead to more professional organizations/ consultancy-like civil society organizations. The FO funding modality could somewhat slow down this development as less professional and more grassroots organizations can acquire funding through such a mechanism.

List of Persons met

Name	Position	Organization
Angoni Majlinda	Executive Director	Gruaja Tek Gruaja , Shkoder
Arab Christine	Country Program Manager	Unifem
Bejko Amela	Coordinator	Association Of Women With Social Problems Durres
Beqiri Safete	Field Representative	KTK
Borici Trendelina	Program Coordinator	Gruaja Tek Gruaja , Shkoder
Bozo Raimonda	Executive Director	TLAS
Bulku Estela	National Program Manager	Unifem
Cara Mrike	Executive director	Association of integration of informal areas
Cevoli Bajana	Executive Director	Association Of Women With Social Problems Durres
Deda Atila	Administrator	Gruaja Tek Gruaja , Shkoder
Dibra Arbana	"Trokitja" Centre Partner Of Ngo	Shkoder
Dimni Enton	Lider Componentof Civil Society	Dpk Consulting USAID
Dimoska Emilija	Program Assistant	KTK
Duraj Admir	Expert, civil society	
Elmazaj Migen	Administrator/ Finance Manager	TLAS
Ferhati Klotilda	Project manager	Association of integration of informal areas
Filipi Gjergji	Research Director	Agenda Institute
Geraj Pashke	board member	Association of integration of informal areas
Gjoleka Admond	Director Of Documentacion	Ministry of Interior
Golemi Lili	Woman's NGO in Durres	
Grabova Edlira	Attorney	Gruaja Tek Gruaja , Shkoder
Gugashi Plejada		OPC

Name	Position	Organization
Hatibi Dorian	Chef Of Deppartment Of Economic Aid	Durres Municipality
Alikaj Klesta	Coordinator Of Legal Clinic	Albanian Helsinki Committee
Kali Romina	Volunteers	Gruaja Tek Gruaja , Shkoder
Karamuco Ervin	Head Of N.P.M Unit,	Ombudsman
Katuci Rezarta	Program officer	Swedish embassy in Tirana
Kokalari Greta	Area coordinator	Albanian Helsinki Committee
Kosta Vangjel	Attorney	TLAS
Kukeli Besa	Beneficare	Gruaja Tek Gruaja , Shkoder
Lako Entela	Program Analyst	Undp
Lici Elida	Volunteers	
Llazani Aferdita	Teacher	Gruaja Tek Gruaja , Shkoder
Maloku Meliha	Secretar Of Municipality's Council	Municipality's Council of Durres
Mazniku Arbi		Agenda Institute
Mecaj Vjollca	Executive Director	Albanian Helsinki Committee
Mila Ferit	Coordinator	Roma's Ngo
Mucollari Celstina	Social Worker	Gruaja Tek Gruaja , Shkoder
Murati Etleva	Chef Of Deppartment Of Economic Aid	Ministry of Labour
Nano Delina	Expert, Civil Society	
Ngjela Klejda	Coordinator Of Project Against Dicrimination	Albanian Helsinki Committee
Olofsson Britta	Counsellor, Head of Dev. Cooperation	Swedish embassy in Tirana
Panteqi Ariola	Sociologiste	Assocation Of Women With Social Problems Durres
Papavangjeli Edlira	Program's Coordinator	Albanian Helsinki Committee
Pasko Genci	Resident Advisor	Tacso
Samarxhi Stefan	Coordinator In Turistic Company Durres	
Sherko Katerina	Finance Manager	Albanian Helsinki Committee
Skendaj Blerta	Program Coordinator	Soros
Skendaj Enida	Assistant Of Legal Clinic	Albanian Helsinki Committee
Sundberg Jenny	Field Representative	KTK
Thana Fabiola	Social Worker	Gruaja Tek Gruaja, Shkoder
Verbole Alenka	Senior Democratization Officer	OSCE
Zenelaj Xhevahir	Head of urbanistic office,	Paskuqan commune

Annex 4 – Country Report Bosnia and Herzegovina

By Annika Nilsson and Selma Osmanagic-Agovic

This report comprises one of the five country reports which together make up the detailed commentary from the Evaluation of Sida's Support to the Western Balkans 2005–2009. The report describes changes of importance in BiH during the five years and the situation currently, including comments and reflections from civil society and other actors on the situation at the time of the evaluation, in June 2010. The report then discusses the approach and work of each of the framework organisations who have been responsible for providing Sida's civil society support during the period. This discussion follows 5 key development assistance criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The report then looks at the delivery modality for Sida's assistance in BiH – the approach of using three, Swedish NGOs as implementing partners to determine program priorities (within the Sida strategic framework) and to determine grant recipients and processes – and comments on the efficacy of the approach. The three NGOs are the Olof Palme International Centre, Civil Rights Defenders and Kvinna till Kvinna.

The field work of the evaluation included seven days of interviews and focus group discussions with representatives of framework organisations, representatives of the cooperation partners of framework organisations, representatives of boundary partners (people/ organisations with a direct or indirect relationship to funded organisations/ projects) and external experts/ observers. The complete list of interviewees is found at the end of the report. The report is to be treated as one of five country inputs to the overall report. Conclusions can be drawn mainly on the overall level as the country sample was very limited (only three organisations per FO) and not completely representative of the FO intervention in BiH. The conclusions and recommendations in the country report are to be seen as points for further investigation.

1 Context

1.1 Governance and democracy

Bosnia and Herzegovina has made very little progress on its state building since 2004. A lot remains to be done to address the key European Union accession criteria of more functional and sustainable state structures and better respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including adoption of the necessary constitutional changes. Constitutional reform has so far been limited to the amendment concerning the Brčko District⁷⁰. The Federation still struggles to formulate a unified picture of its future. “Nationalist rhetoric from political leaders from all the constituent peoples, challenging the Dayton/ Paris Peace Agreement and, thus, the constitutional order, remains commonplace. The most frequent challenges came from the political leadership of Republika Srpska, who have continued to claim the right of self-determination for the Entity.”⁷¹

The work of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to be adversely affected by the unstable political climate and insufficient administrative resources. Lack of coordination and ethnic tensions continue to delay reform. Fragmented policy-making between the State and the Entities remains the main obstacle to efficient work by the State government. The frequent duplication of competencies leads to increased administrative costs. The civil service is still highly politicised and in need of professionalization, transparent and efficient recruitment procedures and modern career development. Little progress has been made in preventing political interference and limiting the role played by

⁷⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/ba_rapport_2009_en.pdf

⁷¹ BiH consist of one state, two entities (Republika Srpska and Federation of Bosnia & Herzegovina) and one district, all with their own governments and legislations.

ethnic identity and party membership in public administration. The education sector is still segregated into three separate systems with different curricula for Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian children. Reports⁷² show that schools often violate the provisions on school names and school symbols and many “have no proper lavatory facilities or computers, but have humongous religious monuments in school yards, sometimes costing more than the school building”.

Despite the adoption of a Justice Sector Reform Strategy, the implementation has not progressed in accordance with the agreed timelines.

- Limited progress has been made in the area of juvenile justice. Only Republika Srpska has prepared a Juvenile Code.
- Protection of child witnesses in legal proceedings and child victims is insufficient. The awareness of judges and prosecutors about children’s rights remains lacking, and priority to hearing juvenile cases in order to reduce the detention periods is not ensured.
- Corruption is still an issue both in the legal system and in public services (e.g. education and health). A new Strategy for fight against corruption 2009–2014 and a related Action Plan were adopted but progress is limited. Implementation of the Freedom of Access to Information Act is insufficient with respect to anti-corruption. Threats to non-governmental organisations and media investigating corruption cases continued. Adequate legal provisions for the protection of civil servants reporting corruption are not in place. There is no effective investigation, prosecution and conviction of suspects of high-level cases of corruption.

The new State Ombudsmen have, after long delays, been appointed. However, the delays in phasing out the Entity Ombudsman offices hamper full implementation of the 2006 Ombudsman Law. These delays have been due, in particular, to the outstanding adoption of legislation closing down the Ombudsman’s office in Republika Srpska.

According to Freedom House, Bosnia and Herzegovina has not improved at all since 2005 in terms of democracy. The independence of media has deteriorated as well as the national governance. The judicial framework and NGO cooperation framework has improved somewhat due to EU and NGO pressure to adopt new legislation. The legislation remains to be implemented. According to CRD, “access to justice, widespread corruption and inadequate implementation of international human rights standards are still crucial problems in the field of rule of law.”⁷³

1.2. Gender equality

After the adoption of a Gender Equality law 2003, hopes were high on (equal representation), media, violence and statistics. The law was considered to be the best in the region. As a result of the law public institutions were slowly established at state, entity, cantonal and municipal levels to enhance women’s human rights⁷⁴. An action plan for implementation of the law was eventually adopted and in 2009 there were gender commissions in 85% of all municipalities⁷⁵.

So far there has been limited progress in terms of results of the law and the gender action plan. The situation and position of women has not yet improved much. While the “structures to support gender equality are in place, there is a great need to make mandates clearer and increase financial and human resources to ensure that these structures can function efficiently. Today they generally function very badly if at all.”⁷⁶ This evaluation found that in many cases the canton gender desks and municipal

⁷² Freedom House Report, referring to survey done by Foundation of Local Democracy www.fld.ba/index.php?type=0&id=20

⁷³ CRD Update to Plan of Action 2010

⁷⁴ KtK Annual Request 2005

⁷⁵ OSCE base line study

⁷⁶ KtK Application For Additional Funding BiH 2010–2011

commissions have achieved very little due to lack of concrete plans, formal mandate and financial means to carry out their work. There is great potential for coordination with civil society organisations. Sida has invested a lot in the gender action plan (GAP) and intends to finance parts of its further implementation.

Despite a law stipulating that 30% of the names on party lists are women, the last election in 2008 saw reductions from around 20% to less than 12% actually getting seats in political bodies. Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to be a country of origin, transit and destination for trafficking women and girls. The incidence of domestic violence remained high and women economic empowerment continues to be a serious issue.

A positive development has been the revision of the Law on protection from domestic violence in Republika Srpska. Under the revised law, the entity and local authorities are responsible for funding safe houses for victims of domestic violence. The inefficiency of the police to handle cases and bring them to court has however hampered women's willingness to report.

1.3. Human Rights

The main elements of international human rights law are now part of Bosnia and Herzegovina's legal system, but implementation and enforcement is slow or non-existent. Full compliance with the ECHR is not yet adhered to, especially the draft constitution which needs amendments. Hundreds of cases have been brought to the European Court for Human Rights.

The major concerns in terms of civil and political rights are

- A (revised) State-level law on legal aid in criminal proceedings has been adopted but access to justice remains a matter of concern. Legal aid in civil and administrative cases is still not guaranteed and a new law is highly needed. Legal aid continues to be primarily provided on an ad hoc basis by privately funded NGOs.
- The conditions in prisons such as overcrowding, poor living conditions and inadequate medical treatment remain a problem. The absence of a harmonised legislative framework and the fragmented management system need to be addressed. Monitoring needs to improve.
- The increasing number of cases of physical violence and threats against journalists and editors, the continuing challenges to the independence of the Communications Regulatory Authority and the slow pace in the implementation of the public broadcasting reform are matters of serious concern.
- The increasing number of cases of intimidation and violence against human rights defenders and civil society organisations are of serious concern especially violations of freedom of assembly and association for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities.

A positive development was the adoption of the Law against discrimination, in August 2009, by the Parliament of BiH. However, the law was amended in the last minute and does not include clear definitions of discrimination on the basis of religion and sexual orientation. There is a need to continue lobbying for these amendments to be reversed and for the implementation of the legislation⁷⁷. It is essential to continue supporting and protecting human rights defenders and to work on improving the functioning and capacity of journalist associations and independent and investigative media.

1.4. Civil society role and capacity

As regards civil society organisations, very limited progress has been made in implementing the Agreement on cooperation between the civil society sector and the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted in 2007. It stipulated the establishment of an Office for Cooperation with the

⁷⁷ CRD Update to Plan of Action 2010

NGO sector, a Civil Society Council with representatives of both government and civil society and a Civil Society Board composed of 31 NGO representatives. Apart from Civil Society Board, these mechanisms are still not functional. The government has only established a Sector for civil society within the Ministry of Justice with very unclear mandate and focus of work. Conflicts between civil society actors have also hampered progress in the establishment of the structures.

Parallel to this process a campaign for signing of local “Compacts” (cooperation agreement among municipal council, mayor and NGOs/non-profit organisations) resulted in agreements in 68 municipalities and joint cooperation bodies in 31 municipalities (out of 142). This campaign has been spearheaded by the Olof Palme partner CSPC. However, the signing is only the first, although very important, step towards successful cooperation. Key current issues are linking civil society organizations into policy making structures, and building on the role and function of “compacts” as a way of creating a structural relationship between local governance structures and civil society organizations.

There are around 12 000 registered NGOs in BiH of which 55% are active. The most common scope of activity are sports (18%), interest organisations (12%) women’s organisations (7%) and organisations dealing with children and youth problems (6%)⁷⁸. The least common are workers’ rights/unions, human rights, animal rights and peace initiatives. Civil society organisations are not new to BiH but they used to be mainly focussing on supplementing the government. The new independent CSOs who also have a monitoring and advocacy role have been seen with scepticism by authorities and the general public, especially since they are funded with external donor money and are not always seen to produce any concrete results. The new NGO sector has become a very important employment sector and many organisations function as small businesses accountable to donors rather than NGOs with a mandate from a larger group and a mission for change.

Municipalities are the single largest source of civil society funding in BiH (32.5 million EUR per year). These funds are mainly given to sports associations, veterans associations, social protection services and culture. 31% of the municipalities announce public calls for proposals while the selection and funding of NGOs in most municipalities remain non-transparent⁷⁹. In 2009 the cantons provided 10.5 million EUR and the entities 11.2 million EUR to NGOs, most of them sports and war veterans associations. Generally the funds were provided in a non-transparent manner. The State provided 0.7 million EUR to civil society in 2009, mainly through calls for proposals in areas such as sports, culture, gender, displaced persons and minority rights (mainly Roma).

Very few of the NGOs are strategically oriented. Most organisations have become project implementing machineries, fully depending on donor’s priorities and calls for proposals. Only 22% of NGOs feel that they are not donor driven, but rather guided by their own vision and mission. NGOs are accountable to donors rather to their constituencies or beneficiaries, which has led to a negative public view of the sector. Now that donor funding is gradually reduced, the most important capacity building need mentioned by NGOs is consequently “profiling” and “resource mobilisation”.

According to the TACSO assessment, NGOs in BiH are poorly skilled in analysis, research and policy dialogue with government. Strategic alliances to achieve results are yet to be developed, although there are a few examples of joint action such as the coalition for non-discrimination legislation, Vote for women and GROZD (campaign ahead of the election 2008).

1.5. Sida and other civil society donors

The major donor to Civil Society in BiH is the EU through IPA funds, EIDHR and EU community programs. There seem to be little communication between the local EU office and the EU in Brussels regarding programming. The local EU office is currently supporting two initiatives. The first project (LOD) is implemented by UNDP with the aims:

⁷⁸ TACSO needs assessment, 2010

⁷⁹ OSCE base line survey

- To facilitate permanent partnerships between civil society organisations (CSOs) and local authorities by building awareness of mutual beneficial cooperation and encouraging sustainable dialogue.
- To create and adopt a unified and transparent mechanism for disbursing funds foreseen for CSOs and their activities, local social service needs and identified priorities; and to ensure a sustainable source of funding through a municipal budget line for financing CSO projects.
- To encourage NGOs/CSOs to specialize/professionalise their activities – to adopt a longer-term planning perspective, to become more responsive to local needs and less dependent on current donor priorities.

The UNDP/LOD project has so far managed to get on board 14 municipalities which are in process of their strategic planning and budgetary support in area of assistance to civil society organisations (CSOs). In these 14 municipalities approximately 50 projects, proposed by local CSOs are in implementation phase. In addition to these 14 municipalities, 6 more local governments will receive technical assistance to improve their strategic planning towards assistance to CSOs.

The second project is EU IPA 2007 project “Building capacities of civil society organisations to take part in policy dialogue (Cidi project)” run by consultancy consortium consisting of Kroanuer consulting (BiH), Atos consulting (UK), Office for cooperation with civil society (Croatia) and Cowi (Denmark). The project focuses on developing the capacity of civil servants and civil society organisations to engage effectively with each other in policy dialogue. The CiDi project has invited in total 12 NGO networks to participate in a capacity building program. The project has also managed to get on board the governments of Brčko District, Republika Srpska, and Federation of BiH to institutionalise dialogue and partnership with the civil society sector. BiH Council of Ministers is also foreseen to receive assistance in institutionalisation of the dialogue and partnership with the civil society sector (i.e. the operationalisation of the NGO legislation and establishment of the NGO office and the NGO council).

Some informants claim that these two local EU projects have not been won in proper competition by potential candidates and that some of them may have had inside information on the requirements. This has led to an uncooperative attitude by some stakeholders towards these EU projects.

At the same time EU Brussels have engaged in the TACSO project (under the SIPU consortium). This project aims at strengthening the capacity of civil society in terms of accountability and a sustainable role in the democratic process. Trainings will be designed to suit the needs of NGOs in each country and to help the access EU funding. The training is only directed towards NGOs not towards authorities. The evaluators noted that the recent TACSO needs assessment looks very similar to the study made by the local EU office in 2008. A number of informants fear that the TACSO project will not reach the grassroots, value-based NGOs but only the already professional NGOs in big towns. NGOs met during the evaluation repeatedly say that they do not need more training. They need partnership, money, practical and moral support to develop their role as monitors, advocates, negotiators, awareness raisers, researchers and service providers.

Being an active member of the EU, Sweden should engage more in the effective use of EU funding to civil society in BiH and ensure that the support provided by Sweden is supplementary.

Many donors are now pulling out of BiH, but some important donors to civil society remain. Apart from Sweden it is:

- The OSCE. Through its 13 local offices it implements a project called “Local first – Empowering citizens – Building communities”. It targets both municipalities and NGOs. This facilitation program will be tailor made to the local needs in each municipality. It does not provide grants.

- USAID is the most important bilateral donor to civil society. It focuses on Civic Advocacy (implemented by local organisation CCI) 5.7 million EUR and Sustainable development of the non-profit sector (implemented by local organisation CSPC) 0.3 million EUR. USAID has expressed a clear interest in donor coordination.
- The Netherlands civil society fund. The sub granting is managed by local NGO CCI.
- The World Bank small grant program for CSOs.
- The Open Society Foundation supporting regional cooperation and exchange.
- The Swizz development agency.

Some donors have, in partnership with local organisations formed an “NGO Council”. This council has together with the Ministry for Humanitarian Affairs, formed the Foundation for Social Inclusion, with a mandate to channel funding to initiatives aiming at social inclusion (especially marginalised and discriminated groups).

Sweden is the second largest bilateral donor in BiH. Sida has worked to promote democracy and human rights both through institutional support to the government and through civil society support. According to the Swedish country strategy for BiH 2006–2010, support to the human rights/ democracy sector aimed to

- Establish an efficient, transparent and democratic public administration and judicial system.
- Reduce corruption.
- Strengthen institutional, elementary and administrative capacity, mainly at the central and local levels.
- Strengthen the judicial system at central government level through efforts to fight corruption and organised crime. Support for reforms in the police system may be considered.
- Generate broader popular participation and greater influence for all groups in the community.
- Raise awareness of and respect for human rights.

In 2007 the Sida office in Sarajevo carried out consultations and established a strategy for its future support to civil society. In this strategy it was proposed that the use of Swedish NGOs (framework organisations) as intermediaries should be phased out by 2011 (Olof Palme already by 2009). This strategy was not formally endorsed, although it has been seen as a guiding document both by the Embassy and the framework organisations. The Embassy has since tried to develop mechanisms for use of local intermediaries and also for direct support to some extent. The support through the three frame organisations to BiH have been around 15 MSEK per year during the period under review. Additional funding to civil society in BiH has been provided by Sida/CIVSAM in Stockholm via Forum Syd, LO-TCO Biståndsnämnd, PMU Interlife, OPC, SHIA and Swedish Cooperative Centre.

The new draft country strategy proposed for 2011–2014 proposes focus on three sectors; a) Democratic governance with a focus on human rights and EU accession criteria, b) market economy and c) sustainable environment. It stresses that local structures and channels should be used whenever feasible and that the Bosnian Diaspora in Sweden should be engaged more strategically. The total budget of Sida’s engagement in BiH will be around 17 million EUR per year.

Being one of the biggest supporters of civil society in BiH, Sweden could take initiative to donor coordination and joint strategising around support to various key areas such as public participation, NGO sector development, gender equality and youth initiatives.

2 Kvinna till Kvinna (KtK)

2.1 Background and history

KtK is a Foundation with the mandate of a) empowering women in conflict affected regions by enhancing their mental and physical well-being and their participation in building a democratic and peaceful society, b) promoting research and studies on the effects of war and conflict in women c) provide information about the effects of war and raise public opinion in favour of peaceful conflict resolution.

KtK started its work in the Balkans in the 90s. BiH was the first partner country of KtK and it is well known and respected for its brave and important interventions during the time of conflict. The informants often make references to the cooperation that took place before 2005, remembering personalities and interventions during that time. It has been difficult to limit discussions to the time after 2005 only.

KtK has provided long term support to partner organisations with a focus on core costs rather than on projects. KtK is flexible and trusts partners to set their own priorities. The local ownership is a prominent feature. KtK focuses on field action and learning by doing. KtK has strong field presence and has built close relationships with its partners. In the period 2005–2009, KtK supported 14 organisations (out of approximately 100 women's organisations in BiH). Nine of them have been supported for more than 10 years. Only three partnerships have been terminated since 2005. Financial support to organisations in BiH has been gradually reduced from 6.5 MSEK in 2005 to 5.1 MSEK in 2010. The average budget has been around 450 000 per organisation and year. KtK also supports networking between partners nationally and regionally.

According to the KtK plan the objectives are

- A more visible and sustainable women's movement.
- A functioning women's network able to monitor the implementation of existing laws and policies.
- Increased number of women in decision making and participation in voting.

KtK has prepared for the situation where Sida support will end in 2012. Partners have been informed that KtK support will gradually be phased out. According to KtK's program proposal, capacity building support to partners has focussed on

- Lobbying, advocacy and media training.
- Fund raising.
- Gender budgeting.
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Elections in 2008 and 2010.
- Stress and burn out.

The conclusions in this evaluation are based on interviews with KtK and Sida representatives, reading of annual reports and earlier evaluations, responses to questionnaires, interviews with partner organisations Cure, Zene Zenama, Horizonti and Lara and their boundary partners, external observers and other major donors.

2.2 Outcome and impact

A more visible and sustainable women's movement

The partners of KtK have become well known and visible women's organisations in their communities, and even on the national level. A number of them have participated in policy dialogue on the gender

action plan, on domestic violence etc. In most cases, the support from KtK played a vital role in this strengthening of the women's organisations. Many of them would not have existed without the support of KtK. Partners appreciate the long term relationship, the patience and flexibility and the funding of core costs as a key factor for their development.

According to self assessment of partner organisations, the KtK support has helped them to develop internal capacities in running of an organisation, in planning and management, in providing training to other stakeholders, in fighting domestic violence, in awareness raising, lobbying and advocacy for women's rights. At the local community level, signs of increased strength of the partners (outcomes) are; improved image, more respect and support from community members, improved dialogue and cooperation with municipal and cantonal authorities, increased awareness among women in targeted Mjesna Zajednica (MZ)⁸⁰ on women's rights (they take action to address issues), improved attention and support for victims of violence and better cooperation with other NGOs. Partners have also managed to influence authorities and achieved closure of brothels, improved health services (mammography, gynaecologist etc) and the appointment of municipal women's commissions. On the national level, a number of KtK partners have influenced policy dialogue and legislative development. However, most of the outcomes cited happened at the local level in MZ and municipalities.

Boundary partners and external observers confirm these outcomes and impacts but also point out that many of the KtK partner organisations are very dependent on one strong leader (often the founder) and they are not really functioning in a democratic manner. There is also competition between some women leaders, which hampers networking efforts to some extent. One KtK informant put it like this "We have contributed to the development of 12–15 very strong women leaders". Informants also point out that younger women are not easily attracted to the existing women's organisations, especially not in urban areas, and there is a huge challenge for the older leaders to take a step back and think about succession and new methods.

A functioning women's network

The biggest networking success is the linkages established between women organisations from different ethnic groups. Women's organisations were the first to break the ethnic segregation and establish working relations on common issues. KtK played a role in facilitating these meetings by providing opportunities and neutral ground. Unfortunately, there are still ethnic (and personal) tensions even among women's groups and the need for neutral ground seems to remain to some extent.

KtK has focussed on building relationships with and supporting networking between their own partners nationally and regionally. The partner group is even called the "KtK network" by internal and external observers and is seen as a rather exclusive network. It is not transparent to other organisations how to become a KtK funded organisation or a member of the KtK network. KtK has not been proactive in terms of cooperation with other donors or in terms of inviting other similar or emerging women organisations (for example Medica Zenica) to the network meetings. Initiatives have been taken to invite other organisations only to formalise a national level network, but competition between leaders and the perceived exclusiveness of the KtK group has hampered these efforts.

Today there are a number of issues based and donor initiated women networks. There is for example a network of 13 organisations working on the campaign "101 Reasons to vote for women" (in the election 2010). A few KtK partners are members of this group. There is the 1325 network supported mainly by Unifem, working on women in conflict. A few KtK partners are members here. There is a women and violence network (Safe Women's Network) of 28 organisations supported by UNFPA and others, a breast cancer network (which achieved remarkable advocacy results) etc. etc. In addition there are also networks formed to access EU funding and support through CiDi and TACSO. According to our infor-

⁸⁰ MZ is the lowest level of government structure, under municipality level

mation there is also an initiative to start a national network under the leadership of Cure (the newest KtK partner). To address the issue of many (sometimes competing) networks with strong leaders, Cure initiated the idea of network that will consist of different “issue based departments“. They started a formalising process, drafted statute, codex of work and other documents. They created a joint web portal for sharing ideas, information etc. However, only a few network members are active, the others still do not use the portal and do not have the culture of sharing ideas with others. It seems that women’s organisations prefer to cooperate around specific issues of common interest, rather than becoming formalised. This could be a healthy sign, but at the same time it is difficult to get a strong, coordinated voice if there is no agreement on a focal point for information and joint action.

The evaluators found that, apart from the “vote for women”, breast cancer initiative, and some street actions by Cure, the women’s movement has not been very proactive and visible in the public arena. Two years ago for example, the BiH state level abolished the right to maternity leave (previously 12 months with pay) without this leading to any reactions from women’s organisations. In RS, the right was kept with some modifications. There seems to be an abundance of trainings and issue based campaigns, but limited support for systematic and strategic joint action in municipalities, cantons and entities.

Political participation of women

Despite the campaign “Vote for Women”, the election in 2008 saw a reduction of women being voted in political positions. It should however be noted that in municipalities where KtK partners were working the number of women in political positions increased, thus breaking the national trend. In one case the leader of a women’s organisation gained a prominent position herself. This shows that KtK partners have made a difference in their communities.

Some of our (women) informants felt that voting for women just for the sake of it may result in a backlash. They referred to examples in some municipalities where women politicians have not played the role wished for in terms of peace building and gender equality and where they have not built relationships with women’s organisations. Other informants feel that a quota system is the only way forward.

Presently there is a new campaign “101 reasons to vote for women” funded by the Swizz development agency. KtK is not active in linking up partners with this initiative, although a few are members.

2.3 Relevance

Women’s influence in peace making, reconciliation and reduction of violence against women in the post conflict society are still extremely relevant areas in BiH. The ethnic tensions have increased since the last general election in 2006 and there is uncertainty about the future. The interventions of KtK have been and are still very relevant in this area.

At the same time BiH is in the process of EU accession and needs to address its gender inequalities and patriarchal structures in order to meet the EU criteria on democracy and human rights. This is also a priority area of Sida. The interventions of KtK have not been strategically geared towards these broader aspects. According to informants, the most important issue at the moment is to ensure implementation of the law on gender equality and the Gender Action Plan through joint efforts by government structures and women’s NGOs. The main priorities for women mentioned are

- Political participation and influence.
- Social/health security and employment.
- Reduced violence against women.

KtK has not considered the changing environment sufficiently and proactively in order to assist Sida and its partners to meet the new challenges. The KtK program could be more oriented towards the emerging priorities. The limited pro-activeness can perhaps be explained by the anticipated phasing out.

2.4 Effectiveness

The long term relationship and funding of core cost approach has helped partners to develop an identity and to build capacity to engage in change processes. All partners have a very clear focus on gender equality and women's rights and their leaders and staff have gained important skills through the networking and support provided. KtK is considered to be a partner, not a donor. Apart from the funding, KtK has taken a keen interest in the operations of its partners, showed genuine concern, engaged in frequent dialogue, provided moral support, worked together to develop applications and reports to KtK, organised study visits to Sweden as well as regional and national networking. Partners confirm that during the post conflict period it was of great value to have a neutral party that provided support and organised meetings across ethnic lines. KtK also played a role in enhancing the voices of BiH women and to open doors both locally and internationally. A quote that illustrates the feeling of sister-ship was "We grew together".

Sida has also made use of KtK analyses and contacts, although it has not been systematic. Sida has sometimes expressed a need of assistance and cooperation on broader gender equality issues, including private and public sector mainstreaming (see also evaluation made in 2006 Peck). The Sida strategy included large support to development of the Gender Action plan and joint strategising would have improved effectiveness. According to UNIFEM and the state gender agency, they have had no contacts or strategic discussions with KtK in recent years, although KtK reports that it happened before 2007. Such contacts could have improved KtK effectiveness as advisor to Sida and as coach to partners in the development context.

KtK methods were effective in terms of coaching local women's groups to become influential change agents in their communities. The methods were more effective and more adapted to the post conflict situation than to the pre-EU situation.

2.5 Cost efficiency

KtK has a heavy field presence and also part time dedicated staff in Stockholm in support of country programs. On average 40% of the budget is spent on overheads for coaching, support and monitoring by Swedish program officers and field representatives. This would mean around 4 MSEK per year in BiH, which is high considering the number of projects and the level of pro-activeness on policy level. Even if the committed and close coaching has been a precondition for reaching weak and rural organisations, and is extremely appreciated by and useful to partners, the cost has been very high. KtK could have reached the same (or even better) quality of relationship and support by gradually building capacity of local staff to represent KtK in the field office and using Swedish representatives for specific technical issues, networking and politically sensitive interventions. At the same time it should be noted that KtK could not have been exchanged with any other technical, local intermediary or consultancy. The results achieved are not only linked to the provision of funding, it's also about inspiration, moral support and development of a global network of women working for peace building, influence on peace processes and against violence.

2.6 Sustainability

The KtK partners in BiH typically have 3–6 employees and 5–10 volunteers. Most of them (60–70%) depend on KtK for 50–100% of their budgets. This is sometimes due to the recent loss of other donors, but it is also because grassroots organisations in small towns have limited chances to compete for external donor funding being offered in complex tenders. KtK has not sufficiently included alternative resource mobilisation in their coaching. It has been comfortable for both parties to continue a good working relationship year after year. This has both benefits (organisations can develop their identity and program without being distracted by various donor agendas) and problems (innovation and efficiency may be hampered and dependency created). In many towns there are a number of competing or supplementary women organisations. KtK partners need practical support to find ways to join forces with

other organisations and mobilise resources together. This cannot be done through seminars or training, but through context specific coaching. Respondents mentioned that they had participated in numerous fundraising trainings, but this did not help them in practice. Opportunities to receive funding through municipalities (for services), through the Foundation for Social Inclusion (for non discrimination work) and through other international women's networks should be explored – as well as access to EU funding. Support to partners for decreased financial dependence of KtK is long overdue. Over the years, the partnerships have not been challenged but just conveniently (for both parties) continued.

Another sustainability issue is the dependence of one leader in many of the partner organisations and the limited recruitment of young women. This has recently been discussed as an issue in the KtK network. It should however be noted that the results of the work done by KtK partners is sustainable. The changes in attitudes, policies and practices that have been achieved will remain even if some of the organisations may have difficulties to survive.

2.7 Conclusion

KtK has played an important role in strengthening the women's movement in BiH. Many of the organisations would not have existed without the support from KtK. KtK has contributed to networking and cooperation across ethnic and national lines, thus contributing to peace building. Being an NGO working for the same cause helped develop the relationships and enhance the voices of the local organisations. The relationships have also helped KtK to grow into a more competent Swedish resource in working with women's rights in conflict and post conflict situations.

KtK's method to rely only on projects designed and demanded by partners has a lot of benefits but also some limitations. KtK has not used its potential to assist partners in keeping up to date with national processes, other donor initiatives, other interesting community programs, international opportunities etc. Pro-activeness in the dialogue with partners, a fixed time frame for the cooperation and up-front discussions on expected results would have improved effectiveness. KtK's narrow mandate (conflict/post conflict and violence issues) seems to have limited their possibilities to act as a dialogue partner (both with partners and with Sida) on general gender equality and development issues.

KtK has provided support that could not have been channelled only through a technical donor arrangement. However, this support could have been organised in a more effective and efficient manner. Even if KtK is appreciated as the best partner/ donor by all informants, there are some areas which could have been carried out more effectively according to partners and boundary partners:

- KtK selected partners more than 10 years ago and have remained with most of them since. This has created a mutual dependence. Other interesting initiatives have not had a chance of being supported. Partnerships need to be evaluated and redefined on a regular basis and KtK should have discussed an exit strategy from the start. To ensure flexibility KtK should always have some free money every year to enable them to respond to new ideas and partnerships. Selection criteria should be transparent.
- KtK accepted to support almost anything that their partners want to do, which has been appreciated. At the same time this has led to an unclear focus regarding KtK priorities (currently they are financing, psychosocial work, political activism, SOS lines, language/vocational training, health campaigns etc.) and to less effectiveness. KtK should, together with partners, agree on a few top priorities for future funding linked to the Gender Action plan. KtK could be more proactive in the dialogue with partners, contributing their knowledge and overall strategic view, without compromising local ownership.
- The practice of one-year agreement hampers long term planning of partners. Agreements should be 3-year.

- KtK has changed staff too often and not all of them have had the necessary experience. The system of having two staff responsible for BiH, one in Sarajevo and one in Stockholm, means duplication of work and unclear lines of responsibility.
- KtK could have been more proactive in terms of donor coordination to achieve more.

Respondents urge Sida not to use the Government Gender Fund to channel money to NGOs in future. They do not trust the transparency of that fund. Some women organisations propose that in future Sida provide funding for joint applications by municipalities and NGOs.

3 Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)

3.1 Background and history

Civil Rights Defenders (then SHC) started its international involvement in the Balkans in the 1990s as part of their mission to monitor the performance of the signatories to the Helsinki Final Act. The focus areas have been; Rule of law, Freedom of expression and Non-discrimination. The engagement in the Western Balkans has been the major program of the organisation in terms of engagement and resources (around 75%, now around 50%). To a large extent it was the Balkan program that formed and inspired the development of SCH as an international actor on civil and political rights. SHC is an expert organisation providing technical support in areas of human rights law and policy as well as in freedom of expressions laws and practices. In 2009 SHC changed its name, mandate, statutes and governance structures to become less limited geographically and financially and more public and transparent in its operations. The new objectives are:

- That people can demand their civil and political rights and thereby obtain influence over their situation.
- That violation of people's civil and political rights by the state are investigated, prosecuted and compensated.
- That there are local human rights defenders who defend people's civil and political rights.

The support to partners has been provided from a field representative (2004–2009), from the Belgrade office and from Stockholm. Since early 2010, the field representation is shared by two Belgrade staff who visit approximately 10 days per month. In 2009, eight partners in BiH received support from CDR. 6 of these partners have been partners for more than six years while two have been partners since 2006. In addition to supporting these organisations CRD has supported some additional projects at a budget of around 0.6 MSEK (e.g. non-discrimination coalition, mock trials and outreach training of lawyers). In total the project budget reached 3.4 MSEK. The related project costs (field staff and administration) amounted to 1.4 MSEK (29%). Between 2005 and 2008 CRD supported 12–14 partners each year. Support to media outlets and legal aid service provision have gradually been phased out. The annual project budget was 3.8–4.3 MSEK per year. The average budget for a project has been around 330 000 SEK per year.

The objectives of the CRD BiH program have been:

Rule of Law Programme: 1) To strengthen some key monitoring and awareness raising functions of human rights NGOs in order to approve accountability and compliance of duty holders in relation to the European Convention of Human Rights; 2) To decrease impunity in relation to serious human rights violations; 3) To enhance people's access to justice by providing free legal aid and promote legal assistance.

The Freedom of expression programme: 1) To strengthen the Self Regulatory Body for print media in BiH and thereby improve ethical standards in journalism; 2) To improve the position of jour-

nalists by strengthening the Journalists Association is establishing legal advice and counsel for their members; 3) To raise the quality of investigative reporting and thereby improve professionalism in journalism.

The Non-discrimination programme: 1) To increase legal protection from discrimination through pushing adoption of an all-inclusive anti-discrimination law; 2) To contribute to increased knowledge about LGBT issues within BiH society and ensure the existence of a professional LGBT organisation in BiH; 3) To improve access to information for the Roma population in BiH.

The conclusions in this evaluation are based on interviews with CRD and Sida representatives, reading of annual reports and earlier evaluations, responses to questionnaires, interviews with partner organisations Journalist Association of BiH, Press Council, Helsinki Committee of BiH and their boundary partners, external observers and other major donors.

3.2 Outcome and impact

The Rule of law program has seen achievements in terms of improved legislation and compliance with EU standards (as explained in the context analysis). This is mainly due to EU pressure and large donor support to Justice Reform programs, although CRD partners contributed in some of the processes. The CRD program has supplemented the legislative efforts by providing various training opportunities for lawyers. Some of these trainings have now been integrated as part of regular curricula for training of judges and prosecutors. The CRD supported programs have also contributed to

- Thousands of citizens having access to free legal aid to claim their rights and high number of cases were charged in favour of victims.
- Institutions and government being more cautious, due to the monitoring carried out by partners.
- Improved statutes for returnees and internally displaced persons.

A law on free legal aid (for civil and administrative matters) has been passed in Republika Srpska during the period of review, but the Framework law for the whole of BiH has not yet been passed. The draft is in procedure and CSO's are mentioned as possible legal aid providers that could receive funds from the state. The evaluators did not find that advocacy for the new legislation and its implementation was a priority for CRD partners. There seemed to be no strategies or concrete plans for pushing government to formalise and standardise NGO legal aid services and to provide funding for it. The CRD partners do however play a vital role in the monitoring and reporting on government performance on other issues, especially transparency and corruption. Apart from CRD only a few donors are supporting such watchdog functions. The main initiatives seem to be Transparency International (funded by Germany and CRD) and CCI (funded by USAID). There is a great need for more to be done in the area of watchdog/ monitoring of corruption, adherence to adopted legislation, treatment of prisoners etc.

The Freedom of expression program has seen some great achievements in an increasingly hostile environment. These results can be directly linked to the financial and technical support of CRD. The Press council and the Journalists Association have both established operations on state level (and closed entity level operations). The Press council owes its existence to CRD, who have provided support in crucial moments. Self regulation in printed media is gradually improving as a code of conduct is developed, corrections and apologies are publicised and the general public (not only politicians) increasingly report violations. The Journalist Association has established a hot line which has become a model for other countries and has successfully assisted journalists who have been threatened or accused. The Journalist Association is increasingly attracting members. It was noted that the Swedish Embassy is channeling funding to the Centre for Investigative Reporting directly to this centre rather than to use the

expertise of CRD as an intermediary. The reason was that “the budget was too big for CRD”⁸¹. CRD confirms that they recommended this set up because of “capacity reasons” and because CRD supported another investigative reporting project at the time. This is an example where Sida and CRD could perhaps have found a more effective and close cooperation.

The Non-discrimination program saw the adoption of a non-discrimination law in 2009. It was mainly due to external pressure, but the coalition supported by CRD also played a role. The law was unfortunately amended in the last minute and does not provide clear definitions on discrimination on religious grounds and sexual orientation. It is now a great challenge for CRD partners to advocate for the law to be amended and operationalised. Limited progress is made in terms of LGBT rights (where other donors are more active than CRD) and access to information for the Roma population.

3.3 Relevance

CRD context and stakeholder analyses are comprehensive and to the point. The three focus areas chosen are extremely relevant to the issues at hand in BiH. In fact, despite the overwhelming number of NGOs in BiH there is a shortage of organisations that are working on serious and committed monitoring of the rule of law/ corruption, human rights and freedom of expression. There are however a number of organisations working on various aspects of non-discrimination and the challenge here is to coordinate efforts and develop dialogue with authorities. It has not been the role of CRD to support self-advocacy groups but rather to ensure that mainstream HR advocates and media address issues of discrimination as part of their agenda.

CRD has been focussing on technical and professional backstopping and only recently been involved in supporting organisational capacity building of partners. To some extent this is due to the fact that they are already strong organisations.

3.4 Effectiveness

CRD partners praise CRD for its technical and high level professional support. They appreciate the moral and political support such as joint signing of petitions and participation in joint campaigns (although the changing of name has caused some initial difficulties). The international backing also provides protection for activists and assists to open doors to decision makers. The quote “we fight together” represents the feeling and the nature of the relationship. Partners also appreciate the willingness of CRD to fund core costs, which assists partners stay focussed and not become donor driven project implementers. They also find the networking with other likeminded organisations in the wider region very positive.

According to self assessment of CRD partner organisations, the support from CRD has helped them to improve their capacity to plan and manage their organisation strategically, to design and influence public policy, to network with and assist other organisations. The support has assisted them to be more well-known and respected. Some organisations also report on improved relationships with authorities, due to professionalism and objectivity, although as watchdogs it is not possible to have excellent relationships.

The boundary partners and external experts confirm the assessments to a large extent. Especially media related partners have increased credibility and public support according to informants. Regarding watch dog organisations informants point out the importance that these organisations focus on issues of relevance to ordinary people’s everyday life and remain professional, objective and well grounded in their analyses.

CRD could however improve its effectiveness in the following areas

⁸¹ The **Center for Investigative Reporting** is a non-profit investigative center that writes about problems in Bosnia and Herzegovina especially corruption and organized crime. It is based in Sarajevo but covers much of the Balkan region.

- Have a closer dialogue and joint strategising with the Embassy, being more open to be the eyes and ears of the Embassy in terms of HR monitoring and civil society developments, helping the Embassy and adding value to bilateral efforts.
- Be careful not to compete with local actors or to start national initiatives in their own name.
- Engage more in donor coordination and in organisational development support to partners (as was done in the case of the Journalist Association).
- Have national presence to facilitate dialogue and support measures, keep updated with events and be able to react quickly (it should however be noted that none of the CRD partners found it to be a problem that CRD does not have an office in BiH, their communication was fast and easy in any case).
- Be even more focussed and strategic on its specific areas of competence, i.e. support to defenders of civil and political rights.

3.5 Cost efficiency

CRD has had an overhead cost of 27–29% during the period of review (around 1.4 MSEK per year for support to the program in BiH). Considering the high level of technical support to partners and the support to networking and joint actions, this seems reasonable. The support could not easily be carried out by any intermediary as it is not only about channelling and monitoring funding. It is about fighting together for civil and political rights, it is about quality technical support in areas such as human rights standards and freedom of expression and it is about international networks. As one CRD partner reported: *“No one local organization could do the job that CRD does, because it does not have the knowledge, mechanisms and instruments that CRD has. In that case, local organization would be only bank!”*

CRD could however increase its usefulness to Sida by being more open to joint strategising and by having a constant field presence.

3.6 Sustainability

The training programs introduced for journalists and lawyers on EU human right standards seem to be sustainable. Many of the courses developed through the CRD program have been included as part of regular university training.

The legal aid programs will hopefully be part of a government funded scheme with time. There is a need for persistent pressure for these schemes to be implemented so that the CRD support can focus on litigation and high level cases.

The financial sustainability of media organisations is gradually improving as membership fees and other income is growing. Media organisations seemed to be well trained in fund raising and are very successful in getting other donors on board. CRD also assisted them in getting grants from other donors as well. However, when it comes to HR defenders, watchdogs and monitors, partners of CRD will have difficulty to get funding and political support from other channels. In BiH only one of the partners is heavily dependent on CRD for funding, but the future situation for watchdog organisations looks bleak. Many donors are withdrawing from BiH, and Sweden, USAID and the EU are the major remaining sources. The bulk of the EU civil society support is however directed towards citizen participation and inclusion of marginalised groups. The human rights situation in BiH is not improving and there is a great need to continue supporting watchdog organisations. Donor coordination and basket funding would be welcomed.

3.7 Conclusions

CRD has played an important role in the area of Freedom of expression by contributing towards the existence of a state level Press council and a state level Journalist association with increasing capacities.

The hot line and legal aid for journalist are models for other countries. The competence of CRD has not been fully used by the Embassy when it comes to support of the Centre for Investigative Reporting.

CRD has also played an important role as a political and financial supporter of Human Rights defenders in BiH. The strategy for the rule of law and non-discrimination could however be further improved along with a better donor coordination to achieve more. CRD could focus more on using its technical strengths for backstopping and on building capacity of local stakeholders. CRD should carefully consider if/ when the situation requires activities to be carried out by CRD itself.

CRD could play a more important role as partner and informant to Sida.

4. Olof Palme International Centre (OPC)

4.1 Background and history

Olof Palme International Centre (OPC) is an umbrella organisation with 27 member organisations from the Swedish labour movement. OPC started to work in the Balkans during the war in the early 1990s and has continued to support partnership between Swedish and Balkan civil society ever since. OPC supports development in BiH with three different funding arrangements (CIVSAM, the political party funding and the Sida Europe funding). These programs supplement each other, but the synergies are somewhat hampered by the diverse objectives and funding conditions. This evaluation only covers the activities carried out with Sida Europe funds. These make out around 60% of the total OPC budget in BiH. Unlike KtK and CRD, the Western Balkan program is not a big part of the total operations of OPC. OPC is not as dependent on Sida Europe funding as the others.

In 2009, OPC supported 9 partners in BiH with a total annual budget of around 3 MSEK (average support was around 300 000 per partner). Four of the nine are old partners from before 2005 and five are new from 2007. In BiH around 1 MSEK (25%) was spent on coordination, support and administration. During the period under review the number of partners has been around 12 each year.

The OPC country specific goals for Bosnia & Herzegovina are:

- Citizens are able to influence the local political agenda and elected representatives are more accountable.
- Citizens participation in member based civil society by means of youth mobilisation has increased.
- Citizens and civil society organisations participate in the EU integration process.

OPC has attempted to reach the lowest administrative levels (MZ) to avoid the complicated governance structures at higher levels. There are 2480 MZ in BiH and some 140 municipalities. OPC partners have covered a minute share of these. The partners of OPC are mainly training and advocacy organisations that carry out various trainings for other civil society actors (groups, community organisations and even other bigger NGOs) in areas such as organisational development, project planning and administration, advocacy, dialogue and negotiation etc. Many partners also include politicians and civil servants in these trainings and discussions. In this respect OPC is more proactive than CRD and KtK.

Many other donors also focus on youth and citizen participation in communities, in particular the EU and OSCE (that recently embarked on a national program). The OPC support is rather limited in comparison with these large initiatives. There seems to be no coordination between OPC and these other donors, despite very similar programs. Sida has also supported a public administration reform program with focus on local levels, but this program has not been linked to the civil society initiatives of OPC.

Recently, OPC has increased its funding to a Bosnian NGO, CSPC (Civil Society Promotion Centre). The idea is to see if this organisation can take over as intermediary for Sida funding to citizen and

youth participation as OPC is phasing out its role as a FO in BiH. CSPC is also used by USAID as intermediary. This evaluation has looked at the CSPC modality to briefly assess its effectiveness.

The conclusions in this evaluation are based on interviews with OPC and Sida representatives, reading of annual reports and earlier evaluations, responses to questionnaires, interviews with partner organisations CSPC, DON, CCI and their boundary partners, external observers and other major donors.

4.2 Outcome and impact

Our evaluation found that signs of outcome and impact of the OPC support could be found mainly on the local level in municipalities and MZ. In these projects OPC funding has been 30–100% of budgets. Some examples of results mentioned were; infrastructure improvements (roads, play grounds, renovation of social centres), improved citizen participation and dialogue with authorities and improved youth leisure activities. The interview with one boundary partner illustrates the general findings (box). The design of interventions at the local level is based on a community development model, engaging citizens for common interests. A limitation stated by partners was that many improvements were depending on funding from OPC and that the real concerns of people (poverty) were not addressed. The authorities were interested in cooperation as long as resources came from elsewhere. The community development model projects are only one of the strategies used by OPC in BiH (3 of 9 partners).

The project contributed to reconstruction of Social house, build roads, parapet etc. However, focus is not on just infrastructural work but more on what it meant for that community. Namely, in that MZ live together Serbs and Bosniaks and the project managed to include them both in their activities and that was the first time that they worked together. So reconciliation aspect here is to be emphasized too. The project gave hope to people that they can do certain things on their own. Even when the project finished, people have continued to work on their own on implementing certain activities that are in interest of all in MZ.

This project has a good basis and successfully work with people who were tricked many times from politicians and lost faith in everyone.

The project would be even better if it was broadened to support e.g. cattle breeding. Finding way to get some cattle to young families in order to ensure their existence and sustainability in rural areas. In that way we can ensure that the infrastructure, playgrounds and social house are going to be used, because if people do not have any income they will move to other places.

Other contributions mentioned by partners were:

- Contributing to the advocacy for adoption of a law on volunteerism, setting up of network and a web portal for volunteering (www.volontiram.ba).
- Contributing advocacy for increased transparency in allocating grants to NGOs from local budgets.
- Contributing to increased signing of formal agreements of cooperation between NGOs and local authorities.
- Contribution to improved networking among NGOs (Sporazum Plus).
- Contributing to internal capacity development of partners (especially in management, reporting and communication).

No partner mentioned results related to EU accession. In general it was very difficult to access the overall outcome and impact of the OPC program. OPC partners are working with different issues and methods in different places and there is not a joint focus of the program. Also, there are many other donors and initiatives with the same objectives, contributing to the changes observed. The OPC contribution is often small compared to these. The major initiatives on local government level are OSCE “Local First”, EU/LOD and EU/CiDi. There are also huge investments in youth programs. With few exceptions OPC has worked with partners that are already established and well reputed.

4.3 Relevance

The OPC context analysis is a good basis for programming, but it lacks a proper stakeholder analysis. The objectives set are highly relevant to the context and to the Sida strategy. However, improved coordination with other similar programs and a more narrow strategic focus could make the interventions more relevant.

4.4 Effectiveness

Partners describe OPC as a flexible, reliable, and long term donor. They confirm that the support from OPC has assisted them to develop skills and achieve more in terms of the projects funded. However, partners have difficulties in describing exactly what OPC is contributing apart from funding, project dialogue and networking. “We work well together”, “they understand our problems because they are also an NGO”, are common statements. Compared to the other two FOs, OPC is more like other donors, focusing its support on projects rather than on long term partnerships and strategic change processes. OPC is the only FO that has tried calls for proposals to select partners, but the method was abandoned after OPC received more than 400 applications which were almost impossible to evaluate in a fair manner. Some organisations with no substance had used professional consultants to write up wonderful proposals according to donor requirements while some organisations with great potential failed to meet basic requirements.

The effectiveness of OPC was particularly hard to access as the impact and outcomes described were anecdotal and spread on a wide range of issues. Often organisations and projects supported have other main donors. OPC could improve effectiveness substantially by

- Defining its specific competencies and added value and focussing its international partnerships on these aspects.
- Improving its stakeholder analyses and strategically and proactively engaging with ongoing change processes.
- Cooperating with other key donors to add value and link up with the Sida funded public administration reform.

In an effort to find a local intermediary Sida has turned to a local NGO, CSPC, to replace OPC. In 2009, 2 MSEK was channelled via OPC to this organisation to test its effectiveness. The aim was to support CSOs in establishing improved relations with governments and facilitating greater level of CSOs engagement in policy dialogue with governments. After calls for proposals funding was provided to some 15 organisations in the following areas:

- Youth.
- Persons with disabilities.
- Elderly people.
- Local communities.
- Partnership and relationship with local government.

An internal evaluation carried out after the first year found that almost all projects were successful and had achieved the objectives. After speaking to two of the sub-grantees we got a more modified picture of the effectiveness of the modality.

- It seems that a number of the recipient organisations are also intermediaries and not the end-users, meaning yet another level of administration.

- Some recipient organisations are already strong and have capacity and did not find the administrative support offered by CSPC relevant to their needs.
- The reporting requirements are too cumbersome compared to the small grants provided and some of the organisations would never consider applying for another grant.
- Organisations have been required to participate in four marketing events and presentations in support of CSPC, which they considered not to be in their interest.
- At least one of the sub-grantees is also a grantee of OPC directly.

We feel that the selection of sub-grantees and distribution of funding may be technically well functioning, but it is very project oriented and not part of a wider strategy for civil participation. So far the program seems to be carried out as an isolated consultancy. The initiatives supported are spread on various issues and geographic areas and not sufficiently linked to ongoing processes and other donor initiatives, although many of them are working to put in place formal agreements (Compacts) for cooperation between local authorities and NGOs. The lack of strategic focus is probably not the fault of CSPC, but rather the way OPC and Sida have formulated the assignment. If Sida wants to continue with this modality, these challenges must be addressed. In order to be more effective, Sida should consider supporting CSPC in a more programmatic manner and in accordance with its own strategy (not merely be seen as an intermediary of funding). For example, CSPC mentioned that their overall priority for the next few years is to achieve transparent and fair grant giving to CSOs in municipalities. Supporting such an initiative could have sustainable and long term effects for civil society in BiH. When using local intermediaries Sida must be more proactive in its engagement and setting of ToR. This requires resources at the embassy/country teams.

4.5 Cost efficiency

OPC has spent 25 % of the budget on its role as intermediary. This is the lowest percentage compared to the other FOs. However, the added value for partners is not as obvious; although partners confirm that OPC is their “best donor”. The results are often described in terms of internal capacity development and training achievements. Often boundary partners are other NGOs. Some of the printed materials shown to us such as promotion pamphlets, training manuals, assessments etc gave an impression of being unnecessarily expensive.

Sida has found the role of OPC a bit ambivalent as OPC works with many funding sources and roles in BiH. Presently OPC is applying for EU funding in partnership with one of its grantees. To become more efficient OPC needs to focus on a specific niche linked to its core values and competencies such as for example unions, local politicians, parliamentarians and member based solidarity work. If continuing to support community development and civil participation in general, OPC needs to link its interventions on ongoing reform processes and build on/ add value to other donor initiatives.

4.6. Sustainability

The capacity development provided through trainings supported by OPC has increased individual and organisational capacity of partners. This capacity is not lost even if OPC withdraws funding or individuals move on to political or government functions. Some OPC partners in local communities are financially dependent to some extent (20–100%) and have few staff (2–6) which make them a bit vulnerable. There is however indications that the processes of civil participation that have been started will continue even without funding, although to a lesser extent. Local partners typically have 10–25 volunteers. In general, OPC has not paid large portions of partner budgets (generally only 10–20%) which mean that partners will survive even if they lose the OPC contribution.

4.7 Conclusions

Although there are examples of interesting and valuable outcomes in local communities, it has been difficult to determine the overall impact of OPC interventions. Projects are too diverse in type and issue and there are many other big initiatives in the area of civic participation. OPC has a complex role working with three different Sida funding arrangements and the initiatives funded by Sida Europe is only part (and perhaps cannot be evaluated separately).

The added value of OPC is not as obvious as that of the other FOs. OPC should consider focussing on fewer issues where OPC can demonstrate specific competency and coordinating better with bigger ongoing EU funded initiatives in the same fields. When working with local democracy, it would for example have been valuable to cooperate with SKL (the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions – SALAR) which have been an active partner in the Governance and Accountability Project⁸² of BiH, also financed by Sida.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 The outcome of the investment

- An enhanced Swedish resource base on women's rights in conflict/post conflict situations and on human rights defenders.
- A stronger women's lobby in BiH.
- Improved conditions for women in selected municipalities of BiH.
- A more visible and enhanced human rights monitoring capacity in BiH.
- Improved competency among lawyers and journalists on human rights and European standards.
- Improved protection of journalists and human rights defenders.
- Improved mechanisms for self regulation of printed media.
- Access to free legal aid or advice of some 20 000 persons.
- Improved citizen participation in a few selected communities.

5.2 Added value of FO involvement

The FOs did not only channel funding, to a varying degree they also added value in terms of

- Moral and political support.
- Technical and professional support.
- International and national networking.
- Sharing of human rights and gender equality values in practice.
- Flexibility and coaching in relation to Sida applications and reporting.
- Capacity development in terms of planning, management and results based reporting.
- Protection of activists.
- Joint action.
- Providing neutral ground.

The fact that the FOs are NGOs working for the same human rights causes was key to some of these added values. These are not only services that can be bought on a consultancy basis.

⁸² <http://www.bihgap.ba/engleski/index.asp>

The relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the modality could however be improved significantly, both in terms of Sida's procedures and conditions and in terms of FOs' focus and methods, as indicated above. The important area of non-discrimination in schools has so far not been addressed sufficiently, although there are some few efforts such as three schools under one roof.

5.3 Recommendations

Being an active member of the EU, Sweden should engage more in the effective use of EU funding to civil society in BiH and ensure that the support provided by Sweden is supplementary.

Being one of the biggest supporters of civil society in BiH, Sweden could take initiative in donor coordination and joint strategising around support to various key areas such as civic participation, NGO sector development, gender equality and youth initiatives. The Accra Agenda could form the basis for such arrangements. Sida could also discuss if and how civil society may be used in addressing the problems of continued nationalism in schools.

Due to the continued polarisation between ethnic groups in BiH, there is still lack of trust between some NGOs and between NGOs and government actors. Sweden should therefore consider continuing to engage Swedish NGOs as intermediaries in areas which are politically sensitive, because

- They can offer neutral ground, external moral and technical support, international protection and networking.
- It can provide Sida with connections, information and assistance to react quickly and boldly to human rights violations.
- It can be a good resource base for Sida human rights work in the region and elsewhere.

The benefits/ added values of Swedish NGOs will however only be worthwhile if the contracting of them is more specific in what Sida wants to achieve and what it expects in terms of contributions. The conditions for engagement of Swedish NGOs as intermediaries should be more transparent and streamlined at Sida. It should not be limited to three framework organisations only. There should be combinations of using Swedish and local intermediaries according to context and capacity in each situation and each thematic area.

Looking at the present FO support the following can be concluded:

The area of "democracy and public participation" is closely connected to public administration reforms and need to be linked to these processes. It is about establishing forms for dialogue and cooperation between citizens/citizen groups and authorities. It is not possible for a Swedish NGO to make much difference unless linked to these bigger processes and having a specific focus and niche. In this thematic area, Sida must ensure coordination with other donor initiatives (mainly EU, USAID and OSCE) and local processes. Local intermediaries and structures could be considered for channelling funding, but because there is still mistrust between NGOs and ethnic groups in BiH most informants prefer international intermediaries. There are however some local organisations that are considered to do a technically good job (for example CCI and CSPP which are used as intermediaries by USAID). If Sida decides to use local organisations as intermediaries, this must be done in a more programmatic and strategic manner. Sida may also want to support the process of establishing a functional State level Office for Cooperation with the NGO sector as stipulated in the legislation. Sida may also consider a variety of supplementary supporting options where Sweden might be able to provide additional inspiration, for example

- Engaging youth and student organisations (Sveriges ungdomsråd, elevråd, LSU) for youth exchange.
- Engaging the Bosnian Diaspora for local democracy development.

In the area of “gender equality and women’s human rights”, there is not yet a local intermediary that is trusted among the women’s organisation, although the Foundation for Social Integration was mentioned by some. Nobody wanted donor funds to civil society to be channelled through the State agency. Sida could consider working with KtK and other donors to find a way forward, possibly to support certain issue based network initiatives. In future Sida could also consider including other Swedish stakeholders for inspiration in certain areas for example:

- Gender based monitoring/reporting, advocacy, policy and research.
- Sexual and reproductive health rights (RFSU).
- Domestic violence and shelters (ROKS).

In countries where there are governance and human rights problems as in BiH, watchdog organisations and free media are essential. These will hardly ever be supported by those in power. They may even be threatened. International moral, political and financial support to professional watchdog organisations and free media is essential. These must have high level of professionalism of these organisations to keep credibility as fair and fact based. Sweden has an important role to continue to support these organisations. CRD has proven to do a good job in this area and could be engaged by Sida also in the future.

List of persons met

FOs

1. Olof Palme Center, Dženana Pavlinović and Johanna Leander interview held on 7th of June 2.
2. Kvinna till Kvinna, Vida Korén, interview held on 9th of June

FO partners

1. Centre for promotion of civil society, Omir Tufo and Adisa interview held on 8th of June
2. Helsinki Committee for Human rights BiH, secretary Živica Abadžić and Sinan Alić, acting president, interview held on 8th of June
3. Žene Ženama, mrs. Nuna Zvizdic, president, interview held on 10th of June
4. BiH Journalist Association, mrs Borka Rudic, secretary general, interview held on 9th of June
5. Horizonti, Tuzla president Mira Vilušić and project coordinator Jasminka Jukić, interview held on 11th of June
6. Centre for civil initiatives, Tuzla, Muris Bulic, project manager, interview held on 11th of June
7. Lara Bijeljina, Radila Žigić, president, Mara Radovanović, vice president; Maja Stankovic, interview held on 12th of June
8. Helsinki committee for human rights RS, Branko Todorović, executive director and Aleksandra Letić, project coordinator, interview held on 14th of June,
9. Press council, Ljiljana Zurovac, interview held on 14th of June
10. Foundation CURE, Jadranka Miličević, president, interview held on 17th of June
11. DON Prijedor, Murisa Maric, executive director, interview held on 5th of July

Boundary Partners

1. NGO KULT, CPCD boundary partner, mrs. Belma Gijo, interview held on 8th of June
2. Mirsad Dačić, Work group members, DON Prijedor’s boundary partner, interview held on 9th July

3. Ernesa Mešić, Municipality of Tuzla and Suada Mujčinović, Tuzla Gender commission, Horizonti's boundary partners, interview held on 11th of June
4. Regulatory Agency for communication, Helena Mandić, Head of Programme Standards, complaints and Broadcasting Regulation Division and Emir Powlakić, Head of Division for Licensing, Digitalization and Coordination in Broadcasting BiH Journalist Association's and Press council's boundary partner, interview held on
5. Press council, boundary partner of BiH Journalist Association, interview held on
6. Angelina Perić, Center for social care, Lara bijeljina's boundary partner, interview 12th of July

External partners

1. EU Delegation, mr. Dzermal Hodžić Task Manager, interview held on 7th of June
2. Cidi Project: „Capacity building of CSOs to take part in civil dialogue“ EU IPA 2007 funded project, Mrs. Zelah Senior, team leader and Ranko Milanovic Blanko, Civil society development specialist, Interview held on 7th of June
3. Agency for gender equality, Ministry for human rights, Mrs. Samra Hadžiabdić Filipović, interview held on 8th of June
4. SIDA, Erik Illes, interview held on 9th of June
5. USAID, Mirjana Valjevac Program Management specialist and Selam Sijercic, Program management specialist, interview held on 9th of June
6. OSCE, Stefania Koskova, Head of Community engagement section, interview held on 9th of June
7. TACSO project, „Technical assistance to civil society organization“ regional EU funded project Slavica Drasković, Resident Advisor, Jelena Kuzmanović, project officer, Maja Karić administration and financial assistant, interview held on 10th of June

Annex 5 – Country Report Kosovo

By Annika Nilsson and Blerim Vela

This report comprises one of the five country reports which together make up the detailed commentary from the Evaluation of Sida's Support to the Western Balkans 2005–2009. The report describes the situation in Kosovo at the beginning of the period in question, changes of importance during the five years and the situation currently, including comments and reflections from civil society and other actors on the situation at the time of the evaluation, in June 2010. The report then discusses the approach and work of each of the framework organisations who have been responsible for providing Sida's civil society support during the period. This discussion follows 5 key development assistance criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The report then looks at the delivery modality for Sida's assistance in Kosovo – the approach of using three, Swedish NGOs as implementing partners to determine program priorities (within the Sida strategic framework) and to determine grant recipients and processes – and comments on the efficacy of the approach. The three NGOs are the Olof Palme International Centre, Civil Rights Defenders and Kvinna till Kvinna.

The field work of the evaluation included six days of interviews and focus group discussions with representatives of framework organisations, representatives of the cooperation partners of framework organisations, representatives of boundary partners (people/ organisations with a direct or indirect relation-

ship to funded organisations/ projects) and external experts/ observers. The complete list of interviewees is found at the end of the report. The report is to be treated as one of five country inputs to the overall report. Conclusions can be drawn mainly on the overall level as the country sample was very limited (only two-three organisations per FO) and not completely representative of the FO interventions in Kosovo. The conclusions and recommendations in the country report are to be seen as points for further discussion.

1. Context Analysis

1.1 Governance and democracy

Throughout the period, the status of Kosovo has overshadowed all other questions, all activities and all development processes. Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence was made in February 2008. While the declaration has received widespread acceptance within the international community, a number of players (countries and institutions) have not recognised the declaration and continue to treat Kosovo as a part of Serbia. Because of opposition from non-recognising states, the ability of Kosovo institutions to participate in regional and international networks and mechanisms are hampered.

Formally, the UN Security Council Resolution 1244/99 is still in force, which foresees the presence of international administrative arrangements for Kosovo by UN (UNMIK), EU (EULEX) and ICO⁸³. While on the ground the US and its ambassador have a lot of power. During the period of review Kosovo government institutions have been established and manned alongside the UN and EU structures and monitoring mechanisms. There is now an elected National Assembly and most Ministries are in place. Local government structures are also functional except in northern Kosovo. However, important laws relating to public administration reform have not yet been passed, although two new laws were passed in July 2010 (the Law on Civil Service and Law on Salaries of Civil Service). There is not yet a system in place to ensure a professional, accountable, accessible, representative public administration free from political interference (which is most prominent in high level positions). The remaining EU and UN institutions continue to confuse powers. Due to the changing environment, it has sometimes been difficult for civil society to determine exactly who to lobby for change. CSOs have gradually developed their skills in lobbying with the Assembly and the national and local Government structures, along with the various international bodies that still uphold certain functions.

A key area of concern during the period has been to strengthen the capacity of local politicians, as "most of them are just figureheads of their political parties and not real representatives of the electorate."⁸⁴ "The situation of young people is especially worrying, with a poor education system, high unemployment and limited possibilities to voice their demands; they are still not heard and not taken into consideration in levels of decision making."⁸⁵

According to Freedom House, the Kosovo Democracy score in 2009 has improved somewhat since 2005 from 5.32 to 5.11. Despite the minute progress, the general level is still low and alarming ratings are given for corruption, freedom of expression and judicial framework and independence. The major issues at the moment are building capacity for EU integration; the security situation in northern Kosovo; political leadership; corruption, notably claims of corruption within the judiciary.

1.2. Gender equality

In 2004, KtK reported that "The women's movement is one of the strongest and best organised civil society groups in Kosovo. The women NGOs have the potential of contributing substantially to institutional building, formulation of laws and bridging ethnic tensions during this period of transition. A

⁸³ International Civilian Office is in place to ensure implementation of the Kosovo status settlement plan and EU integration

⁸⁴ OPC Application 2005

⁸⁵ OPC Application 2010

wide range of initiatives have been taken in Kosovo in regards to increasing women's participation, on national as well as local level. New gender equality mechanisms, such as the National Action Plan (not yet approved), the Gender Equality Law and the Municipal Gender Officers, are key instruments for the women's organisations to influence and to use, and we will support such efforts, which often gather women of different ethnicities and political interests."⁸⁶

During the period of review the Agency for Gender Equality has increased its capacity and continued to monitor and implement the Kosovo Program for Gender Equality 2008–2013. The percentage of women in decision making positions in municipalities has increased from around below 20% to almost 34% in 2009 (although some of them have been voted in only to fill the numbers – being wives or relatives of male politicians). All 30 municipalities have appointed gender officers and 14 have established gender equality committees⁸⁷. The police have established domestic violence units but domestic violence remains widespread and is a serious concern. Shelter facilities are inadequate.⁸⁸ Discrimination, isolation and economic disempowerment of women are extensive, especially in rural areas. Despite revision of inheritance legislation, brothers pressurise their sisters to give up inheritance rights “in the best interest of the family”.

“Kosovo has a very advanced legislation, but in practice there are enormous deficiencies when it comes to implementation, in particular when in regard to women's rights issues such as inheritance and property rights, violence, discrimination, sexual harassment, labour rights, the right to education, etc.”⁸⁹
“Women's organisations can help creating legal praxis by pressing charges, i.e. testing new legal acts, inform women about their rights and work with communities to challenge traditions and values that hamper efficient implementation of the legislation. Such efforts together with advocacy work and the monitoring of national and local institutions are of key importance in order to establish rule of law, democracy and good governance.”⁹⁰

1.3. Human Rights

The focus on the Kosovo's political status question during 2005 – 2009 meant that other political and socio-economic rights of citizens did not get sufficient attention during the period. Kosovo is the second poorest country in Europe after Moldova. Despite adoption of a progressive, human rights based constitution (April 2008), and a range of important laws, including a human rights strategy and action plan (December 2008), implementation and understanding of human rights is limited. Mechanisms for implementation and monitoring are not yet in place and progress is slow. The EU (EULEX) is still playing a role in monitoring of rule of law, but it is heavily criticised for not doing an effective job. The Kosovo justice system remains weak, vulnerable to political interference and inefficient. There has been limited progress in the fight against corruption and organised crime. Allegations of corruption in the judiciary are not adequately investigated. The fight against impunity remains an issue of importance to future reconciliation. There has been some progress in terms of treatment and conditions in prison and detention centres, but serious challenges remain especially as regards to youth, Kosovo Serb minority and persons with mental illness or intellectual disability.

There is now a law on free legal aid and a memorandum of understanding aiming at streamlining services. However, the office of the Legal Aid coordinator is not yet reaching all areas of Kosovo and especially in the northern part access to justice is limited. The Ombudsman office was manned only after heavy pressure from OSCE and civil society.

⁸⁶ KtK Annual Request 2005

⁸⁷ <http://www.ks.undp.org/?cid=2,120>

⁸⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/ks_rapport_2009_en.pdf

⁸⁹ KtK Request for Additional Funding 2010–2011

⁹⁰ KtK Request for Additional Funding 2010–2011

An anti-discrimination law has been passed but it is not effectively monitored. Discrimination against minority groups is still persistent and freedom of movement of minority groups is still an issue due to perceived or real security problems, especially in northern Kosovo. There is limited progress in integration of minority communities and there is a need for promotion of cultural rights and availability of information in the various official languages. “Minorities in Kosovo, especially Serbs and Roma, are constantly discriminated (against). Like in other parts of the Balkans, people with other sexual orientation also face discrimination. Since the civil society is weak in Kosovo, there is little monitoring performed by NGOs on minority rights.”⁹¹

As regards freedom of expression⁹², the independence and impartiality of the publicly-owned Radio and Television of Kosovo (RTK) are not fully ensured. Three years after its entry into force, the Law establishing RTK is still not being adequately implemented. There have been a series of public debates with the participation of the Press Council and the Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo on cases of political interference in the work of the media. The Law on Access to Official Documents is not fully implemented.

Children’s rights are not sufficiently protected, especially children with disabilities (only 30% attend school) and abandoned children. Child labour, trafficking and treatment of children in justice system are not adequately addressed. Social integration of persons with disabilities and returnees need enhancement. The unemployment is estimated to be up to 44 percent and a large number of people are living in poverty.

The major issues at the moment are the guaranteeing of the rights of minorities, mechanisms to implement the government’s strategy and action plan on human rights; ensuring freedom of expression and improving child protection (especially for children with disabilities). “There is a great need to empower and mobilise the Roma community so as to ensure that the provisions included in the 2007 Kosovo Government Roma Inclusion Strategy are translated into practice at municipal level.”⁹³

1.4. Civil society role and capacity

There are almost 5000 registered CSOs in Kosovo, but only 10% of them are truly active. The sector is fragmented, uncoordinated, ethnically divided and often donor and project driven. “*Civil society after 1999 was established and operating as an employment sector*” (FO representative). Apart from the CiviKos platform (of 130 CSOs) which played an active role in the establishment of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the government and civil society in 2007, there are only two networks; Kosovo Women’s Network (KWN) established in 2000 and Kosovo Youth network (KYN) established in 2001. According to statistics, almost half of all CSOs are youth or women organisations.⁹⁴

A Law on Freedom of Association in Non-governmental Organisations was adopted in February 2009 after wide and detailed consultations with civil society. There are so far no policies or institutional frameworks on national level for developing relations between government and civil society and stipulating inclusion of CSOs in policy dialogue. The memorandum of cooperation from 2007 fell off the agenda in connection with declaration of independence and was never implemented. There is a governmental NGO Registration office, to which every NGO is obliged to submit their annual narrative and financial reports. However, this Office does not promote or coordinate cooperation with civil society and government. The Government Agency for Coordination of Development and European Integration (in April 2009 transformed into the Ministry for European Integration) intended to adopt a MoU with civil society establishing conditions for cooperation, but the initiative was held up indefinitely by the Legal Services Department. The EC Liaison Office, which should be a role model for consulta-

⁹¹ CRD Western Balkans Plan of Action 04–06

⁹² http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/ks_rapport_2009_en.pdf

⁹³ OPC Application Kosovo 2010

⁹⁴ TACSO needs assessment 2010

tions with civil society, has sometimes not fulfilled these expectations, according to CSOs. The MoU between the Ministry of the Environment and environmental CSOs amounted to a wish list which has not yet been acted upon.

On the local level the Law on Local Self-Government prescribes a number of consultation mechanisms that municipalities must use to communicate with their constituency and with CSO representatives. According to the law there should be consultative committees in a range of sectors. CSOs are only gradually making use of these opportunities and local governments are often unaware of them.

In summary it can be concluded that the concept and usefulness of public participation is not yet understood within government and civil servants at the national and local levels. At the same time civil society is poorly organised and ill-prepared for dialogue. When consultations take place it is mostly with a few known and trusted CSO leaders. However, some good examples of consultations have been the Kosovo Human Rights Strategy (2007), the law on Access to Official Documents, The National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2004), the Strategy for Integration of RAE Communities (2008) and the Action Plan for People with Disabilities (2009).

Despite the general capacity weakness of the NGO sector in terms of management, strategic planning and networking, accountability to constituencies, advocacy and policy dialogue with government etc. there are some few CSOs that are very professional (a majority of them based in Prishtinë/Priština). These NGOs are mainly think tanks⁹⁵ contributing to dialogue on democratic reform and watchdog organisations⁹⁶. The watchdogs owe much of their early stimulation to donors but are now locally driven in their commitment and values. There is also a rather strong civic organization called the “Self determination movement” which is criticising the ineffective and overwhelming international involvement in Kosovo and the slow pace of reaching real independence. This movement attracts a lot of attention and support at grassroots level, but has never been a dialogue partner in the eyes of the international community due to its non-acceptance of the Ahtisaari agreement.

CRD say in their recent application to Sida that “NGOs dealing with anti corruption related issues have developed their watch-dog functions, through professional monitoring and advocacy activities. We can see that they dare to be a bit more critical because of the fact that they have well researched information to lean on, but evidently need support and back-up to continue to bring irregularities to the surface.”⁹⁷ The major priorities currently are the development of issue based networks, strengthening watchdog and advocacy capacities and building capacity of civil society organisations in municipalities to engage in policy dialogue, empower citizens, include minorities and hold decision makers accountable.

1.5. Sida and other civil society donors

The most important supporters of civil society in Kosovo are the EU, USAID and OSCE. Almost all bilateral donors have scaled down their support, leaving the field to the European Commission. The EU IPA funds for civil society amount to a total of around 10 million EUR over a three year period to

- Environmental protection, energy efficiency, health and safety at work.
- Education.
- Non-discrimination.

⁹⁵ For example: ECK- European Centre Kosovo, Foreign Policy Club, Forum 2015, GAP- Institute for Advanced Studies, IKS Kosovo Stability Initiative, IPOL- Balkan Policy Institute, KIPRED-Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Development, Riinvest Institute etc.

⁹⁶ For example: KDI – Kosovo Democratic institute (Transparency International representative), FOL movement, INPO- Initiative for progress, COHU-Organisation for Democracy Anti-Corruption and Dignity, KCIC- Kosovo centre for International Cooperation, BIRN Balkan Investigative reporting Network, IWPR- International War and Peace Reporting etc.

⁹⁷ CRD Kosovo Update Plan of Action 2010

- Corruption organised crime and trafficking.
- Economic and rural development, especially ethnic minorities.
- Socio economic issues and improved transparency and accountability of NGOs.

In addition there is the EIDHR 2009–2010 of 1.7 million EUR for greater cohesion in working on human rights, political pluralism, democratic political participation, free and independent media, peaceful reconciliation combating discrimination and gender equality. This program is very close to Sida priorities and should ideally have been coordinated with Swedish initiatives. A number of partners are the same. Recently, the EU in Brussels initiated a regional CSO capacity building program, TACSO, with national offices in the Balkan countries and Turkey. So far the major achievement is an assessment report and coaching of NGOs to register in a database (PADOR) to become eligible for EIDHR funding. TACSO is housed by the Kosovo Civil Society Foundation. USAID and the EC Liaison office are represented on the local advisory group (LAG). TACSO showed interest in having Sida as a representative in the group, as well and asked the evaluators to convey this message.

USAID is providing USD 4.5 million for a two year program aiming at building capacity for advocacy and supporting advocacy initiatives. USAID use a US organization as their intermediary, the Institute for Sustainable Communities.⁹⁸ The World Bank also has a civil society small grant scheme. UNDP, UNIFEM and OSCE also support civil society and especially gender equality projects. The Kosovo government funding of CSOs is small and not transparent. It is believed that sports and culture CSOs are getting some funding from municipalities. There are also some social welfare organisations such as Mother Theresa that have been supported.

Sweden is mentioned as the third most important funder of civil society in Kosovo. The total amount spent through the three framework organisations has been around 15 MSEK per year (1.5 million EUR). In addition Sida is providing support to civil society initiatives in Kosovo via Swedish Save the Children (focussing on inclusive education for Roma children and children with disabilities) and Forum Syd (a rather large youth program of 2 million EUR for 3 years with 7 local partners). Also PMU Interlife and OPC member organisations are active via Sida/ CIVSAM funding. There seem to be no Swedish NGOs from the environment sector involved so far. It is estimated that the three framework organisations are channelling less than 50% of the Swedish support to civil society in Kosovo. Forum Syd, OPC, KtK and CRD share offices in Prishtinë/ Priština since early 2010, but cooperation between them is still limited. Sida is also using Swedish consultants for technical support. Indevelop-IPM is used for inclusion of women economic empowerment in programs and Sipu is used for backstopping in the education sector.

According to the Swedish country strategy for Kosovo 2009–2012 the three priority areas are:

- Environment and Climate.
- Education.
- Democratic Governance and Human Rights.

The Specific Swedish objectives for the area of Democratic Governance and Human Rights are:

- To strengthen Kosovo's civil service by ensuring that relevant institutions function democratically, efficiently and in accordance with EU regulations.
- To strengthen the ability of civil society to take a more active part in the development of society – with a specific focus on women's participation in decision making.

⁹⁸ http://www.iscvt.org/who_we_are/

Sweden intends to work more program based and to coordinate with other donors, especially with the EU funded initiatives and the EC Liaison Officer. The strategy also mentions that local structures and ownership should be used and encouraged as far as possible. At the same time the strategy indicates an intention to continue channelling funding to civil society through Swedish NGOs.

2 Kvinna till Kvinna (KtK)

2.1 Background and history

KtK is a Foundation with the mandate of a) empowering women in conflict affected regions by enhancing their mental and physical well-being and their participation in building a democratic and peaceful society, b) promoting research and studies on the effects of war and conflict in women c) provide information about the effects of war and raise public opinion in favour of peaceful conflict resolution.

KtK started its cooperation with women organisations in Kosovo before the war in 1999 and even supported some initiatives while in exile in Macedonia during the NATO bombings. During the period 2005–2010, a total of 12 organisations were supported with annual budgets of 300 000–450 000 per year. Presently KtK supports 8 partners. Six of them are local community women organisations, one is a national network (KWN) with approximately 80 members and one is a Gender Study Centre. All these partners were supported from 2005 or before. The KtK financial support to organisations in Kosovo has been around 3.5 MSEK per year throughout the period, but in 2005 an exceptional payment of 4 MSEK was made to one partner (Centre for Protection of Women and Children) in connection with phasing out of the support. In addition some 2.5 MSEK have been used for KtK field support and administration.

KtK has provided long term support to partner organisations with a focus on core costs rather than projects. KtK is flexible and trusts partners to set their own priorities. The local ownership has been a prominent feature. KtK has strong field presence, one Swedish and one local staff. Close coaching of partner organisations has been the general approach of KtK but in Kosovo KtK staff turnover has been high and therefore this aspect is weaker than elsewhere. Recently the focus has shifted more towards national processes, research and EU progress reporting.

According to the KtK plan for Kosovo, 14 detailed objectives have been formulated under the following six headings

- Women in the peace process (2 objectives).
- Women's organising (3 objectives).
- Women's participation in decision making (3 objectives).
- Women's human rights (2 objectives).
- Women's work against violence and sexual abuse – GBV (2 objectives).
- Women's physical and psychological health (2 objectives).

These six areas have also been used in the progress reporting of KtK, while the detailed objectives do not seem to be used either for guidance or for follow up.

KtK has prepared for a gradual phasing out of the involvement in Kosovo after 2011 and has initiated discussions with partners on this issue. According to the program proposal, support to partners during the past few years has focussed on

- Follow up on capacity building.

- Cross-ethnic cooperation.
- Support to networking.

The conclusions in this evaluation are based on interviews with KtK and Sida representatives, reading of annual reports and earlier evaluations, responses to questionnaires, interviews with partner organisations KWN, Women's Association Aureola, Women's Association Legjenda (Viti) and their boundary partners, external observers and other major donors.

2.2 Outcome and impact

Women's organisations in Kosovo have achieved a lot since 2005 although the situation is still far from acceptable. According to observers, KtK support played a role in strengthening the Kosovo Women's Network and 10 of its 80 members. As a result of the support from KtK, partners report that they are more focussed, have better strategies and more competent staff. They are more respected, have more community support and have better cooperation with other NGOs. Five out of seven indicate that they have better relationships with authorities and four out of seven find that the authorities also listen to them. The Kosovo Women's Network in particular has achieved recognition by authorities and is often consulted. The KWN has also managed to attract Serb women organisations as members and has created a separate network for them. This part has been strongly supported by KtK.

With support from KtK the organisations have also developed their capacities and interest to participate in the political sphere. During the first few years after the war in 1999 most organisations were mainly working with vocational trainings and establishing meeting places for women who had difficulties to leave their houses. Today, six out of eight of KtK's partner organisations are involved in activities in relation to politics.

This increased organisational strength and actions taken by the women organisations has led to some important changes/impacts, for example:

- Improved inter-ethnic relationships between Kosovo Serbian and Kosovo Albanian women's organisations, resulting in reduced tensions and an increased feeling of security among Serb women (although there are still problems in the north).
- A new Law against Domestic Violence, which includes an obligation by the government to provide support for shelters, has been put forward for adoption in 2010 (much thanks to input from KWN).
- Making the problem of violence visible and further break the silence which surrounds all forms of violence against women, increasing the willingness to report and seek help.
- Provision of legal and psychological services to thousands of women and a commitment from at least one municipality to take over financial responsibility for the shelter.
- Improvements in water and sanitation services, due to women's campaigning.
- Improved health services for women in targeted communities and improved information, especially on SRHR.
- Increased women participation in politics (to almost 34 %).
- Increased participation from women's organisations in the preparation of the EU progress report and the alternative UN CEDAW report.

2.3 Relevance

Women's influence in peace making and reduction of violence against women in the post conflict society are still extremely relevant areas in Kosovo. Using women's organisations and women's issues as

spearheads to improve inter-ethnic relationships have also proven to be effective. The ethnic tensions are still a big issue that hampers settlement and a move towards EU accession. It would be highly relevant to continue the support to initiatives in these areas.

Women's influence in politics and increased participation in economic activities is essential for democracy and economic development in Kosovo. These are also priority areas of Sida. Although in the past year, KtK has coordinated with other donors (e.g. UNIFEM) and provided support to overall gender reporting to the EU and UN, KtK has generally not been strategically orientated towards broader gender aspects. When Sida needed advice on the economic empowerment of women for example, a Swedish consultant was engaged by Sida as KtK did not have the capacity and mandate to take on this role. KtK could be even more relevant to the pre EU situation and Sida priorities, if partnering with other experts to cover areas which are not directly related to the peace building (even in its broader sense). The main priorities for the future mentioned by Kosovo women's organisations are

- Political participation and influence.
- Social/health security and employment.
- Reduced violence against women.

We feel that these priorities could be more clearly reflected in the KtK program.

2.4 Effectiveness

The funding of core costs has helped partners to develop an identity and provide some security which has given courage to embark on long term change processes. KtK is considered to be a partner, not a donor. KtK is praised for being flexible and helpful. Apart from the funding KtK has taken a keen interest in the operations of partners, provided moral support, worked together to develop applications and reports to KtK, organised study visits to Sweden as well as regional and national networking.

Sida has made some use of KtK analyses and contacts, although it has not been systematic. Sida sometimes would have needed assistance and cooperation on broader gender equality issues (see also evaluation made in 2006 Peck). When developing a program for women economic empowerment, Sida had to contract consultants (Indevelop-IPM) due to the limited mandate of KtK. The Swedish strategy for Kosovo includes gender equality as a key development issue and KtK could make a more significant difference by engaging more pro-actively in an advisory role to Sida. There is also room for increased donor coordination. The KtK context analysis (in the application 2008–11) does not include a comprehensive stakeholder analysis.

The fact that there have been frequent changes on the position of KtK field representative in Kosovo has affected both effectiveness and efficiency. Each new person has needed time to learn and adjust and each person had her own personal interests and capacities. The changes in approach have been noted by partners with some concern. It seems that recently more focus have been given to national level processes rather than the traditional coaching and sistership that is the hallmark of KtK.

2.5 Cost efficiency

KtK has a heavy field presence and also part time dedicated staff in Stockholm in support of country programs. On average 40% of the budget is spent on overheads for coaching, support and monitoring by Swedish program officers and field representatives. This would mean around 2.5 MSEK per year in Kosovo, which is high considering the number of projects and the level of pro-activeness in terms of partner coaching. KtK could have reached the same (or even better) quality of relationship and support by gradually building capacity of the local staff to take on programmatic work and using Swedish staff for specific issues and backstopping. The Kosovan staff member, who has worked for KtK since 2004, is

still used for interpretations and secretarial work (20 hours per week). In Kosovo, the frequent change of staff and need of substantial interpretation services have not been cost effective.

At the same time it should be noted that KtK could not have been exchanged with any other technical, local intermediary or consultancy. The results achieved are not only linked to channelling of money, it's also about inspiration, moral support and development of a global network of women working for peace building, influence on peace processes and against violence.

2.6 Sustainability

All partners, except one, are dependent on KtK funding to a large extent, 65–100%. Quite a few receive 100% of funding from KtK. Partners that are grassroots organisations in small towns have limited chances to compete for external donor funding being offered in complex tenders. In some towns there are competing or supplementary women's organisations. In this situation partners need practical support to find ways to join forces and mobilise resources together. This cannot be done through seminars or training, but through facilitation in each organisation and municipality. Opportunities to receive funding through municipalities (for services), through other donors and international women's networks should be explored – as well as access to EU funding. Such support to partners is long overdue. It seems that in many cases, the partnerships have not been challenged but just conveniently (for both parties) continued and the same activities repeated.

Another sustainability issue is the dependence of one leader in many of the partner organisations and the limited recruitment of young women in some. This has recently been discussed as an issue in the KtK network.

2.7 Conclusion

KtK has played an important role in strengthening the women's civil society movement in Kosovo. Some of the organisations probably would not have existed without the support from KtK. KtK has contributed to networking and cooperation across ethnic lines, thus contributing to peace building. KtK partners have contributed to successful advocacy for improved health and sanitation services and for increased attention to domestic violence. Being an NGO working for the same cause helped develop the relationships and enhance the voices of the local partner organisations.

The relationships have also helped KtK grow into a more competent Swedish resource in working with women's rights in conflict and post conflict situations. A number of field officers have built their capacity in Kosovo.

KtK has mainly supported initiatives based on partner's interests and ideas. This has a lot of benefits in terms of local ownership but also some limitations in terms achieving sufficient focus of the support on an aggregated level. KtK has not fully used its potential as a proactive coach to partners, especially in relation to joint action on the municipal level, connecting with other donor initiatives and community programs, long term sustainability of partners, alternative resource mobilisation etc. Pro-activeness in the dialogue with partners, a fixed time frame for the cooperation and up-front discussions on expected results would have improved effectiveness. KtK narrow mandate (conflict/post conflict and violence issues) seems to have limited their possibilities to act as a dialogue partner (both with partners and with Sida) on general gender equality and development issues.

Even if KtK is appreciated as the best partner/donor by all informants, there are some areas which could have been carried out more effectively according to partners and boundary partners:

- KtK selected partners a long time ago and have remained with most of them since. This has created a mutual dependence and commitment of all funds to the same groups of organisations. Other interesting initiatives have not had a chance of being supported. Partnerships need to be evaluated and redefined on a regular (biannual) basis and KtK should have discussed an exit strategy from the

start. To ensure flexibility KtK should always have some free money every year to enable them to respond to new ideas and partnerships. Selection criteria should be transparent.

- The mandate of KtK is to some extent limiting the effectiveness of KtK in the pre-EU context although at the same time the focus has been very effective in the post-conflict situation.
- KtK has sometimes taken too low a profile in its relationship with partners and accepted to fund a very wide range of ideas. KtK could, together with partners, agree on a few top priorities for future funding. KtK could be more proactive in the dialogue with partners, contributing their knowledge and overall strategic view, without compromising local ownership.
- The practice of one-year agreement hampers long term planning of partners. Agreements should be 2 or 3-year.
- KtK office in Prishtinë/Priština has changed key staff too often and not all of them have had the necessary experience. KtK should seek further involvement of the local staff on programmatic matters.
- KtK could have been more proactive in terms of donor coordination to achieve more.

KtK has provided support that could not have been channelled only through any technical donor as it also involved inspiration, moral support and joint development of a global network of women working for peace building, influence on peace processes and against violence. However, the support could have been organised in a more effective and efficient manner.

3 Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)

3.1 Background and history

Civil Rights Defenders (then SHC) started its international involvement in the Balkans in the 1990s as part of their mission to monitor the performance of the signatories to the Helsinki Final Act. The focus areas have been; Rule of law, Freedom of expression and Non-discrimination. The engagement in the Western Balkans has been the major program of the organisation in terms of engagement and resources (around 75%, now around 50%). To a large extent it was the Balkan program that formed and inspired the development of SCH as an international actor on civil and political rights. SHC is an expert organisation providing technical support in areas of human rights law and policy as well as in freedom of expressions laws and practices. In 2009 SHC changed its name, mandate, statutes and governance structures to become less limited geographically and financially and more public and transparent in its operations. The new objectives are:

- That people can demand their civil and political rights and thereby obtain influence over their situation.
- That violation of people's civil and political rights by the state are investigated, prosecuted and compensated.
- That there are local human rights defenders who defend people's civil and political rights.

CRD did not have field representation in Kosovo until 2010. The support was earlier provided from the Macedonian office and from Stockholm. Partners and Sida greatly appreciate the positive change with a country representative. In 2009, six partners in Kosovo received support from CDR. All of them have been partners since 2007, or earlier. Previously CRD also supported a number of media actors in Kosovo but this support has gradually been phased out. In total the project budget has reached around 4.2 MSEK per year. The related project costs (field staff and administration) amounted to 1.1 MSEK (around 21%). Support to media actors has gradually been phased out, although a Serbian language

radio network is still included. The Civil Rights Program/Kosovo and the Humanitarian Law Centre/Kosovo (which works to document war crimes and bring the responsible persons to court) have received substantial grants of more than 500 000 SEK per year. Others have been supported with around 200 000 SEK per year.

The objectives of the CRD Kosovo program have been:

Rule of Law Programme: a) to strengthen monitoring capacity of NGOs in order to improve the compliance with Human Rights obligations and accountability of duty holders b) to contribute to build a “collective memory” about the armed conflict in Kosovo 1998–1999 and support judicial processes aiming at improving accountability for past crimes c) to enhance people’s access to justice through the provision of free legal aid to IDPs, refugees and vulnerable groups

The Freedom of expression programme: to improve professionalism in media through strengthening of the self-regulation of print media in Kosovo

The Non-discrimination programme: to improve legislative and other mechanisms for the protection of discriminated groups

The conclusions in this evaluation are based on interviews with CRD and Sida representatives, reading of annual reports and earlier evaluations, responses to questionnaires, interviews with partner organisations COHU, Youth Initiative for Human Rights, Kosovo Rehab Centre for Torture Victims and their boundary partners, external observers and other major donors.

3.2 Outcome and impact

According to respondents, CRD support has made significant contributions towards an increased level of professionalism in partner organisations, their improved respect and credibility in society and an increased number of supporters, members or volunteers. The capacity to work systematically and in a focused way has improved significantly. One partner is struggling to find its new strategic platform as an independent organisation, previously working as a branch. On the whole however, the increased capacity of partners has contributed to achievements in all three program areas.

The Rule of law program has seen achievements in terms of access to justice for women (property rights and domestic violence) and for the RAE community (right to citizenship/ registration, social services, housing and education). As a result of CRD support, partners have been able to provide legal services to thousands of individuals from these groups, prepare assessments and reports on existing problems in these areas and approach ministries and municipalities to demand improvements. This has led to some actions by authorities and a grant from the EU.

The watchdog organisations supported by CRD have managed to influence the conditions in correction and detention centres (noted by the EU progress report) and to put issues of governance, freedom of expression⁹⁹ and corruption on the public agenda. Published reports have been well researched and substantially covered by media. Although these watchdog partners are also funded by other donors (some 20–40% of budgets have been paid by CRD), the CRD contribution has been especially important in terms of the moral and political support provided. Quite a number of reports have led to government dissatisfaction and threats and CRD representatives have been able to demonstrate personal support at press conferences and via open letters.

Finally, the CRD support has led to documentation of war crimes in preparation of possible legal actions and/or restoring the dignity of victims. CRD has also been involved in supporting an NGO coalition with the aim of pressurising governments to establish an independent Regional Commission (RECOM), tasked with establishing facts about war crimes and other serious violations of human rights

⁹⁹ <http://ks.yihr.org/article/3/Youth-Initiative-report-on-governance-and-free-expression-in-Kosovo>

during the wars on the territory of former Yugoslavia. There are different views on the progress of this NGO coalition.

The Freedom of expression program has contributed to the existence of a single, professional self-regulatory body for the print media in Kosovo, which is operating according to European standards. The Kosovo Press Council has successfully adjudicated complaints against Kosovo print media, has amended the Statute and Code of Conduct and has started to issue press releases criticizing violations of the free press and media politicization. PCK has developed its internal organisational capacities and participates actively in regional networking. The impact on freedom of expression is however hard to estimate as the political interference is increasingly a problem. It is obvious that the situation would have been even worse without them. The PCK expects to gain further authority as a sectoral organization that deals with breaches of the professional code of conduct, introducing European standards within the media sector as a whole.

The Non-discrimination program has contributed to the successful, and reasonably transparent, appointment of an Ombudsman for Human Rights. This appointment was postponed for 3 years for political reasons. There is a Law on Non-discrimination (from 2005), but understanding and implementation is limited. The need for public awareness about the law is now addressed by two CRD partners, but with funding from other donors.

3.3 Relevance

CRD context and stakeholder analyses are comprehensive and to the point. The three focus areas chosen are extremely relevant to the issues at hand in Kosovo. In fact, despite the overwhelming number of NGOs in Kosovo, there is a shortage of organisations that are working on serious and committed monitoring of rule of law/ corruption, human rights and freedom of expression. There are however a number of organisations working on various aspects of non-discrimination and the challenge here is to coordinate efforts and develop dialogue with authorities. CRD is not supporting self-advocacy groups but rather works to ensure that mainstream HR advocates and media address issues of discrimination as part of their agenda. In Kosovo OPC is supporting the LGBT organisation (of men). The LGBT organisation (of women) is not interested in external attention (yet). It is however part of the KWN. Presently, the only openly lesbian official person in Kosovo is the director of the KWN (Kosovo women's network).

3.4 Effectiveness

CRD is seen as a highly credible and important support organisation. One informant said: *"Had there not been support from CRD and Open Society Institute there would not be an independent civil society in Kosovo"*. Apart from the financial support, it is the moral and political support that is seen as most helpful. By joint signing of reports, petitions and press releases and by participation in joint campaigns, CRD is contributing credibility and visibility to the initiatives. The international backing also provides protection for activists and assists to open doors to decision makers. Some partners also find the networking with other likeminded organisations in the region very helpful. Although happy with the past support, partners see the recent appointment of a field officer as an important improvement.

CRD could however improve its effectiveness in the following areas

- Have a closer dialogue and joint strategising with the Embassy, being more open to the eyes and ears of the Embassy in terms of HR monitoring and developments, helping the Embassy and adding value to bilateral efforts.
- Make a wider analysis of Kosovan civil society actors to find potential partners, in order to develop an even better program.

- Engage more in donor coordination (with Swedish FOs and others) and facilitate information and experience sharing between FO partners working with similar issues.
- Being more attentive to organisational development of needs of partners, especially in terms of internal democracy and resource mobilisation.

3.5 Cost efficiency

CRD has had an overhead cost of 21% during the period of review (around 1.1 MSEK per year for support to the program in Kosovo). Considering the high level of technical support to partners and the support to networking and joint actions, this seems reasonable. The support could not easily be carried out by any intermediary as it is not only about channelling and monitoring funding. It is about fighting together for civil and political rights, it is about quality technical support in areas such as human rights standards and freedom of expression and it is about international networks. CRD could however increase its usefulness to Sida by adopting a different approach to cooperation and by having a constant field presence.

3.6 Sustainability

The legal aid program will hopefully be part of a government funded scheme with time. There is already a law on free legal aid. CRD should cooperate with partners to pressure for these government schemes to be implemented so that the CRD support can focus on litigation and high level cases.

The financial sustainability of the Press Council could gradually be improved as membership fees and other income is growing. However, when it comes to HR defenders, watchdogs and monitors, partners of CRD will have difficulty to get funding and political support from other channels. The human rights situation in Kosovo is still weak and there is a great need to continue supporting these initiatives. Many donors are withdrawing and Sweden, USAID and the EU are the major remaining sources. The bulk of the EU's civil society support is directed towards citizen participation and inclusion of marginalised groups.

3.7 Conclusions

CRD has played an important role in the area of freedom of expression by contributing towards the functioning of a state level Press Council and by publicly supporting monitoring reports on Freedom of expression. Freedom of expression needs even more attention in the future and CRD should continue to develop its work in this area. CRD could coordinate more with other donors and seek new potential partners and strategic alliances, for example Article 19¹⁰⁰ and Reporters without borders etc.

CRD has contributed to access to justice for thousands of women and Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian individuals, leading to improvements in their living conditions. CRD has also played an important role as a political and financial supporter of human rights defenders in Kosovo. The support could however be further improved in terms of strategic selection of partners, coordination and sharing of experiences with other relevant local stakeholders and likeminded civil society donors (including the other FOs and their partners). CRD should engage more in facilitating the networking of local organizations in the field of human rights and freedom of expression.

4 Olof Palme International Centre (OPC)

4.1 Background and history

Olof Palme International Centre (OPC) is an umbrella organisation with 27 member organisations from the Swedish labour movement. OPC started to work in the Balkans during the war in the early 1990s and has continued to support partnership between Swedish and Balkan civil society ever since.

¹⁰⁰<http://www.article19.org/work/index.html>

OPC supports development in Kosovo with three different funding arrangements (CIVSAM, the political party funding and the Sida Europe funding). These programs supplement each other, but the synergies are somewhat hampered by the diverse objectives and funding conditions. This evaluation only covers the activities carried out with Sida Europe funds. These make up approximately 90% of the total OPC budget in Kosovo. One partner in Kosovo has received funding from both Sida funding sources. Unlike KtK and CRD, the Western Balkan program is not a large part of the total operations of OPC. OPC is not as dependent on Sida Europe funding as the other FOs.

In 2009, OPC supported 10 partners in Kosovo with a total annual budget of around 3.7 MSEK (average support was around 340 000 per partner). Four of the eleven are old partners from 2005 – or before, three came on board in 2007 and two are new from 2008. In Kosovo around 1.1 MSEK (23%) was spent on coordination, administration and networking. During the period under review the number of partners has been around 12–14 each year.

Two OPC partners have jointly targeted five municipalities (of 30) in the region of Prizren to achieve results on citizen participation at the local level. In addition, support has been provided to Peja NGOs, Mitrovica NGOs, LGBT NGOs, children's rights NGOs, youth NGOs, training NGOs and policy development NGOs. The methods used by OPC partners are mainly training in areas such as project planning and administration, advocacy, dialogue, negotiation and advocacy. The training is directed towards other civil society actors, community members, politicians and civil servants. Other methods used are forum theatre, focussed group discussions and score card grading of politician's activities.

The OPC country specific goals for Kosovo were:

- Citizens (including youth, women, Roma) influence the local political agenda.
- Local political representatives are accountable to citizens.
- Citizens are involved in public debate on political issues.
- Citizens and civil society organisations are involved in the process of EU integration.

The second objective does not appear in recent OPC annual reports – the reports only cover the other three.

Many other donors also focus on youth and citizen participation in communities, in particular the EU¹⁰¹, OSCE¹⁰² and USAID¹⁰³. OCSE even have municipal teams working in municipalities throughout Kosovo to promote public participation and increased transparency and accountability in municipalities. The OPC support is rather small in comparison with these large donor initiatives. There seem to be limited coordination between OPC and these other initiatives. The Forum Syd youth program is a new youth initiative supported by Sida which also seems to be carried out without linkages to these other youth initiatives, although they share offices with the FOs. The Forum Syd youth initiative is built on ideas and experiences from other countries in the Western Balkan (Proni program). This program is being evaluated later on in 2010.

The conclusions in this evaluation are based on interviews with OPC and Sida representatives, reading of annual reports and earlier evaluations, responses to questionnaires, interviews with partner organisations Centre for Social Group Development (LGBT), ATRC (Advocacy and Training Resource Centre), Syri Vizionit and their boundary partners, external observers and other major donors.

¹⁰¹<http://delprn.ec.europa.eu/?cid=2,102>

¹⁰²<http://www.osce.org/kosovo/29389.html>

¹⁰³<http://www.usaid.gov/kosovo/eng/activities.html>

4.2 Outcome and impact

The program in Prizren demonstrates results in terms of increased willingness by CSOs/ citizens and by politicians and civil servants to participate in joint meetings. Needs assessments carried out communities have influenced authorities to some extent as 30% of recommendations have been included in official long term plans (wish lists) and 5% in short term plans (definitely to be implemented). The number of consultations and transparency of regulations increased. The score card system (giving performance grades to politicians) has inspired a few politicians to visit their constituencies, including one mayor. The consolidated and consistent efforts in the district probably helped to achieve this.

The program in Peja demonstrates results in terms of an increased number of consultations between citizen groups and decision makers. Needs assessments and strategies have been developed in close cooperation with Roma and Serb communities in the area (as stipulated in Local Government legislation). Boundary partners confirmed their happiness to be invited to consultations for the first time. They also confirmed that the project (i.e. OPC) has funded some infrastructure improvements and some vocational training for women. However, the strategies do not address some of the main concerns of the concerned groups such as access to income generation (farming, jobs etc). None of the trained women have been able to get a job. It was also noted that the authorities have not adopted these strategies for minorities, nor provided any funding towards their implementation (except for some minor infrastructure arrangements). Presently the strategies are mainly used for external fund raising.

While the OPC program has produced many activities, trainings, discussions, forum theatres, needs assessments, manuals, reports etc. impact was generally difficult to trace. Local governments hardly ever committed resources to the implementation of plans and recommendations brought forward in consultations. Partners and boundary partners referred mainly to activities, events and printed materials when discussing results. Some even had difficulties to describe the objectives of their work in terms of desired changes. The following outcomes were however mentioned as a result of the OPC support:

- RAE community representatives were consulted for the first time.
- Political parties held democratic internal elections for the first time.
- The relationship between CSOs and local authorities improved in communities targeted.
- The strategic focus and technical skills of partner organisations improved.
- The respect of and support to civil society increased in local communities.
- The networking and cooperation between NGOs improved e.g. Coalition “Democracy in Action” to monitor elections.

Difficulties in assessing impact and outcome are partly due to the fact that OPC partners are working with different issues and methods in different places and there is not really a consolidated focus of the program. Also, other bigger donors are funding the same organisations and projects. With few exceptions OPC has worked with partners that are already established and well reputed. The OPC contribution is often a smaller share and therefore it is hard to attribute possible changes.

4.3 Relevance

The OPC context analysis is a good basis for programming, but it lacks a proper stakeholder analysis. The objectives set are highly relevant to the context and to the Sida strategy. OPC is one of few donors that target both civil society and government officials to build capacity and facilitate dialogue. This is highly needed as civil servants and politicians are rarely targeted by other donors who are trying to improve public participation, thus leaving the duty bearers with less capacity to carry out their obligations. However, the lack of coordination with other similar programs and the lack of focus on areas where OPC can add particular value as a Swedish value based, labour movement, is making the OPC intervention less relevant.

4.4 Effectiveness

Partners describe OPC as a flexible, reliable, and long term donor. They have difficulties to describe exactly what OPC is contributing apart from funding. The most common contributions mentioned are training, strategic planning, coaching on report writing, auditing assistance and networking. Compared to the other FOs, OPC is more like other donors, focusing its support on projects rather than on long term partnerships and strategic change processes. The OPC field officer has established very good relationships with partners and with the Sida office. The field officer provides contextual advice to Sida and logistic assistance to Swedish visitors who want to make field visits. This has been highly appreciated.

The procedures used to select new partners do not seem completely transparent and the selection criteria are not obvious. Considering the OPC objectives there could have been other possible and viable strategies and partnerships. Donor coordination has been limited and some partners are reporting to 10–15 donors. In such a situation there is risk of partners becoming donor project implementing machines with difficulties to maintain their own identity. There is also risks of double financing. OPC has not taken initiative to assist partners in this respect.

4.5 Cost efficiency

OPC has spent around 23 % of the budget, or 1.1 MSEK per year, on its role as framework organisation to Sida and supporter of the 11 partners. Although partners are not able to describe exactly what is the contribution or the added value of OPC, they confirm that OPC is their “best donor”, “always being flexible”, “understanding our issues” and “helping instead of criticising”. It should also be noted that the OPC field officer is playing an essential role for the development of relationships with partners, quality of project applications and reporting, support to partners in project management issues and facilitation of Sida’s work. OPC is very responsive to Sida requests for advice and assistance regarding local context issues.

There are however a few areas that need attention:

- OPC should look into the cost effectiveness of some of the partner outputs. The evaluators observed unnecessarily expensive printed materials which seemed to be more of promotion materials than needs assessments and strategic plans for consumption in local municipalities.
- To become more efficient OPC needs to concentrate more on a few core values and issues. OPC also needs to build its interventions on bigger ongoing processes and add components to these processes. OPC needs to move from project based support and engage with specific change processes.

4.6 Sustainability

The capacity building of partner organizations provided through trainings supported by OPC has increased individual and organisational capacity. This capacity is not lost even if individuals move on to political or government functions. OPC has seldom paid core costs or large portions of partner budgets (generally only 10–20 %) which means that partners will survive even if they lose the OPC contribution.

4.7 Conclusions

It has been difficult to determine the overall impact and outcome of OPC interventions. Projects are too diverse in type and issue they address and there are many other big initiatives in the area of democracy development, public participation and youth empowerment that are contributing to the observed changes. The strategies, partnerships and activities chosen in Kosovo could be more focussed and well motivated. Also, OPC procedures for selection of new partners are not completely transparent to observers. The effects of partner activities are possible to observe mainly in a few targeted local communities.

The unique added value of OPC is not as obvious as that of the other FOs. At the same time, OPC is seen as one of the best and most attentive donors and as a very helpful resource to Sida. The work with partners in Kosovo has given OPC experience and a good reputation. Presently OPC is applying for EU funding in partnership with one of its grantees.

OPC could improve effectiveness of its support by

- Defining and concentrating on its most important competencies and added value in relation to local partners and to Sida.
- Focussing on fewer key issues, linked to these key competencies, such as support to development of local community democracy. Diversifying its list of local partners within the selected focus area, to assure the greater impact.
- Improving its stakeholder analyses and strategically engaging with ongoing change processes.
- Cooperating more with other donors to help partners grow independent and efficient.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 The outcome of the investment

- An enhanced Swedish resource base on women's rights in conflict/post conflict situations and on human rights defenders.
- A stronger women's lobby and a national women's network.
- Improved conditions for women in selected municipalities.
- A more visible and enhanced human rights monitoring capacity.
- Improved protection of journalists and human rights defenders.
- Improved mechanisms for self regulation of printed media.
- Access to free legal aid or advice of thousands of marginalised and violated persons.
- Improved citizen participation in a few selected communities.

Only OPC has worked actively with the EU accession agenda.

5.2 Added value of FO involvement

The FOs did not only channel funding, to a varying degree they also added value in terms of

- Moral and political support to sensitive actions of local partners.
- Technical and professional support and capacity development.
- International and national networking.
- Sharing of human rights and gender equality values in practice.
- Flexibility and coaching in relation to Sida applications and reporting.
- Professional development of local partners in terms of planning, management and results based reporting.
- Protection of activists.
- Joint action.
- Providing neutral ground.

The fact that the FOs and local NGOs are working for the same human rights causes was instrumental to some of these added values. These are not only services that can be bought on a consultancy basis. The effectiveness and efficiency of the modality could however be improved quite a lot.

5.3 Recommendations

Being an active member of EU, Sweden should engage more in the effective use of EU funding to civil society in Kosovo and ensure that the support provided by Sweden is supplementary and achieves the intended result. The annual European Commission progress reports on Kosovo, as well as reports from other European good governance watchdog organizations on Kosovo, could serve as an important tool to set the annual benchmarks and planning guides.

Being one of the biggest supporters of civil society in Kosovo, Sweden could take initiative to donor coordination or be part of existing viable donor coordination mechanisms and joint strategising around support to various key areas such as civic participation, NGO sector development, gender equality and youth initiatives. Sweden could take active part in the TACSO advisory group.

Sweden should continue to use Swedish NGOs as intermediaries because

- It builds the Swedish resource base and commitment to the international human rights agenda.
- It can provide essential added values that cannot be bought from consultants.
- It can rely on the accountability of Swedish NGOs and their impartiality from local authorities.
- There are still no completely trusted local intermediaries, although some suggested the Kosovo Civil Society Foundation as a possibility.

These benefits will however only be worthwhile if Sida is more specific in what it wants to achieve and what it expects from the FOs in terms of added value and contributions. The processes and conditions for engagement of Swedish NGOs as intermediaries should be more transparent and streamlined at Sida. Sida could also invest in supporting the development of local independent, transparent and trusted structures for possible future direct funding to the NGO sector. Such structures or issue based networks are so far not available in Kosovo according to local interlocutors. The NGO sphere is still a small community where everybody is in a relationship.

The selection of and capacity building support to partners should take into consideration that many NGOs in Kosovo are more of hierarchical, one-person business and which is a major de-legitimising factor. It is important that the operations of FOs and their partners are examples of good practice before they implement activities on the ground.

There are other donors supporting gender equality and public participation, but few are supporting human rights monitoring and human rights defenders. If in need of prioritising, Sweden should primarily focus on supporting civil society in this area. Donor coordination should be a requirement.

List of People Met

1. Levend Bicaku – OPC
2. Kushtrim Kaloshi and project manager – ATRC
3. Lina Andeer and Hanna Sällström – Kvinna till Kvinna
4. Arber Nuhui – CSDG
5. Raba Gjoshi – YIHR
6. Ardita Metaj Dika – TACSO
7. Ramadan Ilazi – FOL
8. Feride Rushiti and three staff members – KRCT
9. Veton Mujaj, director and two project managers – Syri i Vizionit

10. Afrim Istrefaj – beneficiary of Syri i Vizionit project
11. Luan Hasanaj – boundary organization of ATRC
12. Igbale Rogova – KWN
13. Arsim Janova – deputy Minister of Justice
14. Mats Sundgren and Visare Gorani Gashi – SIDA
15. Rrezarta Jashari – British Embassy
16. Meli Osmani and three members – Legjenda
17. Ahmet Kryeziu and staff – Save the Children
18. Edis Agani – European Commission Liaison Office in Kosovo
19. Zehra Kacapor and local staff on Kosovo office – Forum Syd
20. Avni Zogjani and Lorik Bajrami – COHU
21. Sanije Grajcevc – Aureola
22. Zahrije Podrimqaku – boundary organization of Aureola
23. Mentor Burofci – boundary organization of COHU

Annex 6 – Country Report Macedonia

By Marija Nashokovska and Jim Newkirk

This report comprises one of the five country reports which together make up the detailed commentary from the Evaluation of Sida's Support to the Western Balkans 2005–2009. The report describes the situation in Macedonia at the beginning of the period in question, changes of importance during the five years and the situation currently, including comments and reflections from civil society and other actors on the situation at the time of the evaluation, in June 2010. The report then discusses the approach and work of each of the framework organisations who have been responsible for providing Sida's civil society support during the period. This discussion follows 5 key development assistance criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The report then looks at the delivery modality for Sida's assistance in Macedonia – the approach of using three, Swedish NGOs as implementing partners to determine program priorities (within the Sida strategic framework) and to determine grant recipients and processes – and comments on the efficacy of the approach. The three NGOs are the Olaf Palme International Centre, Civil Rights Defenders and Kvinna till Kvinna.

The field work of the evaluation included five days of interviews and focus group discussions with representatives of framework organisations, representatives of the cooperation partners of framework organisations, representatives of boundary partners (people/ organisations with a direct or indirect relationship to funded organisations/ projects) and external experts/ observers. The complete list of interviewees is found at the end of the report. The report is to be treated as one of five country inputs to the overall report. Conclusions can be drawn mainly on the overall level as the country sample was very limited and not completely representative of the FO intervention in BiH. The conclusions and recommendations in the country report are to be seen as points for further investigation.

Sida is withdrawing its support from Macedonia, effective at the end of 2011. As part of this withdrawal, the support to civil society through the framework organisations has also been phased out. As a result, no framework organisation has an office or representative in Macedonia (the evaluation team met with the CRD representative from Kosovo who is responsible for Macedonia projects and with a representative of Kvinna till Kvinna who was in Macedonia but is now in Albania. No representative from Olaf Palme was interviewed, and as the Olaf Palme program was completed in 2006, emphasis was given in the field work to CRD and Kvinna till Kvinna projects and activities, an emphasis which is reflected in the analysis narrative.

1. Context Analysis

1.1 Governance and democracy

In 2004 the situation was described by OPC, in its funding application to Sida, as having been focused on “Governmental coalition building including Albanian political parties and dialogues for the concerns of ethnic groups”, but that the agreement on the decentralisation of the government had shifted the issue, with tensions increasing within Macedonian political parties. The tensions caused the delay of planned elections in November 2004. “Underlying conflicts are however found in the increasing gap between the two large ethnic groups of Macedonians and Albanians. There is a deep distrust between the groups.”¹⁰⁴

Since that time, the effectiveness and fairness of election processes has been patchy. On the negative side, elections continue to demonstrate organised violence, intimidation and stuffing of ballot boxes, including in the 2008 election. According to Freedom House, Macedonia is considered as partly free in terms of civil and political rights, with a rating of 3,0 in 2009¹⁰⁵ (the same as in 2008). “The law was enforced selectively, and the authorities failed to prevent violence and intimidation. The authorities have launched investigations against the perpetrators of the incidents and irregularities. To date, these have led to 34 court cases. The president of the Supreme Court has instructed the courts to give priority to these cases.”¹⁰⁶ The following year’s EU progress report notes that “progress was made in prosecuting the perpetrators of the irregularities in the 2008 parliamentary elections. Following the instruction from the President of the Supreme Court to give priority to these cases, a total of 29 perpetrators have been sentenced to prison terms by the courts.”¹⁰⁷

The OSCE/ ODIHR and Council of Europe observation missions concluded that the elections “...met most OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections.” The elections were administered by a three tiered administration comprising the State Election Commission (SEC) the Municipal Elections Commissions (MECs) and the Election Boards at local level. Overall, these bodies responded well to the challenge of organizing these complex elections.”¹⁰⁸ During the 2009 elections, the “media, as a whole, generally complied with the guidelines and regulations issued by the Broadcasting Council and allowed voters to make an informed choice. Nonetheless, some media did not provide equal access to all political parties and extensive coverage of government projects during the campaign period amplified the advantage of the incumbent parties.”¹⁰⁹

“In terms of civil society an improvement was seen in NGOs impact on government policies and decision-making processes. On the other hand we assess that the political pressure seems to have increased in the country, making the media and the NGOs less prone to criticise the government.”¹¹⁰ It was confirmed that the Law on Citizens’ Associations and Foundations and the Law on Volunteering, as well as the volunteering strategy are enabling factors for civil society, unlike the Law on Lobbying, which is impeding civil society due to provisions that prevent NGOs not registered for lobbying to engage in lobbying activities. There are concerns in relationship to governance that with EU funding going through the Government, you must be “good” with the Government or you will not see funding, and this is an issue which is deemed to be less significant than corruption. There are issues at the moment with establishing proper mechanisms for implementation of the Free Legal Aid Law; continuation of the decen-

¹⁰⁴ OPC – Democracy And Human Rights Projects In The Western Balkans 2004

¹⁰⁵ The rating is based on a scale where the averages are calculated in the following manner: 1.0 to 2.5 is considered as Free, 3.0 to 5.0 as Partly Free, and 5.5 to 7.0 Not Free.

¹⁰⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press_corner/key_documents/reports_nov_2008/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia_progress_report_en.pdf

¹⁰⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/mk_rapport_2009_en.pdf

¹⁰⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/mk_rapport_2009_en.pdf

¹⁰⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/mk_rapport_2009_en.pdf

¹¹⁰ CRD – Macedonia 2010 Update of the Plan of Action for Macedonia 2010

tralisation processes including strengthening of Municipal administrative processes; further work on the implementation of the law on the civil service and the fragmented nature of the legal system which affects a number of areas of Macedonian life, but is particularly noticeable in implementation of the anti-corruption systems and measures.

The view expressed strongly and repeatedly during evaluation field work in mid-2010 is that the political situation is very fragile, with strong political interference in all aspects of society. Civil society representatives interviewed have all lost confidence in the direction and approach of Government, and were of the opinion that there could not be a worse time for international donors to be withdrawing their support to civil society in Macedonia, as the current Government is manipulating political processes in general and civil society in particular to its own ends. People and organisations interviewed were dismayed at Sida's decision to end support to Macedonia, and it is likely that some aspects of the work of civil society in Macedonia will be quite negatively affected by this decision.

1.2 Gender equality

In 2004 the situation was marked by the ongoing debate on decentralisation, which had increased the tension between the Macedonian and Albanian populations. This increase in tension made "it more difficult for women's organisations to meet with groups of other ethnicity. Many women's organisations witness that it has become problematic to realize election campaigns and come across with their perspectives and priorities. However, the groups pursue in emphasising gender aspects despite the political focus on ethnical aspects."¹¹¹

"The sector in which the impact of civil society is most visible is in the work of women's NGOs. There are several strong organisations involved in women's education working to get more women involved in politics, to improve awareness of feminism, women in religion and to improve gender equality in the country. The women's movement in Macedonia has also shown its strength in cooperating over the borders through the Women's Lobby network."¹¹²

Since then, the introduction of the law percentage quota has so far been respected and resulted in an increase in the representation of women both in local councils and in Parliament. The practice of family voting instructions in the Albanian community continues to undermine the right of women to vote freely. Attempts are being made to deal with the problem of domestic violence. A national body was set up to coordinate implementation of the national strategy against domestic violence (2008/2011). Implementation of the strategy has started, but some ministries show little interest in it. Progress was made towards coordinating the fight against human trafficking better at national level. Coordination remains weak at local level."¹¹³ "Little has been done to address women's rights in rural areas. Insufficient attention is paid to women's health, discrimination in the workplace and sexual harassment. Roma women and girls still suffer from both racial and gender discrimination."¹¹⁴

Key needs at the moment are in relation to capacity building, knowledge of and relationships with the EU, improvements in cooperation between organisations and developing programs of peace and inter-ethnic relationship building.

1.3 Human Rights

In 2004 many citizens of Macedonia found the judicial system inaccessible and complex, meaning that while the law provides for free legal representation, this reality did not apply to everyone. This was exacerbated by the prevalence of corruption in the system. "The tension between different ethnic groups, particularly the Macedonian Slav majority and the ethnic Albanian minority, remains high in

¹¹¹ KtK Annual Request 2005

¹¹² OPC – Democracy And Human Rights Projects In The Western Balkans 2004

¹¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/mk_rapport_2009_en.pdf

¹¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/mk_rapport_2009_en.pdf

Macedonia. The smaller ethnic groups, for example Roma, are easily forgotten in the ethnic conflict and therefore ends up in an even worse situation, politically, economically, legal and socially.”¹¹⁵

Since then the “high level of corruption in the political and judicial systems in Macedonia has an adverse effect on the respect for human rights and rule of law.”¹¹⁶ “International as well as civil society actors have the last few years been reporting on an increasing conservatism and significant political interference and control in what the civil society is doing to improve human rights for all citizens.”¹¹⁷

“The level of professionalism in journalism as well as on the management side of media is still very low in Macedonia. A feature of Macedonian media that is adding to the low degree of professionalism is that media in general are sharply linked to political interests and divided along ethnic lines. The media legislation, and related legislation, such as access to information and defamation laws, does not meet international standards.”¹¹⁸

The major issues at the moment are monitoring government actions in relation to human rights; provision of stronger leadership on the part of the inter-ministerial council on human rights; training of public servants; development of anti-discrimination policy; development of a law on anti-discrimination; development of legal mechanisms to address discrimination in all its forms. The Law on Anti-Discrimination has been passed. There is a somewhat divided opinion about the relevance and effectiveness of civil society in the development of the law. While all agree that the law was pushed by civil society, there is not total agreement as to the impact civil society had on the detail of the law itself.

1.4 Civil society role and capacity

“One of the characteristics of the FYR Macedonia NGO sector (in 2004) is that many NGOs have been organised on ethnic principles, to address the different needs of people of various ethnic and religious identities. Although many NGOs cooperated together in extending assistance to those in need, many were not able to transcend ethnic lines and were primarily active in assisting their respective ethnic communities.

Since then, “International as well as civil society actors have the last few years been reporting on an increasing conservatism and significant political interference and control in what the civil society is doing to improve human rights for all citizens. Many human rights organisations also give testimony to the interference of the Government, which in different ways tries to control what they are doing, e.g making unannounced visits, obstructing implementation of activities etc. Few dare today openly criticise the Government or governmental institutions for fear of retribution, and women organisations that strive to change attitudes and opinions run a greater risk of being disregarded for the minimum state support that is being developed for civil society actors.”¹¹⁹

“The role of international development agencies in supporting the creation and capacity development of local NGOs has been and remains critical.”¹²⁰ This comment remains extremely relevant in the current situation, however the reality is that the international donor community is withdrawing its support to Macedonia – “European donor countries in particular have scaled down their commitment to the country and some have left, or very soon will do so.”¹²¹ There is a consistent view in the NGO community that the EU itself has lost confidence in Macedonia’s ability and desire to accede to the Union, and

¹¹⁵ CRD – Three-Year Plan Of Action For The Western Balkans 2004–2006

¹¹⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press_corner/key-documents/reports_nov_2008/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia_progress_report_en.pdf

¹¹⁷ Kvinna till Kvinna Application for Additional Funds Macedonia 2010–2011

¹¹⁸ CRD – Three-Year Plan Of Action For The Western Balkans 2004–2006

¹¹⁹ OPC – Democracy And Human Rights Projects In The Western Balkans 2004

¹²⁰ OPC – Democracy And Human Rights Projects In The Western Balkans 2004

¹²¹ Needs Assessment Report – TACSO, SIPU International Sweden, 8 January 2010

that consequently are no longer focused on the need for support to and development of a vibrant civil society.

In 2004, Sida Framework Organisations in Macedonia reported that “Implementation of the Government’s strategy and action plan for cooperation with civil society organisations is progressing. The transparency of the criteria for allocating grants from the state budget to NGOs has improved through the public announcement of the call for proposals, the selection criteria and the results.”¹²² The current situation is much less positive, with significant anxiety among civil society actors and external observers¹²³ that government transparency is deteriorating while at the same time government is making use of civil society organizations to distribute material supportive to government, ostensibly as balanced reporting from the NGO sector. This politicisation of the sector, coupled with the proliferation of NGOs (somewhere between 6000 and 9000 current exist, with 10 of every 11 in Skopje), has led to the sector being described as Gongos, Phangos and Mangos (Government NGOs, Phantom NGOs and Mafia NGOs). There is deep concern in Macedonian civil society about the future of the country and the future of the sector.

TACSO comments on mechanisms for civil society – Government cooperation, describing the abilities of the Government’s Unit for Cooperation with NGOs as “limited” and that there is “little evidence” that the Unit is carrying out any coordination.¹²⁴ Of equal interest is the Government’s IPA programming document which does not mention the Unit – focusing instead on the General Secretariat.¹²⁵ It is difficult even to meet and have discussions with the Unit, as all requests for meetings are directed to the General Secretariat. With relation to the Government’s Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with Civil Society 2007–2011 (prepared with EAR funding), TACSO refers to it as “ambitious” and implementation as “patchy”. There are 150 “umbrella” organisations in Macedonia, only exacerbating the difficulties of coordination.

Major issues at the moment include the politicisation of the civil society sector and the exit of donor funding, putting at risk independent, internationally-supported efforts in civil society development, human rights and gender equality. One framework organisation partner (not dependent on Sida funds) commented “They have had a good program, funding good organisations, generated a high level of professionalism and now they walk away, and the organisations will just close their doors and have no more impact.” Another commented “Why is it the fashion for international money to leave? The NGO sector in Macedonia is in crisis – deep crisis – but everyone is leaving. Why?”

1.5 Sida priority areas according to strategy

Sweden’s current development strategy related to Macedonia expires in 2010, and has had three components:

- Agriculture and economic growth – aimed at promoting sustainable economic development and a sustainable restructuring of the agricultural sector in accordance with EU requirements.
- Human rights and social cohesion - with a focus on the promotion of fair and non-discriminatory social development with emphasis on gender equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, participation in public life and the strengthening of civil society.
- Sustainable Development - intending to contribute to environmentally sustainable development and integration with European structures.

¹²² OPC – Democracy And Human Rights Projects In The Western Balkans 2004

¹²³ Needs Assessment Report – TACSO, SIPU International Sweden, 8 January 2010

¹²⁴ Needs Assessment Report – TACSO, SIPU International Sweden, 8 January 2010

¹²⁵ PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT 2010 COMPONENT 1 Transition Assistance and Institution Building

The Swedish support to the human rights/democracy sector, the area of this evaluation, has four, key areas:

- promoting equality between women and men, girls and boys.
- enhancing the capacity of public institutions to ensure compliance with human rights.
- supporting the participation of deprived groups in the development of public life (Roma Inter ethnic tolerance).
- helping to strengthen civil society.¹²⁶

2. Kvinna till Kvinna

2.1 Background and History

The mandate of Kvinna till Kvinna is:

- To carry out projects in areas of war and conflict which promote women's self-reliance and self-esteem, and women's psychosocial and/or physical health, or which contribute to promoting women's participation in the development of a democratic civilian society.
- To promote studies and research concerning the effects of war and armed conflicts for women.
- To publicize facts and information concerning the effects of war, and to raise public opinion in favour of the peaceful solution of conflicts using non-military methods.

Kvinna till Kvinna (KtK) has worked since 1993 in the Balkans, and in Macedonia since 1999, largely because it sees change as a long-term and demanding process. During this period, while the focus and mandate of the organisation has not changed, its partners (and their focus) have. Today's focus is on improving legislation and institution-building, all from the perspective of "strengthening the representation and involvement of women in all spheres of society"¹²⁷. Partner organisations have continued to grow and develop, and KtK has undertaken to respond to these changes and developments in ways which assist their partners to continue to address necessary change in their societies.

In this context priority areas for KtK in Macedonia were described in KtK's *Program Proposals for the Balkans for 2008–2011* as:

- Support to Women's participation in the decision making processes in Macedonia.
- Support to combating violence against women and women's health.
- Support Women's education (i.e. both general gender awareness in rural areas, and feminist studies on university level).
- Support to Roma women's initiatives, specifically on Roma women's participation in decision making.
- Women in peace processes.

KtK approaches its work from the perspective of the two-way development of trust and understanding between the organisation's field staff and partner organisations. KtK insists on international (Swedish) staff as field representatives, to ensure the neutrality of their approach. They emphasise a deep understanding of the country in which they work, as well as the region, particularly in terms of the conditions

¹²⁶ Sida – Strategy for development cooperation with Macedonia, January 2006 – December 2010

¹²⁷ Kvinna till Kvinna Annual Request to Sida 2007.

of women. The KtK approach is long-term, and they fund partner organisations not just for a number of years but also with core funding, allowing the partners not just the ability to grow and strengthen without constant funding issues, but also to allow partners to emphasise their own agendas. Further, networking, both nationally and regionally is a particular focus of KtK's approach to its development work, as networking is seen as "an important method for sharing experiences, increasing the impact of advocacy and lobbying, and making people meet across borders of ethnicity or nationality."¹²⁸

In Macedonia, the KtK *external* program strategy, i.e. its focus in society during the time under review, has been on the participation of women in the decision-making process, violence against women, women's health and women's education (both general gender awareness in rural areas, and feminist studies at university level). Its program strategy *with partner organisations* has been its phase-out strategy, organisational capacity building (specifically on strategic planning, advocacy and RBM), improving organisational knowledge of and connections with the EU, and networking, nationally and regionally.

KtK's current partners are as follows:

Name of partner organisation	Number of staff	Type of Project
AUREOLA – Struga	4	Women's education in rural areas.
Prestiz – Bitola	3	Participation of women in the decision-making.
LIL – Skopje	3	Participation of Roma women in the decision-making.
Women's Organization Sveti Nikole	1	Women's health.
Women Centre – "Women for the 21st Century" – Kumanovo	0	Participation of women in the decision-making.
Shelter Centre – Skopje	9	Violence against women.

2.2 Outcome (impact)

The work of KtK can be said to have impacted on Macedonia. The areas of change particularly notable in the work of the organisation, directly related to KtK's 2008–2011 strategic focus are:

- Support Women's education (i.e. both general gender awareness in rural areas, and feminist studies on university level).

It is notable in the women's organisations covered in the evaluation that there is both a breadth and depth of leadership capacity. Focus group discussions were each held with seven members, all of whom participated extensively and with quality inputs. The interviewees tended not to be young, but there was a young presence as well. Boundary partners demonstrated a like profile – reasonable-sized groups of well spoken and outspoken women of varied ages and backgrounds. As well as the demographics and presentation of interviewees, the content of the sessions was strongly supportive of the collegial and long-term approach taken by Kvinna, and the positive impact the approach had on organisational capacity and sustainability. Three types of capacity-building were mentioned in interviews: project management, gender activism, political involvement, with further emphasis in responses to questionnaires on fundraising, confidence, strategic thinking and human resource development.

Interviewees responded consistently that they set agendas and Kvinna supported them in achieving their desired results.

- Significant work in support to Women's participation in the decision making processes in Macedonia – both political parties and structures of local self government.

¹²⁸ Kvinna til Kvinna Annual Request to Sida 2007.

The evaluation team had a number of conversations with women involved in political parties and local government who had been supported by Kvinna partners. It was noted in these conversations that the contributions of the partners included training, networking (“it is important that as women in politics we support women in politics – it is not important what party we are in.”) Two separate partner organisations focused on the involvement of women in local decision-making and each has achieved visible, not-insignificant change. It is early in the process however, and time will be required to be certain the change has been sustained.

- Support to combating violence against women and women’s health.

One strategic focus was on women’s health. The whole range of organisation’s and individuals interviewed pointed to amendments to the Law on Health Protection and Health Insurance as an example of change as a result of Kvinna’s program. The amendment ensures that each woman in Macedonia can have one PAP test annually free of charge.

It is also worthwhile to comment on the wider priority of KtK in relation to networking, to providing assistance and support to the development of networks – local and national – of women’s groups and others. As a result of this regional/ international priority, the first, non-ethnic women’s network in Macedonia was formed, around the project *Doing Things Together*. The project focused on activities across ethnic groups, particularly how to address problems together. There were issues of capacity early on, but with time, and through the development processes of Kvinna, better skills exist in gender activism, political involvement and project management. Partners emphasised the networking component, with specific reference made in Kumanovo to Kvinna’s role in working with a network that existed previously and working to strengthen the network, locally and nationally.

Against the three key criteria of the evaluation, sustainable impact has been achieved to a certain extent.

Mobilise trust, support and resources

The working relationship between partner organisations and Municipalities, local health authorities, other women’s groups and national networks has improved and been strengthened. There are a number of examples of this, including the participation of partners in Municipal organisations such as Women of the 21st Century’s participation in the Ethnic Tolerance Group and the Municipal Government of Kumanovo giving them the “November Award”, its highest honour. There are numerous examples of local coordination and cooperation between partner organisations and Municipalities and Ministries. Partners have significantly higher levels of visibility locally, and significantly higher levels of support and involvement in local (and national) activities and initiatives.

Build alliances

Alliances which were pointed to in the field interviews included national women’s networks but also, for example, the work done together with local health authorities on a proactive approach to early detection of breast and cervical cancer. An alliance being supported is the group of women politicians, who see themselves as an alliance, irrespective of political party. Partner organisations support these groups.

Interact with and influence authorities

As a result of the work of Kvinna and its partners, amendments have been made to national health legislation related to women’s health. As well, the Ministry of Health now takes a more proactive role in scheduling of visits for cervical cancer screening, rather than waiting for potential clients to present for a check-up. Partner organisations played a role in advocating for the introduction of the Law on Equal Opportunities and the Family Law. There is a much higher level of participation of women in local political structures, and it is noted that in Kumanovo and Sveti Nikole this increase has been particularly and consistently supported by Kvinna and its local partners. The participation appears to be substantive.

2.3 Relevance

KtK has maintained a strong link to grassroots women's organisations as well as within national networks, and with these contacts and links has been able to develop a well-structured understanding of issues and priorities for women in Macedonia. Their response, the focus on participation of women in the decision-making processes, violence against women, women's health and women's education was deemed appropriate by partners and external observers. Kvinna's approach is long-term, with a focus on organisational development for their partners, which means that they must also take a longer term view of the external focus of the organisations with whom they work. During the period under review they have made adjustments to focus, but they were not extensive.

The selection of partner organisations is deemed relevant and appropriate. There is a focus on rural women's organisations, multi-ethnic and national networks and organisations with a desire to produce change, particularly in political contexts.

Kvinna's work responds directly to Sida's Macedonian priorities, with an emphasis on promoting equality between women and men, working with public institutions on human rights issues, supporting women to participate in developing public life and strengthening civil society.

2.4 Effectiveness

KtK is effective in its work, particularly in relation to the organisation's intent to increase the participation of women in the decision-making process and women's health as well as in developing the organisational capacity and knowledge of partner organisations.

The evaluators have had extensive conversations regarding Kvinna's processes of influence with partners. Kvinna's work is undoubtedly effective with their partners, but must be questioned in terms of the length of engagement with a given partner, the (related) relatively small number of partners over time and the potential for "clientalism" because of the relationship process. On the positive side, the approach taken by Kvinna with its partners – long-term relationship growth, trust development, "partner not donor" – has clearly delivered quality results with the organisations visited and with their boundary partners. It must be asked however if such development requires a 10 year commitment (Women's Organisation Sveti Nikole and Women's Centre – Women of the 21st Century), particularly where at the end of this 10 years, 100% of the organisation's budget (Women's Centre – Women of the 21st Century) still comes from Kvinna's Sida funds.

While it will always be difficult to find the right balance, it is the view of the evaluation team that Kvinna's approach would benefit from stricter guidelines for deliverables within a given timeframe, particularly in terms of establishing a program for beginning and ending focused relationships with given organisations. The organisational development process with partners would benefit from a more closely defined process and from a phase-out approach (from inception), that works on independence in all senses, including financial.

Partner organisations noted a particular increase in capacity in the areas of focus, strategy, staff competence and leadership.

While Kvinna's work addresses gender equality, it does not work at all levels of society in addressing gender equality issues. In future programs focused on gender issues, women's human rights and gender equality, where KtK is selected as an implementing partner, Sida should also select a second organisation to address issues such as gender equality within government structures, an area where Kvinna does not work.

2.5 Cost efficiency

The program is relatively expensive compared to the experience and seniority of staff, and there has been a relatively high level of turnover of Kvinna's program officers. Partners are not always sure of

who their Kvinna representative is, and also commented on language issues appearing from time to time. The view of the evaluation team is that the issues of program effectiveness would be better handled by project officers with more experience, and a better appreciation of strategic approaches. A more senior staff would be more able to inspire behind-the-scenes leadership, encouraging, prodding and inspiring partners in the development of their own strategic directions.

The development of strategic thinking, and a more strategic focus on program delivery would improve not just overall effectiveness but also the cost efficiency of delivery. There appears to be a gap between Kvinna's country strategy, which is both clear and appropriate, and the nature of its program delivery at the partner level, which appears to focus almost solely on developing trust and relationships to the exclusion of a more programmed, strategic and focused delivery. As a result, and without a clear set of outputs and outcomes in the development process, it is possible for these processes to wander, and to take time and energy best directed elsewhere. This gap can be closed with a more detailed/ structured approach to the development of partner organisations, with more experienced program staff and with a clearer link between country strategy and program delivery mechanisms locally, all of which would have a positive impact on cost efficiency.

These comments are made in reflection on the overall effectiveness and impact of Kvinna's approach, with the intent of pointing out directions that can have a positive influence on overall impact.

2.6 Sustainability

Sustainability of KtK's work has been achieved to a certain extent. From the perspective of partner organisations, it is unclear which will continue to flourish, or even survive, in the current political climate. According to the returned questionnaires, Kvinna's partner organisations get little financial support from Macedonian sources. While some financial independence is commented on regarding Kvinna's partners (and CSOs in general), the more prevalent view is that without international donor funding most non-political NGOs cannot survive. On the one hand, partners talk about capacity, independence and the future, but all then talk about the difficult times they expect without a consistent source of funds. Both organisations/ networks interviewed in the field existed prior to Kvinna involvement, and it is likely they will continue to exist after Sida funding ends, although it is not clear in what form or capacity. On the other hand, the comment was heard that Sida's framework organisations have left behind *capacity* – the Women's Centre in Sveti Nikole was a specific example given for this.

The following table summarises KtK partner responses to the evaluation questionnaire on budget contributions from KtK.

Name of partner organisation	% of budget covered by FO	Increase or decrease	% of core admin covered by FO	Increase or decrease
AUREOLA – Struga	/	/	/	/
Prestiz – Bitola	100% (only project at the moment)	Increased	100%	Increased
LIL – Skopje	30%	increased	20%	Same as previously
Women's Organization Sveti Nikole	41%	Decreased	15%	Decreased
Women Centre – "Women for the 21st Century" – Kumanovo	100%	increased	100%	Increased
Shelter Centre – Skopje	45%	decreased	10%	Decreased

3. Civil Rights Defenders

3.1 Background and History

In 2004 Civil Rights Defenders (CRD – then the Swedish Helsinki Committee) increased its presence in the Balkans, including an office in Skopje (with 1.5 funded positions). As well as increasing its field presence it undertook to improve project management capacity, particularly in terms of results-based management. The program in Macedonia reported to a regional program director stationed in Stockholm.

According to their 2004 strategy statement, the “Swedish Helsinki Committee for Human Rights (SHC) is a non-governmental human rights organization without political and religious affiliations. The purpose of SHC is to increase the respect of human rights and freedoms in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ICCPR of 1966 and the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, as well as to contribute to a democratic development in all Helsinki signatory states (the current OSCE-area).

The SHC monitors and advocates the compliance of human rights, and cooperates with local organizations sharing the view that respect for human rights is a precondition for building of democracy.”¹²⁹

CRD’s key areas of concern in the Balkans, and in Macedonia, are access to justice, freedom of expression and discrimination.

CRD’s strategic approach is to direct attention to their own areas of concern while operating within the Sida 2006–2010 Strategy for Development Cooperation with Macedonia, which identified human rights and social cohesion as priority areas. The CRD focus, specifically as described in its 2008–2011 strategy document, was on its three areas of priority:

Rule of Law Component – Objectives

- To increase peoples’ access to free and easy access to the laws, including Macedonian and European case law.
- Enhance people’s access to justice in Macedonia through provision of legal assistance and support the drafting and/or lobbying for adoption of a Free Legal Aid Law.
- To improve the accountability and compliance of duty-holders and enhancing recognition of rule of law, through general human rights monitoring.

Freedom of Expression Component – Objectives

- Enhance people’s access to diverse and balanced information by improving professionalism in journalism and the flow of independent news
- To enable a higher level of professionalism among the media through advocating for a proper implementation of the new Broadcasting Law.
- Non-discrimination Component – Objectives
- Reduce the number of Roma individuals “de facto” stateless or without personal documentation, hence improving their social, economic and civil rights
- Ensure the existence of a professional LGBT organisation and put the issue of LGBTQ on the agenda of the political parties

¹²⁹Strategy for the Swedish Helsinki Committee For Human Rights, SHC 2004–2006

Focus was on initiatives aimed at enhancing “compliance with human rights, supporting the participation of deprived groups in the development of public life and helping to strengthen civil society.”¹³⁰ Practically this means a focus on development of critical human rights legislation (specifically the Law on Free Legal Aid and the Law on Protection Against Discrimination), availability of laws to ensure access of information to the public, provision of free legal aid, monitoring of the courts, police, jails and institutions, on behalf of all citizens but with particular concern for vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities.

Name of partner organisation	Number of staff	Type of Project
Coalition All for Fair Trials	6	Monitoring of the court cases
Forum for Roma Rights ARKA	12	Free legal aid and ID documents for Roma
Macedonian Helsinki Committee	9	Free legal aid
Macedonian Young Lawyers Association	5	Legislation development
Macedonian Institute for Media	8 + 14 School of Journalism	Journalism professionalism
Citizen Association MOST	15	Access to legislation
Media Development Centre	Skopje	Monitoring of the Broadcasting law and Media Policies

3.2 Outcome (impact)

Rule of Law

The activities of CRD and its partners have had on-going and not-insignificant impact in the area of the rule of law. In order to best understand the work of CRD and its partners, the evaluation team visited the Macedonian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights (MHC), the Kumanovo-based Roma Rights Forum ARKA and MOST. MHC “observes and informs, on the respect for human rights” and MOST “contributes to developing a more democratic, more stable and prosperous Macedonia through citizen involvement in activities that secure transparency, openness and governmental responsibility”, and ARKA “develops and implements quality programs for the promotion, protection and improvement of human rights and multi-ethnic cooperation and the development of a civil society by providing free legal help, monitoring, education and research”.

MHC plays a critical role as an independent monitor/ watchdog of the judiciary, police, courts and institutions for the mentally ill. One external observer commented to the evaluation team that “civil society in Macedonia is a big business now, driven not by activism but by survival”, and then pointed to a group described as “the other side – the good side” and listed MHC first in this list. It was reported that it is the strict independence and principle of MHC that gives them the strength and credibility to have impact. One story involved a policeman at the central police station sending a man to MHC on release. The man wanted to make a complaint against the police and the police had no problem directing him to MHC.

MOST ensures the availability, free of cost, of all important legislation and decisions of the Macedonian government. Currently some 27,000 people/ organisations make regular use of the portal, and there does not exist capacity elsewhere in Macedonia to manage and maintain the database. People, organisations and institutions have complete, free access to the main legislative and administrative decisions of the Government. MOST also is responsible for monitoring elections in Macedonia. Not a current CRD program, having been phased-out in 2008, MOST is part of the European Network of Election Monitoring Organisations and for this year supplies the Secretary General to the organisation.

¹³⁰CRD Three-year Plan of Action for the Western Balkans 2004–2006

Anti-discrimination

ARKA's impact has been in assisting a large number of citizens to get personal documentation, documentation which allows them to travel, to communicate more readily with authorities and to access Government services otherwise unavailable to them. Since 1999, in north-east Macedonia, ARKA has assisted more than 7000 people to get citizenships, birth certificates, IDs and passports. Of these, 900 were Roma and the balance while mostly Albanian were from a wide range of ethnic groups. As well, since becoming a partner with CRD in 2006, they have assisted more than 7000 cases, with on average two documents per case, for people in Kumanovo and Skopje. A key to ARKA's impact has been their Advisory Board, which is comprised of representatives of all institutions relevant to personal documentation. The Advisory Board meets monthly and comments on difficult cases, proposing solutions and reaching joint agreements about how each will be addressed. Significantly, ARKA has now established an Advisory Board, using the same principles, for its separately funded Police Torture Project, establishing a new system of relationships with authorities in this area of concern.

Against the three key criteria of the evaluation, sustainable impact has been achieved to a certain extent.

Mobilise trust, support and resources

According to one external observer, "the key to the framework organisation approach, to make it work better, is transparency and cooperation/ coordination". The fact they are recognised as having no bias has given MHC a certain authority in its dealings with the judiciary, institutions and police. Their relationship with the police is an interesting case in point, as they both train and criticise them, in a constructive relationship. Former police have now sought the support of MHC for their particular cases. The free legal aid program has also increased the trust citizens have in the organisation, as they provide objective opinions at no cost. ARKA is approached not just by the Roma community but by anyone who is in need of assistance with documentation, and they provide that help without exception. They have also provided advice and technical assistance to other organisations (such as UNHCR) working on documentation issues in Macedonia. ARKA representatives commented that "we weren't always in line with public opinion, but recently, during a case of police torture of a Roma person in Kumanovo, public opinion was definitely with us."

Build alliances

The relationship between MHC and the Ombudsman is an effective alliance for change – where mutual support (concrete and specific as well as of a more general nature) is provided. Information is shared and assistance provided in addressing the specific cases which appear. MHC and MASSO, a CRD-supported LGBT organisation, formed an effective alliance related to non-discrimination principles and the Law on Non-discrimination. Indeed there was a significant amount of cooperation and alliance-building by human rights NGOs related to the Law.

ARKA works closely with the Coalition All for Fair Trials (a CRD-funded organisation).

Interact with and influence authorities

The ARKA Advisory Board exemplifies positive, creative interaction with and influence of authorities. Instead of operating in an adversarial manner, representatives of the Roma community sit in a formal meeting, in a constructive atmosphere and look at the specific details of specific issues. Dealing with basic human rights, such as documentation ("no documents, no life"), in such an objective way allows appropriate decisions to be made.

Before publicising any given case, MHC always addresses the relevant public institution about the case for their opinion. This conservative approach to authorities has improved their relationship with and influence on these authorities. According to MHC, authorities might not always agree with recommen-

dations in reports, but they never dispute the veracity of the report itself. MHC is a member, without voting rights, on the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Rights and Freedoms of Citizens.

The MOST program of monitoring the performance of MPs has ongoing influence on MP actions and roles. They monitored each of the 120 MPs each six months and prepared reports based on MOST's MoU with Parliament. MOST prepared the first four reports, the Parliament has taken over the monitoring and has produced the subsequent two reports.

The CRD approach and impact is fundamentally different to KtK's. While it would be incorrect to say that CRD does not address capacity where required, their particular focus is not on partner capacity (indeed CRD often chooses organisations such as MOST and MHC which already had existing high levels of capacity) but on the external focus of the work of the organisations, particularly their potential human rights impact. In this, CRD's partners and funded projects can be seen to have consistent impact. The work done by each of the three organisations visited is important human rights work; work that contributes to the outcomes seen as priorities by CRD and by Sida.

The CRD focus on legislation, on systems that assist individuals to access information and on encouraging respect for human rights within Government systems have the *potential* to directly influence Macedonia's EU accession agenda. There is a more fundamental question – the commitment of the country to the accession process and indeed the commitment of the EU to Macedonia's accession. Notwithstanding these questions, the focus on ensuring the rights of the individual, and the approach taken by CRD partners, changes the responses within particular Government institutions. More work is needed, and the overall Government approach impedes substantial progress, but the work being done is visible and important.

It is in this context that the decision by Sida not to continue funding civil society activities in Macedonia is concerning, as without consistent and ongoing sources of funding these critical activities of monitoring and change may not continue.

3.3 Relevance

The work of CRD is considered particularly relevant to the political, human rights, EU accession and development priorities of Macedonia. CRD has a well-developed understanding of the human rights priorities across the region, which has been developed by them with strong influences from their partner organisations – giving the strategic direction a strong basis in reality on the ground. In maintaining their focus on the rule of law, freedom of expression and protection against discrimination, CRD has listened to local needs and have addressed the key areas of priority related to human rights in Macedonia.

Coupled with this is the CRD selection of partners, which demonstrates a spread of support across the priority areas, a balance of national organisations with those with a rural/ regional focus and a balance of well-established NGOs with those needing more support. Partner support also appears to be well structured in that those partner organisations with high levels of sophistication and organisational capacity indicate that CRD has been a true partner, aware of organisational needs but not treading heavily where not required while ARKA discussed not just this type of partner support but further assistance in strategic planning, networking regionally and internationally and with financial reporting procedures.

CRD's work responds directly and effectively to Sida priorities in Macedonia.

3.4 Effectiveness

The CRD approach in Macedonia, which emphasises partnership and a focus on the work of partners rather than on particular projects. The work is focused externally, i.e. on change in legislation and change in the practice of authority, rather than on partner organisations themselves. This is not to say

that CRD does not address organisational development, but to indicate where the emphasis is. Partners, in their responses to questionnaires, indicate significant improvement in their focus and in their strategy.

The approach has meant that partners are chosen because of the position they are in and the role they can play in their key focus areas. This approach has been effective in developing the skills, capacities and networks of partners, and therefore their ability to be players. This is particularly noticeable in the development of organisations such as ARKA, who have expanded their work beyond Skopje, with more staff, doing more work. The same applies to the Macedonia Helsinki Committee. Focusing on work with the MHC, recognised in Macedonian society as a “very objective, very professional – unbiased and not politicised” organisation, means CRD itself can focus on the actual work and impact of MHC in focus areas. It is important to note, in terms of effectiveness of approach, that ARKA receives 25% of its total funding (and 20% of its core funding) from CRD. For MHC, the numbers are 20% of total funding and 20% of core funding).

All interviewed partners discussed the *quality* of the partnership they had with CRD. Throughout the field work of the evaluation reference was made to framework organisations being partners, not donors. The evaluation team pursued this comment, as it was made so often, and received a number of detailed replies about the qualitative difference between the CRD (and KtK) approach and that of other donors and “partners”. One story described a “partnership” between a CRD partner organisation and an international aid agency which was described as “a way for (the Agency) to keep people in their office.” In other words, the point of the “relationship” was not achieving outcomes but ensuring funding. Given the committed, “activist” nature of CRD staff, partners made it clear that this was a far different relationship.

In addressing the question of the alignment of Swedish support to that of other donors, it is noted that significant concerns were expressed across all interviews at the withdrawal of Swedish civil society funding from Macedonia at this critical time. This is an unfortunate “alignment” as not only Sweden is downgrading or ending its donor support. The evaluation team was reminded constantly, from boundary partners, cooperation partners, framework organisations and external observers and experts that the timing of this withdrawal of international donor support could not be worse. Pluralism, EU accession, development of a vibrant civil society and respect for basic human rights are all likely to suffer as a result.

3.5 Cost efficiency

The evaluation team considers CRD delivers a cost efficient delivery of Sida funding. Generally organisations are not supported to 100% of needs, and CRD funding has been directed to a component of the organisation’s work that benefited from the extra focus for a period of time. Generally organisations receive some form of core support, but this is not a universal situation. Support is generally multi-year.

As indicated above, the activist, committed nature of CRD’s approach is of particular importance to partner organisations, and to overall and cost effectiveness. CRD can and does adjust its approach to partners based on need – organisational or strategic – and is responsive to these needs because of the nature of the organisation.

The following table is a summary of the basic facts on organisations and organisational support currently being provided by CRD in Macedonia. The table represents only the responses received from partners.

3.6 Sustainability

The evaluation team is concerned at the effect the loss of Sida funding will have on the monitoring of human rights in Macedonia – on this critical watchdog role. The team is also concerned with the current provision of free legal aid provided by MHC and its long-term sustainability. One framework organisation partner (not dependent on Sida funds) commented “They have had a good program, funding good organisations, generated a high level of professionalism and now they walk away, and the organisations will just close their doors and have no more impact.” According to MHC, “we are a pro-

fessional, committed, non-political organisation that plays a serious role in legal and human rights issues. And in 12 months we will be in deep trouble, as we will *not* get Government funds.”

Having said that, it can be argued that there is sustainability of impact from the work of CRD. MHC was significant with regards the Law on Anti Discrimination, initially on its own and then as a more widely supported initiative of Macedonian civil society. MHC has “succeeded in building capacity and credibility, and has succeeded in delivering substantial, substantive work.” As can be seen in the above table, no organisations supported by CRD are dependent on CRD for their financial existence. Indeed, no CRD-funded organisation gets more than 40% of their funding from CRD’s Sida allocation.

The following table summarises CRD partner responses to budget contributions from CRD.

Name of partner org	% of budget covered by FO	Increase or decrease	% of core admin covered by FO	Increase or decrease
Coalition All for Fair Trials	Current CRD project – 25.500 euros not part of the total organisation budget.	Increased from 2008 identical with 2009	0%	Decreased
Forum for Roma Rights ARKA	40%	Decreased for 40%	20%	Decreased
Macedonian Helsinki Committee	20%	Decreased	20%	Decreased
Macedonian Young Lawyers Association	40%	Increased up to this year		Increased up to this year
Macedonian Institute for Media	7%	Decreased	3%	Decreased
Citizen Association MOST	0%	Decreased	0%	Decreased

4. Overall comments on the Modality

The approach of providing support to civil society through Swedish NGOs, with a presence in the field is effective, relatively cost-efficient and has seen an impact on Macedonian society. The modality itself has some particularly good aspects, and some areas where modifications are required, but in general represents an appropriate approach for Sida to take to delivery of its support to civil society.

It is and will remain difficult to balance the creativity, activism and possibility of independent CSOs with the necessary and desirable form and structure desired by Sida as a donor. Working to maintain this balance though is a very important component for the success of the program, and the ongoing processes of program design and management, and the selection of framework organisations, should be undertaken in a way that encourages the maintenance of this creative tension, as it is a hallmark of the modality.

The use of NGOs as implementing partners is a positive component of the program. More so, the use of NGOs with different backgrounds, different priorities and different modes of operation is not seen as an issue or problematic but as an enabling aspect of the modality. Civil society organisations bring a commitment and activism that cannot be found in organisations from government or the private sector. This is their great value. They will tend to focus on their own priorities, and may well address administrative requirements less strongly than required, but these issues can be dealt with structurally, in the contractual relationship. This is not to say that NGOs in general, nor the existing framework organisations in particular, have not done an effective job of program administration, but to indicate that one particular benefit of using NGOs, to work with NGOs, is that their focus is on the work they are doing and the external works they want to achieve, not on project management per se.

Sida's priorities with regards civil society are wide, and activist NGOs will tend (although not exclusively) to operate within a narrow range of issues, with a narrow range of priorities. In order to cover its priorities, the use of NGOs from a wider range of backgrounds is both appropriate and effective. While a project management consultancy might have the capacity to work with "partners" across all partner areas, their in-depth knowledge will never compare, and they will never be able to achieve the quality of relationship – the quality discussed by all partners interviewed during the evaluation. This quality of partnership is one thing that sets the modality apart from other approaches.

It is relevant and appropriate to juxtapose the approaches of KtK and CRD in this discussion. The organisations have different priorities, different types of partners, different approaches (although each provides multi-year funding to longer-term partners) and different outcomes. The important word is different, as it does not imply a value judgement. It is this difference that gives strength to the outcomes of the support, precisely because a wider range of organisations with a wide range of capacity are benefiting from the support and from the relationship with international NGOs. It would be difficult to compare and value of the work done by these organisations in Macedonia. Notwithstanding the qualifications discussed in the framework organisation section above, the evaluation team was impressed overall with the work of the organisations. But they are not comparable, not as organisations nor in their approach. It is the view of the evaluation team that this is an important positive of the modality.

The use of Swedish NGOs is appropriate, although they must have a field presence in each country in which they work. Swedish organisations provide a link back to Stockholm, and to Sida, ensuring a clear line of communication to the donor as required. Whether or not these NGOs use local, Swedish or other nationals as their program officers should be a matter for the organisations. It would be worth considering the use of a Swedish NGO – National NGO partnership as a framework organisation. This would provide local NGOs with strong international support and assistance in developing the work and their profile while providing Swedish NGOs with a strong local component.

Sida would benefit from clarifying its internal understanding of and arrangement regarding the delivery of the support, particularly the understandings between Sida Stockholm and Sida offices in relevant Embassies. There is not always a correlation between projects funded by this program and funding provided directly by the Embassies, and there is overlap which appears based on a lack of knowledge. Some Embassies are more knowledgeable about and/ or involved in the program.

A much clearer understanding must exist between Sida and the framework organisations regarding the responsibilities of the framework organisations and of Sida. The existing arrangement is neither detailed enough, clear enough or well enough understood by the parties. The selection of framework organisations must be done transparently, against a clear Terms of Reference. The financial framework for the services associated with overseeing the support should be provided as part of each organisation's tender documentation. The financial framework must clearly delineate between direct program support, organisational development support (including national and regional networking activities) and administrative support. All components should be clearly justified in terms of program outcomes and administrative arrangements.

While it will be important to allow the framework organisations to operate within their existing priorities, these must fit within Sida's overall strategy for the Western Balkans and each country, meaning these strategy statements must form part of the tender documentation and tendering NGOs must be willing and able to provide services within one or more of the strategic priorities.

A wider representation of NGOs should be represented in the tendering/ selection process, although existing framework organisations should be welcome to tender. It does not need to be pre-determined that 1, or 2, or 3 organisations will provide services– responses to the tender call should inform this decision. It may be that an organisation provides a proposal for a relatively small component of the total program – if the approach, outcomes and financial structure fall within the overall program framework, such an outcome need not be discouraged.

The processes followed by framework organisations in selection of project and partners for funding require greater transparency, and a greater emphasis on ensuring organisations in a position to design and implement projects of relevance to Sida priorities – and within the priorities of framework organisations – have an opportunity to access available funding. The selected framework organisations should manage a call for proposals in each country, by each organisation. The call should be open, against a clearly defined criteria and the decision-making process transparent and publicly announced.

- Program flexibility is important, with a focus on strong outcomes and the development of the capacities and organisational sustainability of funded organisations.
- The intent and priority of each organisations’ call (and therefore the types of activities to be funded) can and should be determined by the framework organisation, according to their priorities and their agreement with Sida.
- The program should allow multi-year agreements with funded partners in each country and should encourage funded organisations to consider, design and submit proposals for 2, 3 or 4 year programs with a clear beginning and end and a clear need for the multi-year focus to achieve desired outcomes. The purpose of the multi-year arrangements is to allow projects that require more than one year to deliver outcomes to be designed and implemented with confidence of funding arrangements – such arrangements are better for the donor and the implementing agency. However, multi-year arrangements where funding is provided to repeat an activity should be discouraged – the program focus should be on multi-year arrangements for outcomes and impact, not on consistency of funding of organisations for the sake of it.
- Single year projects should not be discouraged. It is worth considering to allow organisations funded in this way to return for follow-up funding, if it is needed and desirable. Again, however, the principle should be follow-up funding (meaning funding for specific, important value adding) not repeat funding.
- Framework organisations should be required to retain a proportion of the allocation they will provide in grants (20% is recommended). This component is to be available to be used for a) follow-up activities as described above, b) for organisations who did not apply at the initial call for proposals, c) for issues that emerge and require immediate response, d) for “special initiatives” or e) for subsequent Call for Proposals later in the program period.
- A cost-share component would be of value. All funded organisations have experience with the requirement to find 10% or 20% of a grant amount, and the requirement to find the cost-share component creates an ownership dynamic in relation to the grant and the project.

The current emphasis on results-based management should be confirmed and enhanced, with framework organisations and funded organisations required to have a set of clear outputs and outcomes – clearly linked to their priorities and the intents of their program – and to report against measurable indicators relevant to the output/ outcome statements. It is an important organisational management discipline, of relevance to all organisations in all fields. It would be worth considering having each framework organisation undertake an impact assessment of their work, at the end of the program, against their program design matrix.

The program requires a formal cooperation and coordination between framework organisations in each country. Formal cooperation in Sweden is also recommended.

The particular skills and qualities of the field staff is critical. They must be senior, i.e. with experience and “presence” as well as having the right training and employment background. Senior does not mean they must be old, but young people lacking field experience are highly unlikely to fill the requirements.

List of Interviewees

Framework Organizations

Name of the interviewee	Organization
Peter Mossop	Civil Rights Defenders
Emilija Dimoska	KtK

Framework Organizations Country Partners

Name of the interviewee	Organization	Framework Organization
Biljana Bejkova	NGO Infocenter	Olof Palme International Center
Elena Simonoska	NGO Infocenter	Olof Palme International Center
Darko Aleksov	MOST	Civil Rights Defenders
Rosana Aleksoska	MOST	Civil Rights Defenders
Aleksandar Chichakovski	MOST	Civil Rights Defenders
Dragana Cheleva	MOST	Civil Rights Defenders
Feat Kamberovski	ARKA	Civil Rights Defenders
Ramadan Shakirovski	ARKA	Civil Rights Defenders
Violeta Petrovska	Women of 21st Century	KtK
Lidija Ilievska	Women of 21st Century	KtK
Zhivka Hristovska	Women of 21st Century	KtK
Tatjana Krstevska	Women of 21st Century	KtK
Dija Arifi	Women of 21st Century	KtK
Radmila Aleksovska	Women of 21st Century	KtK
Mirjana Gievska	Women of 21st Century	KtK
Vera Zlateva	Women Organization-Sv. Nikole	KtK
Daniela Paneva	Women Organization-Sv. Nikole	KtK
Aleksandra Kocavska	Women Organization-Sv. Nikole	KtK
Nadezhda Gligorova	Women Organization-Kochani	KtK
Milevka Zdravkovska	Women Organization-Probishtip	KtK
Violeta Eftimova	Nov Zhivot-Shtip	KtK
Gordana Nestorovska	Macedonian Helsinki Committee	Civil Rights Defenders
Gordan Kalajdjiev	Macedonian Helsinki Committee	Civil Rights Defenders
Kocho Andonovski	Macedonian Helsinki Committee	Civil Rights Defenders
Vjolca Mora Bajrami	Macedonian Helsinki Committee	Civil Rights Defenders
Pavlina Zefich	Macedonian Helsinki Committee	Civil Rights Defenders
Ana Stojkovich	Macedonian Helsinki Committee	Civil Rights Defenders
Keti Jandrijeska Jovanova	Macedonian Helsinki Committee	Civil Rights Defenders

Boundary Partners

Name of the interviewee	Institution/Organization	FO Local Partner	Framework Organization
Alija Bedrija	Individual Client	ARKA	Civil Rights Defenders
Jonuz Alijevski	Individual Client	ARKA	Civil Rights Defenders
Svetlana Usovic	Individual Client	ARKA	Civil Rights Defenders
Marina Manojlovska	Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) – Political Party	Women of 21st Century	KtK
Svetlana Bozinovska	Democratic Development of Macedonia (DOM) – Political Party	Women of 21st Century	KtK
Vjora Halimi	Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) – Political Party	Women of 21st Century	KtK
Blagoj Panev	Public Health Center – Sv. Nikole	Women Organization-Sv. Nikole	KtK
Vesna Anceva	Public Health Center-Sv. Nikole	Women Organization-Sv. Nikole	KtK
Daniela Arsenova	Municipality of Sv. Nikole	Women Organization-Sv. Nikole	KtK
Danica Naskova	Center for Social Work-Sv. Nikole	Women Organization-Sv. Nikole	KtK
Gordana Miteva	Self-Help Group-Sv. Nikole	Women Organization-Sv. Nikole	KtK
Uranija Pirovska	State Councillor for International Ombudsman and Public Relations	Macedonian Helsinki Committee	Civil Rights Defenders
Marija Ristevska	Centre for Research and Policy Making – Skopje	NGO Infocenter	OPC

External Parties

Name of the interviewee	Organization
Silva Pesich	United Nations – Office of the UN Resident Coordinator
Eben Friedman	Roma Education Fund
Bekim Hoxha	Wake Up
Vesna Stamenkovska	Institute for Sustainable Communities
Mentor Kadriu	Swedish embassy

Annex 7 – Country Report Serbia

By Dragiša Mijačić and Jim Newkirk

This report comprises one of the five country reports which together make up the detailed commentary from the Evaluation of Sida's Support to the Western Balkans 2005–2009. The report describes the situation in Serbia at the beginning of the period in question, changes of importance during the five years and the situation currently, including comments and reflections from civil society and other actors on the situation at the time of the evaluation, in June 2010. The report then discusses the approach and work of each of the framework organisations who have been responsible for providing Sida's civil society support during the period. This discussion follows 5 key development assistance criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The report then looks at the delivery modality for Sida's assistance in Serbia – the approach of using three, Swedish NGOs as implementing partners to determine program priorities (within the Sida strategic framework) and to determine grant recipients and processes – and comments on the efficacy of the approach. The three NGOs are the Olof Palme International Centre, Civil Rights Defenders and Kvinna till Kvinna.

The field work of the evaluation included five days of interviews and focus group discussions with representatives of framework organisations, cooperation partners of framework organisations, boundary partners (people/ organisations with a direct or indirect relationship to funded organisations/ projects) and external experts/ observers. The complete list of interviewees is found at the end of the report. The report is to be treated as one of five country inputs to the overall report. Conclusions can be drawn mainly on the overall level as the country sample was very limited (only two or three organisations per FO) and not completely representative of the FO intervention in Serbia. The conclusions and recommendations in the country report are to be seen as points for further investigation.

1. Context Analysis

1.1 Governance and democracy.

Serbian governance throughout this period is a study in weak (albeit stable) government and lack of political will and capacity – in parliament and in government institutions. “In Serbia a number of laws, in accordance with European standards, have been passed during the last three years. The government has, however, shown no will to actually implement these laws.”¹³¹

“Serbia now belongs to this group of young democracies in South Eastern Europe. It has absolved a series of free and fair elections, alternated governments, established other basic pillars of democratic governance and opened up its economy. While the recent financial crisis will also show its effects in Serbia, it will not change the fact that foreign direct investment has been booming and the economy expanding over the last years. The Serbia of 2008 is very different from the Serbia of the mid-1990s. However, despite all the changes in political, economic and social life, there are still a number of legacies of the Milosevic era that haunt the country as it is struggling to become a stable and prosperous democracy.”¹³²

According to Freedom House, Serbia is considered as *free* in terms of civil and political rights, with a rating of 2.5 in 2009¹³³ just like in 2008.¹³⁴ As with other countries in the region, participation levels in the democratic process are worryingly low. The 2003 election could not be called due the lack of turn-

¹³¹ CRD Plan of Action Western Balkans 04–06

¹³² Ex-post Evaluation of the Palme Center's Serbia Programme – 12 November 2008

¹³³ The rating is based on a scale where the averages are calculated in the following manner: 1.0 to 2.5 is considered as Free, 3.0 to 5.0 as Partly Free, and 5.5 to 7.0 Not Free.

¹³⁴ CRD Update Plan of Action 2010

out. While this has not happened again since, voter participation remains low, with high levels of cynicism and distrust prevalent.

One critical current priority relates to the public administration. “Serbia has good capacity in the area of public administration. However the pace of public administration reform has been slow. The action plan for implementation of the public administration reform strategy has yet to be adopted. The merit system provided for in the amended Law on Civil Servants has not been implemented. Transparency in the public administration has to be improved and greater priority should be given to fighting corruption and effectively supporting the work of independent bodies.”¹³⁵ A second current priority is in relation to the rule of law – not developing new laws appropriate to a European nation – but to actually implement the new laws which have already been developed and passed.

1.2 Gender equality

Serbian civil society has a long and strong history of activism and impact, given impetus during the later part of the Milosevic era when the NGO community was a very significant player in the movement which eventually drove the Milosevic regime from office. This strong history however has not lead subsequently to a structural change of more significance than in Serbia’s Balkan neighbours. While on the one hand the Law on Gender Equality and the related National Strategy have been formally accepted by the Parliament, and the National Action Plan for Gender Equality has been completed and is currently going through the process of formal acceptance by Government, the equal reality is that “Without changes on the political level, few long-term improvements on gender equality and women’s situation in the society will occur.”¹³⁶ “The national strategy to improve the position of women and promote gender equality was adopted in February 2009, identifying the six most critical areas: (1) improvement of the economic position, (2) health, (3) representation in public and political life, (4) equality in education, (5) suppression of violence and (6) elimination of gender stereotypes in the media. Legislation prohibits discrimination based on gender, although Serbia demonstrates a capacity to prepare and pass legislation but not the capacity to implement it. The level of violence against women, including domestic violence remains a serious concern.”¹³⁷

Capacity building within the Gender Equality Directorate remains a key issue, as does the effectiveness of the relationship and cooperation between the Directorate and civil society organisations. There is a strong view within the women’s movement that too much emphasis is now placed on “gender equality” and gender mainstreaming (referred to as “the gender machinery”) to the detriment of “women’s human rights”, and that this imbalance is driven by donor priorities, as opposed to priorities as seen locally, and that the loss of a strong link back to grassroots women’s organisations in the design of EU-funded grant programs means the programs lose impact in relation to women’s human rights.

1.3 Human Rights

In 2004 it was the view of Civil Rights Defenders that many “media outlets display a lack of knowledge on local and international code of ethics, and operate with inadequate professional advice. Most individual journalists seem to be unaware of the responsibility they carry for what they write, and undervalue the importance of media in the development of a healthy democratic society.”¹³⁸ “The OSCE mission in Serbia and Montenegro holds the upper hand in what concerns initiatives furthering the rule of law. Their work is mostly aimed at judicial reform, penal reform, and anti-corruption activities and at establishing an Ombudsman institution.”¹³⁹ There “are some breaches of especially minority rights. Roma people in both of the member states are constantly discriminated against without a real chance

¹³⁵http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/sr_rapport_2009_en.pdf

¹³⁶KtK Annual Request 2005

¹³⁷http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/sr_rapport_2009_en.pdf

¹³⁸CRD Plan of Action Western Balkans 04–06

¹³⁹CRD Plan of Action Western Balkans 04–06

for education and personal improvement. More than a few cases of trafficking of human beings bears witness to the fact that not everybody in the country have their rights protected. Social and economical rights are constantly oppressed in the country but that is closely connected with the poor economical situation in the country as in the region as a whole. People that belong to GBLT groups have no chance of expressing themselves freely. Other human rights in Serbia in Montenegro are mostly protected but there is still a lot of space for improvement.”¹⁴⁰

Since that time the “main problem in regard to the role of civil society in Serbia is the fact that the watch dog and monitoring activities were not followed by proper follow-up activities that will contribute to the improvement of situations in different areas. The majority of the conducted research and analyses were presented without reactions of relevant duty holders.”¹⁴¹ “There has been progress in the reform of the judicial system, which is a key priority of the European Partnership. The legal and institutional framework for the observance of human rights is in place and some progress has been made on improving observance of international human rights law. The new Ministry for Human and Minority Rights is playing an important role in promoting such rights. Further efforts are needed to increase understanding of relevant international standards in this area. New anti-discrimination legislation introduced a rule prohibiting hate speech. However, in spite of the legal framework, incidents involving hate speech, threats and physical attacks against journalists, human rights defenders and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) population have not been properly investigated and perpetrators have not been brought to justice.”¹⁴²

The major issues at the moment are increasing public awareness and increasing public debate on issues of “discrimination, transitional justice, corruption, lustration, judiciary, violence, relations between state and church”.¹⁴³ “More concerted efforts need to be made to raise awareness of the situation of vulnerable groups of children and ensure that their rights are protected. In practice, there is ongoing discrimination, in particular against vulnerable groups such as Roma, persons with disabilities, and the LGBT population. All these groups are frequently victims of intolerance and hate speech. There is little support for victims of discrimination and there is a need for greater commitment on the part of all involved – the police, the prosecution service and the judiciary – to make sure that the legislation is fully enforced.”¹⁴⁴

1.4 Civil society role and capacity

In 2004, Serbia was “the last country in the region that has not established a new legal framework for NGOs. While different versions of an NGO law have been circulating over the last years and were repeatedly passed by the council of ministers, the parliament has not yet adopted such a law. Serbia thus relies still on laws from socialist times, which are clearly not adequate.”¹⁴⁵

Since then there were “improvements within the Serbian administration to cooperate with civil society. However, cooperation remains mainly ad hoc and selective. NGOs, in particular human rights defenders, were once again victims of threats and verbal abuse for holding diverging views on issues such as Kosovo and the fight against impunity.”¹⁴⁶ The “sector as a whole has a substantial image problem. Serbian civil society is still largely lacking membership and still suffers from a negative image in the public opinion. The Pontis foundation in its analysis of Serbian civil society points out that there are components of Serbian civil society that have become isolated and are seen as traitors by a large part of the

¹⁴⁰OPC Application 2005

¹⁴¹CRD Serbia Update Plan of Action 2010

¹⁴²http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/sr_rapport_2009_en.pdf

¹⁴³CRD Serbia Update Plan of Action 2010

¹⁴⁴http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/sr_rapport_2009_en.pdf

¹⁴⁵Ex-post Evaluation of the Palme Center's Serbia Programme – 12 November 2008

¹⁴⁶http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/sr_rapport_2009_en.pdf

population and that the whole civil society sector is affected by this.”¹⁴⁷ There are four major problems for civil society and these include the non-existence of a legal framework for civil society, lack of stable financial resources, citizens’ lacking confidence in the civil society and the avoidance of direct political activities. The latter problem has led to civil society organisations only involving themselves in “expert” activities rather than in the real issues that impact on citizens’ everyday life.

After almost ten years of draft proposals and unsuccessful attempts, the Law on Associations was adopted in July 2009 in the Serbian Parliament and came into force on 22 October. Although this is just a first of several necessary steps towards creating better ground for the work of civil society it is also a good sign that the state is finally ready to establish better communication with citizens’ associations. “However, in other areas of law, particularly those concerning tax and fiscal measures, laws continue to offer no specific allowances for not-for-profit organisations, treating CSOs as if they were small or medium sized profit-making enterprises.”¹⁴⁸

Creating a situation where citizens are able to influence the local political agenda when elected representatives are more accountable both involves monitoring of political representatives, linking them with relevant (organised) interests in society as well as improving the legitimacy and mobilising potential of Serbian civil society.”¹⁴⁹ There is a recent history of CSO participation in the work of Government in Serbia. Good examples of civil society participation in and influence on discussions with and within Government include the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the National Youth Strategy, the Social Protection Development Strategy, the Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons With Disabilities.

Government support for NGOs and public involvement in civil society has increased – according to USAID’s 2008 NGO Sustainability Index, Serbia “saw an improvement as a more stable and responsive government assumed office in the second half of the year, creating a more supportive environment for NGO campaigns to promote Serbia’s integration with the EU.”¹⁵⁰ TACSO reports that, based on 2007 figures, “official government spending on civil society from the State Budget totalled 60 million EUR, having risen roughly fourfold since 2003. Real support of CSOs is likely, however, to be considerably lower, as an unknown proportion of the 60 million was also allocated to the support of sports and religious organizations, as well as political parties.”¹⁵¹ TACSO also reports that a number of Ministries (specifically the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) are actively supporting CSOs.

According to TACSO, the “main CSO database of CSOs active in Serbia, maintained by CRNPS, indicates that, countrywide, civil society retains a traditional focus on social and community services and charitable activities. The dominant means of action in these areas is service delivery, particularly in the areas of social protection, health, education and the law.” The structure of funding dictates that all but the few professional NGOs which have obtained long-term institutional funding (usually from an international donor) and those community-based self-help groups, whose activities do not require material investments, are more or less dependent on short-term project funding.”¹⁵²

Priorities at the moment include the involvement of citizens in public debate on political issues, CSO participation in the EU integration process, increasing accountability of political representatives and

¹⁴⁷ OPC Serbia Assessment 2008

¹⁴⁸ Serbia Needs Assessment Report – Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations in the IPA Countries TACSO, SIPU International, Sweden, 2010

¹⁴⁹ OPC Serbia Program 2010–2011

¹⁵⁰ http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/2008/complete_document.pdf

¹⁵¹ Serbia Needs Assessment Report – Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations in the IPA Countries TACSO, SIPU International, Sweden, 2010

¹⁵² Serbia Needs Assessment Report – Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations in the IPA Countries TACSO, SIPU International, Sweden, 2010

the structural relationship between government and the NGO community. The Government has recently established the Government Office for Cooperation with Civil Society, but it is yet to be funded, staffed or to operate. According to TACSO, important gaps exist in civil society activity in Serbia in the areas of oversight of public administration, the work of parliamentarians and local assemblies, monitoring political processes, watchdog activities in the implementation of laws and standards of service delivery, overseeing budget processes and in the allocation of public resources and the fight against corruption.¹⁵³

1.5 Sida priority areas according to strategy

Following are Sweden's objectives for the sector:

- **Democratic governance:** Effective and democratic national government administration in the service of citizens at both the central and local level. Support will be given for administrative reforms, development assistance coordination, decentralisation and statistics. Swedish initiatives will support increased citizen participation in, and influence on, national government administration. Projects to compile gender-disaggregated statistics, as well as initiatives against corruption in national government administration, should be supported. Support will be channelled through a few ministries in order to strengthen their capacity and increase democratic dialogue between the state and citizens. Support should be available to improve the Serbian administration's ability to receive additional funding from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). Support in building up a Decentralised Implementation System (DIS) should be offered.
- **Human rights and gender equality:** Greater respect for, and compliance with, human rights and gender equality. Support for human rights will include both cooperation with state institutions and strengthening of civil society. The interaction among these actors will also be strengthened. Swedish initiatives will support active civil society that enables citizen participation in, and influence on, the development of society. The focus will be on civil and political rights, particularly gender equality and the participation of minorities in the development of society. Sweden, which has a leading role with respect to gender equality, will support the implementation of Serbia's gender equality strategy through the Serbian Gender Equality Directorate. Special support will be given for implementation of national action plans for Roma rights. The role of civil society in monitoring gender equality and other human rights – including those of children, the LGBT community and minorities, particularly the Roma – will be strengthened by support through Swedish NGOs and other organisations.

2. Kvinna till Kvinna

2.1 Background and History

The mandate of Kvinna till Kvinna is:

- To carry out projects in areas of war and conflict which promote women's self-reliance and self-esteem, and women's psychosocial and/or physical health, or which contribute to promoting women's participation in the development of a democratic civilian society.
- To promote studies and research concerning the effects of war and armed conflicts for women.
- To publicize facts and information concerning the effects of war, and to raise public opinion in favour of the peaceful solution of conflicts using non-military methods.

Kvinna till Kvinna (KtK) has worked since 1993 in the Balkans, and in Serbia since 1994, largely because it sees change as a long-term and demanding process. KtK established a permanent presence in

¹⁵³ Serbia Needs Assessment Report – Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations in the IPA Countries TACSO, SIPU International, Sweden, 2010

Serbia in 2001, where the program is carried out by two, full-time coordinators, who have also been responsible for KtK's work in Montenegro. They are supported by a full-time coordinator in Stockholm.

KtK approaches its work from the perspective of the two-way development of trust and understanding between the organisation's field staff and partner organisations. KtK insists on international (Swedish) staff as field representatives, to ensure the neutrality of their approach. They emphasise a deep understanding of the country in which they work, as well as the region, particularly in terms of the conditions of women. The KtK approach is long-term, and they fund partner organisations not just for a number of years but also with core funding, allowing the partners not just the ability to grow and strengthen without constant funding issues, but also to allow partners to emphasise their own agendas. Further, networking, both nationally and regionally is a particular focus of KtK's approach to its development work, as networking is seen as "an important method for sharing experiences, increasing the impact of advocacy and lobbying, and making people meet across borders of ethnicity or nationality."

According to KtK's 2008 – 2011 Program Proposal for Serbia, KtK's program objectives for this period, specified in six, key areas.

Women in the peace process

- Women's interests are taken into account to a greater extent in the post-war rebuilding process, ex constitution, reform of the security sector etc.
- Women demand their right to participate in peace building and status negotiations.
- The role of women in the anti-war movement becomes more visible and valued.

Women's organising

- A stronger and more visible women's movement.
- An improved constructive and critical dialogue between state institutions and women's organisations.
- Improved knowledge of and cooperation with women's movements within the EU.
- Increased understanding for the role and function of civil society.

Women's participation in decision making processes

- Increased number of politically active women.
- Improved and systematic co-operation between women's organisations and (women) politicians.
- Improved constructive and critical dialogue between women's organisations and relevant EU bodies.
- Changed attitudes towards women politicians from the general public.

Women's human rights

- Discrimination against women (esp. Roma women and lesbian women) is seen as severe.
- More women are aware of their rights and dare to demand them.
- Gender equality laws are adopted, followed and gender mechanisms are in place.
- It is possible to criticise the state without risking one's personal security.

Women's work against violence and sexual abuse

- Deepened knowledge of men's violence against women among relevant institutions and increased professionalism among relevant institutions.
- Men's violence against women is seen by the general public as a crime and not as a private problem.
- The issue of men's violence against women is established on the political agenda.

Women's physical and mental health

- Raised awareness among women's organisations on women's sexual and reproductive health and rights and readiness of women's organisations to meet conservatism.
- Young girls have access to information on sexual and reproductive rights.¹⁵⁴

The current KtK program in Serbia (6 million SEK in the current year) has provided support to the following:

Organisation	Location	Project Supported
Autonomous Women Center (AWC), Belgrade – Network	Belgrade	National network of SOS Hotlines and shelters
Autonomous Women Center (AWC), Belgrade	Belgrade	National SOS help-line and counselling service for victims of violence
Awin, Belgrade	Belgrade	Networking and capacity building of other rural women groups and organisations in Serbia
Fenomena, Kraljevo	Kraljevo	Counselling for women victims of violence, ICT and small business centre for women
Nemeza Nezavisnost Women's Section, Belgrade	Belgrade	SOS Hotline for women suffering from discrimination at work
NLO, Novi Sad Lesbian Organisation	Novi sad	Visibility of LGBT issues, support to LGBT activists, reaching out to young people
Sandglass, Krusevac	Krusevac	Women's Information and Education Centre, promoting gender equality locally and regionally
Shelter, Belgrade	Belgrade	Shelter for women victims of violence
Women's Alternative, Sombor	Sombor	SOS-help line and professional psychological and medical Counselling, gender awareness training and lectures in schools on reproductive health
Women's Centre, Leskovac	Leskovac	SOS help line and counselling, active in Women in Black network
Women for Peace, Leskovac	Lekovac	SOS Help line and counselling, institutional education and cooperation, peace advocacy
Women's Space, Nis	Nis	Networking activities between Roma women activists in south Serbia, encourage political participation
Zene na Delu, Belgrade	Belgrade	Anti burn-out program for activists fighting violence against women, Theatre activism, Women and ICT
Women in Black, from 2006	Belgrade	To highlight war crimes, patriarchal, nationalistic, fascistic trends in media
WINDOC	Belgrade	Gender equality in and through the media

In assessing the work of KtK in Serbia, field visits took place in Kruševac and Niš, with visits to Pešćanik (Sandglass) in Kruševac and Ženski Prostor (Women's Space) in Niš. Ženski Prostor describes itself as a Roma feminist organisation, and while it participates in wider networks, its focus is on Roma women and Roma women's networks. Pešćanik focuses on its own organisational development and capacity in order to (and as well as) the participation of women in local politics and the development of and participation in national and regional women's networks.

2.2 Outcome (impact)

The work of KtK can be said to have impacted on Serbia in some areas of its strategic focus, although not all of its focus areas have been addressed in its current program support. Of the 6 program areas

¹⁵⁴ KtK Program Proposal Serbia 2008 – 2011

and 20 delineated program objectives, impact can be described in two program areas, addressing 4 of the program objectives:

Women's organising

- A stronger and more visible women's movement.

Women's participation in decision making processes

- Increased number of politically active women.
- Improved and systematic co-operation between women's organisations and (women) politicians.
- Changed attitudes towards women politicians from the general public.

The work done with women's organisations, particularly rural and Roma organisations, and the work done in encouraging and assisting the increase of women's participation in decision-making processes (particularly local politics) is significant. The *quality* of the work done by KtK with Pešcanik (Sandglass) and by Pešcanik with local women politicians, and the obvious strength of Pešcanik as an organisation points to the importance and impact of KtKs approach and intervention.

Against the three key criteria of the evaluation, sustainable impact has been achieved to a certain extent.

Mobilise trust, support and resources

The working relationship between partner organisations and Municipalities, other women's groups and national networks has improved and been strengthened. Partners are more visible locally, and have higher levels of support from and involvement in local (and national) activities and initiatives. Interviewed organisations discussed the increase in their visibility as important to wider community trust and support – including being asked to undertake research studies. As well, organisational capacity in mobilising is notable, particularly the mobilisation of target groups to advocate for change. Responses to questionnaires indicate a significant contribution from KtK in empowering individuals and organisations to mobilise and take action, including a number of social and policy changes as a result of the support provided.

Build alliances

Alliances which were pointed to in the field interviews included national women's networks, the national Roma women's network, the Network for European Women's Lobby. All organisations benefit from their network involvement, including through information sharing, education and support to lobbying and advocacy activities, which have less impact if done on an organisation by organisation basis. One boundary partner described the Roma Women's Network as "the most important work" because of its impact on local and national strategy development. Pešcanik created a local NGO Forum, with others, and participates in two national women's networks. Responses to questionnaires all indicate a significant improvement in the cooperation of partners with other NGOs, and indeed this cooperation occurs locally, nationally and regionally.

Interact with and influence authorities

Ženski Prostor was asked, and provided, the Shadow Report to CEDAW for Serbia, wherein they described their research on 250 cases of the abuse of women's human rights and make recommendations in the areas of health, education, violence against women and employment. Subsequently, and through the Roma Women's Network, they are approached by authorities to address Roma women's human rights and violence against women. There used to be 3 local women councillors in Kruševac, from a total of 70. The number is now 24, with the change attributed to the work of Pešcanik. The President of the local self government is also a woman, and a member of Pešcanik. "It has been a long

road, but they are much more ready now”. KtK participation with Ženski Prostor in the National Network and the work done by the Network on the political participation of Roma women in the National Roma Council, may yet see real participation from Roma women in the Council.

2.3 Relevance

KtK has maintained a strong link to grassroots women’s organisations as well as within national networks, and with these contacts and links has been able to develop a well-structured understanding of issues and priorities for women in Serbia. Their response, the focus on violence against women, networking, the participation of women in political processes, and organisational development and sustainability was deemed appropriate by partners and external observers. A significant focus has been placed on the national SOS Hotline network and local SOS Hotlines, as well as related women’s shelters. This emphasis, directly and indirectly, has increased the effectiveness of the SOS Hotlines nationally.

The selection of partner organisations is deemed relevant and appropriate. There is a focus on rural women’s organisations, Roma organisations and national networks.

KtK’s work responds directly to Sida’s Serbian priorities, with an emphasis on (women’s) human rights and gender equality.

KtK’s program objectives were established by KtK itself, “based on our and our partners” analyses of the current situation and needs”, and in the view of the evaluation reflect the Serbian situation with regards gender equality, gender-based violence and the needs and directions of the women’s movement. The program design is relevant and appropriate, and the activities undertaken also are relevant. As discussed above, the program fails in terms of relevance in not addressing a wider component of these program objectives; in focussing on too narrow a range of these objectives.

2.4 Effectiveness

KtK is effective in its work in strengthening the women’s movement, in increasing the participation of women in the decision-making process and in addressing issues related to violence against women. The fundamental approach of developing the organisational capacity and knowledge of partner organisations is particularly effective in addressing the strength of women’s organisations at the local level. KtK’s partners are particularly supportive of the approach taken by KtK, with an emphasis on KtK’s “partnership” and its “organisational development”. It is obvious from the undertaken field visits that this approach, particularly in the long-term manner in which it is delivered, strengthens the partner organisations capacity, and their ability to work effectively with their stakeholders.

One example of the effectiveness of their work is found in a comment from Ženski Prostor, who said “KtK first insisted we adopt monitoring and evaluation as a regular activity. They made us – but now we see this ourselves as useful and necessary. We don’t fear this anymore.”

As well as other areas discussed in more detail, responses to the questionnaire indicate strong support from partners to the effectiveness of KtK’s work in assisting partners in their program focus, development of their strategic approach, development of leadership and the quality of staff.

KtK’s work addresses gender equality, but it does not work at all levels of society in addressing gender equality issues. Particular reference is made to KtK’s objectives on improvements to dialogue between state institutions and women’s organisations, gender equality laws and gender mechanisms (ie, state level structures of gender equality) and the key areas of gender-based violence in the public consciousness and on the political agenda. These are areas of particular importance to Sida, generally and specifically in Serbia but are not areas where KtK has expended money or focused its actual activities during the period under review. Program effectiveness will be increased by widening activities to address more delineated objectives.

Having established the 6 program areas, the actual funding for projects provided by KtK did not provide significant support to projects addressing *Women in the peace process*, *Women's human rights* and *Women's physical and mental health*. As well, the program focus on *Women's work against violence and sexual abuse*, which in the KtK program was focused on institutional change and increasing of professionalism in institutions, as well as on the issue of violence against women being established on the political agenda, actually focused on the SOS Hotline network and shelters. There is no argument that the SOS Hotline and shelters are important initiatives, but the reality is that the program did not address KtK's *own objectives* in the area of violence against women, and did not achieve outputs or outcomes in this key area. From the perspective of the future, KtK would do well to a) have fewer program objectives, and objectives on which they can and will focus and b) to ensure a clearer link between their problem analysis, program objectives and project support. It is not intended here to be critical of KtK's current operation, but to encourage a stronger structural/ strategic flow between KtK's own analysis and program activities.

2.5 Cost efficiency

The evaluation team considers KtK to be a relatively cost-efficient partner in the delivery of Sida funding. The activist, committed nature of KtK's approach, and the nature of its grassroots program of organisational development is of particular importance to partner organisations, and to overall and cost effectiveness.

Some improvement could be made in head office costs, where it would appear a large percentage of overall costs for the Serbia operation are going.

Unlike elsewhere, the Serbia operation has had a long-term program officer presence which is considered by the evaluation team to be important in delivering a cost efficient and effective outcome with grassroots organisations, particularly with an emphasis outside Belgrade.

2.6 Sustainability

Sustainability of KtK's work has been achieved to a certain extent. From the financial perspective for partner organisations, it is unclear which will continue to flourish, or even survive, in the current political climate. According to the returned questionnaires, KtK partners are significantly dependent financially on KtK, with 6 of the 7 responding organisations reporting a minimum of 50% of core and program funding coming from KtK, with most organisations being supported to between 60% and 70% of program funding and between 70% and 100% for core costs. Average contributions from KtK are between 22,000 and 28,000 Euros annually for each funded organisation.

Beyond finances, all organisations report a significant improvement in their focus on what they want to achieve, 5 of 7 report a significant improvement in their strategy while the other two report improvements "to a large extent", all have better leadership and more competent staff, all have more members, clients and supporters. Four of the 7 report good to very good improvements in the number of donors providing support, and 2 of 8 respondents commented on getting more financial support from authorities. The participation in national networks was pointed to by one organisation as an important component of their ongoing sustainability – "we cannot do it ourselves". One interesting comment came from Pešćanik, who "have a concern that we depend on a fairly small core of about 20 women", as many organisations would delight in a core of 20. According to KtK, "we have clearly seen the development of "our" organisations. They started local of course, now they are strong nationally. Someone said "KtK supports all the strongest NGO in the Balkans". I would say that their strength is a reflection of our work with them.

On balance, and directly because of the long-term financial and organisational development support provided by KtK, organisations have better structures, better leadership and more competent staff, and an improved place in society and relationship with authorities, but all face an uncertain financial future. It is worth noting here that KtK's support is not just important because of its long-term focus, but

because the organisation is intent on assisting partners in a wide number of areas that are not focussed on generally, including mediation of internal conflicts, regional networking and experience sharing. KtK itself indicates that the participation of KtK staff in partner activities is a positive aspect of their work.

3. Civil Rights Defenders

3.1 Background and History

In its *Strategy For The Swedish Helsinki Committee For Human Rights, SHC 2004–2006*, the Swedish Helsinki Committee (now called Civil Rights Defenders) describe their mission and objectives as follows:

The purpose of SHC is to increase the respect of human rights and freedoms in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ICCPR of 1966 and the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, as well as to contribute to a democratic development in all Helsinki signatory states (the current OSCE-area).

The SHC monitors and advocates the compliance of human rights, and cooperates with local organizations sharing the view that respect for human rights is a precondition for building of democracy.

The vision of SHC is that all people in the OSCE-area should be enabled to exercise their civil and political rights, recognising that this is one important pillar upon which democracy is built.

Overall Objectives

The SHC seeks to contribute to an increased respect for human rights and thereby to contribute to the building of democracy. Fundamental for achievements in this regard is promotion of state systems based on the rule of law. In order to meet our mission and vision we have three overall objectives, which will guide our activities.

1. Strengthening of the rule of law

Recognising that rule of law does not mean merely a formal legality which assures regularity and consistency in the enforcement of democratic order, but justice based on the recognition and full acceptance of the supreme value of the human personality and guaranteed by institutions providing a framework for its fullest expression. (Final document of the OSCE Human Dimension Meeting in Copenhagen 1990).

2. Strengthening of the freedom of expression

Recognising that everyone has the right to freedom of expression including the right to communication. This right will include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. The exercise of this right may be subject only to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and are consistent with international standards. (Final document of the OSCE Human Dimension Meeting in Copenhagen 1990).

3. Protection against discrimination

Recognising that all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law should prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground. (Final document of the OSCE Human Dimension Meeting in Copenhagen 1990).¹⁵⁵

It is possibly more relevant to point to CRD's current objectives in relation to each of its program areas. These objectives are detailed in CRD's *Serbia Plan of Action 2008–2011*.

Rule of Law Program

¹⁵⁵ *Strategy For The Swedish Helsinki Committee For Human Rights, SHC 2004–2006*

- Improve accountability and compliance of duty-holders in relation to the European Convention of Human Rights.
- To decrease impunity in relation to serious human rights violations
- Enhance people's access to justice by providing free legal aid with drafting and/or lobbying for adoption of a Free Legal Aid Law

Freedom of Expression Program

- To improve legal protection and other mechanisms for independent media and journalists, thereby diminishing the power of groups which try to misuse the media to achieve their political ends or advance other interests.
- To improve professionalism in journalism and contribute to politicians' accountability by strengthening the first digital media archive.
- To increase the level of competence of local media to improve its web presence, thus paving the road for achieving self-sustainability

Anti-discrimination Program

- Strengthen monitoring and advocacy on rights of national minorities
- Increase knowledge about LGBT rights among duty holders and the public
- To raise knowledge about mechanisms of disability based discrimination and improve co-ordination around policies for disabled people in order to improve conditions for inclusion of people with disabilities in the everyday life
- Improve the news flow on minority languages for minority media in order to improve means of expression for minority groups.

The CRD program for 2005–2009 totals 34.268 million SEK (The program is 6.08 million SEK in the current year) and has provided support to the following:

Organisation	Location	Project Supported
CHRIS (Network of the Committees for Human Rights in Serbia)	Network of 6 local org.	Basic operational support, legal aid and advocacy, awareness-raising on human rights
Belgrade centre for Human Rights (BCHR)	Belgrade	Translation of judgements of the European Court of Human Rights in regard to specific articles of ECHR
CUPS, Centre for Advanced Legal Studies	Belgrade	Drafting and advocacy for a national system of legal assistance, drafting and advocacy for anti-discrimination legislation
Youth Initiative for Human Rights	Belgrade	Monitoring and implementation of 5 crucial transition laws
Center for Regionalism	Novi Sad	Decentr within Constitution of Serbia
Helsinki Committee Serbia	Belgrade	Production of Annual report on human rights+ prison monitoring
Humanitarian Law Centre	Belgrade	Reparation and litigation related to cases of serious human rights violations in the recent past
Young Lawyers of Serbia	Belgrade	Law clubs at universities on HR law, regional moot court competition
Young Lawyers of Serbia	Regional	
Transparency Serbia	Belgrade	Workshops on impl of anti-corruption legislation

Organisation	Location	Project Supported
Pescanik FM	Belgrade	Publishing transcript and support to the Radio Show Pescanik FM, dealing with various issues related to human rights and transition
Independent journalists Association of Serbia	Belgrade	Survey of position of journalists, organisational development and operational support
ANEM- Association of independent electronic media	Belgrade	Advice and legal aid to media, promotion of a free environment for electronic media
Local Press Association	Belgrade	Basic operational support and OD, legal aid and counsel for journalists and media
Independent Journalists Association Vojvodina	Novi Sad	Seminar on promoting differences
Novi Sad School of Journalism	Novi Sad	Reporting diversity training
Media Art Service International		Link Magazine Supplements
Centre for Professionalism of Media (CPM)	Belgrade	Media and HR, ECHR on FoE
Rex Cultural Centre	Belgrade	Human rights film festival
Ebart Media Archive	Belgrade	Media archive, investigative journalism, OD
Velki Mali	Pancevo	Training and awareness raising related children with disabilities, capacity building of local NGOs
Association of Students with disabilities	Belgrade	Training and awareness raising related to disability rights
LABRIS	Belgrade	Awareness raising and advocacy on LGBT rights
Queeria	Belgrade	Public campaign on LGBT rights
Gay Straight Alliance	Belgrade	Annual report on LGBT rights
Minority Rights Centre	Belgrade	Advocacy on Roma Rights
Sandzak Committee for prof of HR	Novi Pazar	Minority Rights Protection in Sandzak
Civic Action for HR on behalf of Sanjak coalition	Novi Pazar	Monitoring and PR of Minority rights in Sanjak
Beta News agency	Belgrade	Minority news services, news in three minority languages (Albanian, Roma, Hungarian)
Radio Tocak (roma)		Operational support
DEVE		Educ HR in regard to sexual minorities
Resource Centers	Network of 5 local org	Exercising our rights
Media on the Web/ Media Dots		Capacity building and support for local media's web editions (regional project)
Regional Centre for Minorities	Belgrade	Institutional support, resource and training for minority organisations, advocacy for roma organisations

3.2 Outcome (impact)

As a country in transition, Serbia requires assistance in responding to areas that might otherwise be set on the side, and the view most often expressed during the evaluation is that CRD plays a significant role in ensuring these critical issues of human rights are on the agenda and are being addressed.

Mobilise trust, support and resources

All partner organisations, in responses to the questionnaire, report improvements in their ability to mobilise trust and support, notably in better relationships and increased trust with authorities. Specific

change is visible within the Police – there are specific examples of the Police addressing complaints from gay persons in a professional manner – Police who have participated in training provided through the CRD-funded program. These education programs are seen as “very important aspects” of the CRD program, with Labris reporting that beyond the work they have done with CRD assistance other organisations are now approaching them to provide input (workshops and lectures) within their existing programs. These are small steps, and more is needed, but they indicate change.

Build alliances

The work done by CRD in “coalitioning” is pointed to as an important development. As well as a number of references to CRD’s capacity to increase and improve general communication between NGOs (not insignificant in a sometimes divided sector) the specific work on developing coalitions in support of legislation and actions was pointed to as an important component of CRD’s work. Particular mention was made of the coalition formed to work on and lobby for the anti-discrimination law, the anti-hate speech coalition and the work done with the Media Centre.

In 2009, LGBT NGOs were attempting to organise the Pride Parade, but realised they did not have the capacity to do so – neither knowing what to do or how to do it. CRD provided them with both financial and non-financial support, including office space, coordination assistance, and contacting and lobbying with authorities. This support included provision of an expert to assess the security threats inherent in organising the event.

Interact with and influence authorities

According to external observers/ experts spoken to as part of the evaluation, there is no trust in the judicial system in Serbia, and most relationships are personal, not institutional. In this context, local organizations have a good understanding and good connections, and from a human rights perspective, NGOs drive the agenda.

The first “hate speech” case ever has happened in Serbia. The anti-discrimination law is also a good example. “The Anti-Discrimination Law would not have been possible without CRD.” Coupled with the law itself is the work they have done with free legal aid – “they were the only source of legal aid for people who have been discriminated against”. “The work they have done with the LGBT community – what they did with Labris is very important.” Labris themselves make the point that CRD is “a friend of our organisation”, and that the activist nature of the CRD role in Serbia is important to who they support and the outcomes they achieve.

Also commented on by external observers is the CRD-funded annual report on human rights and prison monitoring undertaken by the Helsinki Committee Serbia and the annual reporting undertaken by the Gay Straight Alliance on LGBT rights in Serbia, all of which provide authorities and the community with detailed analysis of the situation with and status of these key areas of human rights in Serbia. CRD partners have excellent relationships with the Office of the Ombudsperson, as well as the improving relationship with the Police described above.

3.3 Relevance

The CRD country and related objectives and program are relevant to Serbia, to its partner organisations and to Sida objectives in Serbia, which include and emphasis on “cooperation with state institutions and strengthening of civil society”, both of which are components of the CRD program, the “interaction among these actors”, also a focus of the CRD program and a focus on “the participation of minorities in the development of society”, a key within CRD’s program which includes the Roma community, LGBT organisations and people with disabilities.

As well as the specific legal outcomes related to legislation, and the educational work being done with authorities, a significant amount of work is being done with the media that are bringing about change in how the media reports on human rights, particularly with relation to the Roma and LGBT commu-

nities. CRD and its partners are very proactive with the media, and this emphasis is having an impact on reporting.

The Helsinki Committee of Serbia is supported in its work on prison monitoring. “We raised the awareness of prison management of the importance of the human rights of prisoners and of the prisoners of their own rights so these rights could be respected. Prison authorities have an understanding and our recommendations have contributed to improved conditions in two prisons.” HCS had been doing prison monitoring for some time, but had stopped – the CRD support allowed this monitoring to be initiated again.

Only two political parties in Serbia have policies on non-discrimination related to the LGBT community. Only 8 LGBT organisations exist in Serbia, of which two, or three depending on circumstances, can be described as advocacy organisations. There is a critical need for support to and development of this area of the NGO sector.

3.4 Effectiveness

The CRD approach in Serbia is “partnership, not patronage” and incorporates a focus on the work of partner organisations generally, not on particular projects. The CRD approach is also more focused externally, on change in legislation and change in the practice of authority, than on its partner organisations themselves. In many instances this is visible in the existing strength of partner organisations (no organisation reports receiving more than 50% of its program funds from CRD, and of the 12 reporting, only 4 receive more than 33% of core funding from CRD and half get less than 20%). CRD does address organisational development, and is effective in assisting partner organisations in developing a more strategic approach, and to “focus our efforts more effectively”, to quote one partner. The consistent view across partners, boundary partners and external observers is that this approach is correct and effective.

With the CRD emphasis on human rights, and its activist approach, partners and observers commented on the role CRD plays in agenda-setting and in focusing directions. While the question was raised during field interviews about “ownership”, and “an appropriate framework to develop a civil society model for Serbia”, the consistent view was that this was a positive, not a negative. The view was that a strong, international NGO acting as donor/ partner, particularly one with a strong local knowledge and presence adds value to the work of local human rights NGOs. One external observer said “I hear good things from civil society, I hear good things from Parliament. The framework organisations are strong names with strong reputations and with demonstrated competence.” Another external observer noted that human rights NGOs in Serbia will struggle without the international nature provided by CRD, as this international nature provides a stature not found locally.

It is arguable that the approach is an effective application of both a top-down and a bottom-up approach to addressing human rights issues, with a respected, activist international human rights NGO providing a framework for and impetus/ assistance to local human rights NGOs, providing a wider perspective and knowledge to the local organisations and giving the international organisation effective, locally-based knowledge and capacity.

As well as other areas discussed in more detail, responses to the questionnaire indicate strong support from partners to the effectiveness of CRD’s work in assisting partners in their program focus and development of their strategic approach.

3.5 Cost efficiency

The evaluation team considers CRD provides a cost-efficient delivery of Sida funding. Generally organisations are not supported to 100% of needs, and CRD funding has been directed to a component of the organisation’s work that benefited from the extra focus for a period of time. Generally

organisations receive some form of core support, but this is not a universal situation. Support is generally multi-year, and efficiency would benefit from multi-year agreements between CRD and its partners.

As indicated above, the activist, committed nature of CRD's approach is of particular importance to partner organisations, and to overall and cost effectiveness. CRD can and does adjust its approach to partners based on need – organisational or strategic – and is responsive to these needs because of the nature of the organisation. It is considered important, when discussing cost efficiency, the focused nature of the CRD approach.

3.6 Sustainability

The evaluation team visited two organisations funded by CRD (four, given BCHR was funded in the past by CRD, but the visit to BCHR was specifically related to OPC). None of the three can be described as being financially dependent on CRD funding, although 40% of Veliki Mali's core support is from CRD. As indicated above, many CRD supported organisations have a larger, or wider focus, and do not depend on Swedish donations. However, this does not mean they are financially self-sustainable. As commented by one external expert: "There is a clear perspective: if international donor funding stops, organisations will either cease to exist or they will become service providers in competition for government funds."

There is the other side to sustainability – organisational capacity beyond just the question of finances. While the organisations visited all demonstrated levels of professionalism, and reasonable to excellent strategic approaches to their planning and implementation, there is a fragility in their existence. Labris is a case in point. The evaluation team has spoken to three of the organisation's leaders in recent weeks, each of whom demonstrated professionalism, capacity, foresight and motivation. Unfortunately, all Labris staff have resigned and are leaving the organisation as the result of an internal disagreement with the organisation's governing committee over future directions. Labris will probably continue as an organisation, but will not be engaged in advocacy on behalf of the lesbian community.

Without CRD assistance, Veliki Mali will almost certainly be able to continue to provide support to the parent's and families of children with disabilities, but will almost certainly not continue with its current, national focus on advocacy, and organisational development for similar organisations. CRD itself indicates that the participation of CRD staff in partner activities is a positive aspect of their work.

4. Olof Palme International Centre

4.1 Background and History

According to documentation of the Olof Palme International Center (OPC), the Centre "works in the spirit of Olof Palme for democracy, human rights, and peace. We cooperate with people and organizations throughout the world, in nations such as Brazil, Burma, South Africa, Palestine, and Moldova. Through our development projects, we seek to empower people to change their societies and thereby their own lives. Women, youth, and grassroots activists are our main target groups. It is the conviction of the Palme Center that an active, democratic civil society, based on the needs and aspirations of the people is a basic precondition for stable democratic social development."¹⁵⁶

The Palme Center started to work in the Balkans during the war in the early 1990s and has continued to support partnership between Swedish and Balkan civil society ever since. In Serbia, the Palme Center has supported different peace groups since the beginning of the 1990s, including the anti-Milosevic movement. The Palme Center has a local office in Belgrade; the programme is managed by Serbian and Swedish head office staff. The Palme Center programme in Serbia has always been character-

¹⁵⁶Palme Centre Strategy for South East Europe Programme Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo 2008–2011

ised by partnership and mutuality, based on the respect and conviction that our partners are the drivers of development and the ones to formulate problems and solutions.

During the period since the programme started in the early 1990s, the developments in the region have been considerable and the Palme Center has continuously adapted the programme to the changing situation.

Besides extensive work in the Balkans, the Palme Center has a long experience in different regions of the world in the field of democracy development and human rights. The Swedish member organisations bring their experience and knowledge into the international cooperation.”

The Palme Center and partners directly aim to increase the capacity of NGO's to identify common interests and needs and advocate effectively to influence the public and private sectors on issues such as sustainable funding mechanisms, the role of civil society in public service delivery, public policy affecting civil society organisations, and allow the NGO community to function as a fully integrated sector of a democratic society. Besides support to a process of redefining the role of civil society by established Belgrade organisations, the Palme Center supports local initiatives in other parts of the country.¹⁵⁷

OPC's specific goals for Serbia are:

- Citizens are able to influence the local political agenda when elected representatives are more accountable.
- Citizens are involved in public debate on political issues.
- Citizen participation in member-based civil society by means of youth mobilisation has increased.
- Citizens and civil society organisations participate in the EU integration process.

Organisation	Location	Project Supported
Committee for Civic Initiative	Nis	Training local politicians and civil servants in problem solving, strategic management, activities related to functioning of local self-governments.
Center for Anti-war Action	Belgrade	Youth Activism in Local Communities
Belgrade Centre for Human Rights	Belgrade	Strengthen human rights knowledge among young professionals and students,
Regional Centre of Civic Action <i>LINGUA</i>	Kraljevo	Facing the past – reconciliation
Centre for Free Elections and Democracy – CeSID	Belgrade	Local initiatives and increased activism among citizens all over Serbia
Belgrade Open School	Belgrade	Facilitate the use of Internet as a tool for development of various aspects of civil society and to promote Internet as a mean for development of coop.
PROCONCEPT	Belgrade	The Analysis of Capability and Capacity of NGOs in Development of Civil Society in Serbia
Center for Democracy Foundation	Belgrade	Promotion of EU Policy of Gender Mainstreaming in Serbia
Center for Development of Non Profit Sector Western Serbia	Uzice	Empowerment of elected citizens and local staff to become more responsive to the needs of their community
KIOSK NGO	Belgrade	Establish a dialogue and communication between citizens of various ethnic groups through photo workshop

¹⁵⁷ Olof Palme – Serbia Application 2008 – 2011

Organisation	Location	Project Supported
Milenijum	Nis	Regional reconciliation for young people, the future of civil society in Serbia in the reform process
Toplica Center for Democracy and HR	Prokuplje	Promotion of common, shared European values, procedures and standards, municipalities in Toplica region
Center of modern skills	Belgrade	Training of local community NGOs in advocacy skills
Center for Development of Serbia	Belgrade	Involving citizens of Belgrade in monitoring and evaluating performance of local authorities
European Movement in Serbia	Belgrade, Vojvodina, Sandzak	Promotion and understanding of the innovative capabilities of social economic actors
Group Let's (since 2007)	Belgrade	Development of a Youth office model for local governments, increased youth activism and implementation of youth policy
Urban Inn (since 2007)	Novi Pazar	Increased civic participation in local community decision making, improved services

4.2 Outcome (impact)

The OPC approach in Serbia differs from both CRD and KtK in that theirs is a focus more on projects than on either the organisational development focus of KtK or the strong human rights focus of CRD. The projects of OPC include training, promotion and knowledge building, with a focus on Municipalities and young people (and young people in Municipalities). Given their approach, and the type of support they provide, impact is not readily apparent. The projects they support are important, useful, and valuable to participants and stakeholder groups/ organisations, but with some exceptions, impact cannot be ascribed to them. The evaluation visited three OPC-funded organisations, two of whom had been cooperating with OPC for many years. The projects are relevant to Serbia, and to OPC's reading of the situation in Serbia, but generally lack an individual strength or the strength that would come from a more strategically-focused OPC program.

Mobilise trust, support and resources

The Belgrade Centre for Human Rights project, which strengthens human rights knowledge in young professionals, is a worthy initiative in education, and in its 10 years of being funded by OPC (and 5 years prior to that with other funding) has influenced more than 500 participants. The evaluation team would argue that it is neither focused on nor has impacted OPC's key areas of citizen influence of local political agendas, citizen participation in member-based civil society, citizen involvement in the EU integration process and only marginally in citizen involvement in public debate. More importantly, after 15 years the program has evolved little and the role played by OPC is more friend and benefactor than partner and donor.

As well as other areas discussed in more detail, responses to the questionnaire indicate strong support from partners to the effectiveness of OPC's work in assisting partners in their program focus and development of their strategic approach.

Build alliances

Alliance/ network-building is not a focus of OPC's activities, and the project/ organisation-oriented approach which OPC uses does not lend itself to alliances. OPC's focus is on the specific projects of its partner organisations, and with the range of priorities there is a limited scope for alliance building. Networking happens, and OPC organises networking meetings with its partner organisations, but it is not a key component of the OPC approach in Serbia.

Interact with and influence authorities

OPC has funded the Nis-based Committee for Civic Initiatives for 12 years. During this time, OGI (from its Serbian name) has had four separate initiatives with OPC funding. The current School for

Europe has a tentative 4-year funding arrangement. The training program addresses 20–25 Municipal people (from two towns) each year. It is a three-month long program, with classes each Saturday. OGI, and its program in Nis, is synonymous with educational programs related to European integration. Municipal authorities respect their work, and previous OPC-funded projects have included training for politicians and training for young people in political parties. The project focuses on citizen involvement in the EU integration process, and is therefore relevant to OPC's agenda in Serbia.

The project being implemented by Hajde da (Group Let's ...), with a specific emphasis on youth involvement in local politics and development of a youth office model for Municipalities is having an impact in a number of Municipalities in the south-west of Serbia and in Belgrade, where there is an increase in the involvement of young people, and where an active role for Municipal Youth Offices is being defined and implemented.

4.3 Relevance

The OPC country assessment is relevant and appropriate. OPC's problem analysis includes issues with accountability at the level of local self government, and the program focus on local participation in civil activism is an appropriate response to this issue (and indeed to the issue of accountability at the national political level).

OPC's country assessment in relation to civil society is also relevant, wherein OPC describes the four major problems it sees with civil society in Serbia today:

- The non-existence of a legal framework for civil society (which has since been addressed, with the new law on citizen's associations).
- Lack of stable financial resources (which remains, and will continue to remain for many years, a critical issue).
- Citizens' lacking confidence in the civil society.
- Avoidance of direct political activities (and involving themselves in "expert" activities rather than the real issues that impact on people daily).

4.4 Effectiveness

Unfortunately, the OPC program with civil society does not focus sufficiently on the assessed problems, an area in which the work of OPC could be improved, as the relevance and impact of their activities each lack strength for the same reasons – the program to respond to the problem analysis is not linked well enough to the problem analysis and specific projects are therefore not focused appropriately.

According to OPC, it's "programme goals leave a lot of space for creative ideas of Serbian organisations to devise concrete projects. This reflects the Palme Center's conviction that it is more effective to support home-grown initiatives rather than to look for implementation partners for pre-determined projects."¹⁵⁸ While agreeing in principle, the evaluation team is of the view that there needs to be a stronger correlation between OPC's problem analysis and objectives and the project/ organisation work to be supported.

There appears to be a lack of correlation between OPC's problem analysis and objectives and the actual project/ organisation work being funded. While there are some links, it is the view of the evaluation team that OPC should re-visit its partnerships and its projects in the context of its problem analysis, and seek initiatives from civil society organisations designed to address these problems. While this becomes more relevant in the longer term, it is worth asking the question now, for example, of the BCHR's program – "Where does this program fit our problem analysis and our country objectives?"

¹⁵⁸Olof Palme – Serbia Application 2008–2011

4.5 Cost efficiency

The evaluation team considers OPC provides a cost-efficient delivery of Sida funding. Generally organisations are not supported to 100% of needs, and OPC funding is directed to single components of a partner organisation's work. Generally organisations receive some form of core support, but the levels are not high. This is indicative of the type of organisation and support provided by OPC, ie larger, stable organisations where OPC provides project support in specific areas. Support is generally multi-year, and efficiency would benefit from multi-year agreements between OPC and its partners.

As with CRD, most organisations funded by OPC receive only a small proportion of their funding in this way (of 10 reporting organisations, only one receives more than 50% of its funds from OPC and 5 report 10–15%). Generally speaking core funding levels are even lower, with the exception of CRS (The Centre for the Development of Serbia) which receives almost 70% of its core funding from OPC).

4.6 Sustainability

Sustainability of OPC's work in Serbia has been achieved to a certain extent. Financially, only one organisation which responded to the questionnaire will depend on OPC funding for their future existence, and all organisations indicate that their OPC-funded work fits within their ongoing activities and operational context. The three organisations visited as part of the evaluation are all on-going concerns – their project make-up/ activities will be affected depending on whether or not they receive OPC money, but their existence is not in any way endangered if they do not receive Sida assistance.

Looking beyond finances, OPC itself indicates that the participation of OPC staff in partner activities is a positive aspect of their work.

5. Overall comments on the Modality

The approach of providing support to civil society through Swedish NGOs, with a presence in the field is effective, relatively cost-efficient and has seen an impact on Serbian society. The modality itself has some particularly good aspects, and some areas where modifications are required, but in general represents an appropriate approach for Sida to take to delivery of its support to civil society.

It is and will remain difficult to balance the creativity, activism and possibility of independent CSOs with the necessary and desirable form and structure desired by Sida as a donor. Working to maintain this balance though is a very important component for the success of the program, and the ongoing processes of program design and management, and the selection of framework organisations, should be undertaken in a way that encourages the maintenance of this creative tension, as it is a hallmark of the modality.

The use of NGOs as implementing partners is a positive component of the program. More so, the use of NGOs with different backgrounds, different priorities and different modes of operation is not seen as an issue or problematic but as an enabling aspect of the modality. Civil society organisations bring a commitment and activism that cannot be found in organisations from government or the private sector. This is their great value. They will tend to focus on their own priorities, and may well address administrative requirements less strongly than required, but these issues can be dealt with structurally, in the contractual relationship. This is not to say that NGOs in general, nor the existing framework organisations in particular, have not done an effective job of program administration, but to indicate that one particular benefit of using NGOs, to work with NGOs, is that their focus is on the work they are doing and the external works they want to achieve, not on project management per se.

Sida's priorities with regards civil society are wide, and activist NGOs will tend (although not exclusively) to operate within a narrow range of issues, with a narrow range of priorities. In order to cover its priorities, the use of NGOs from a wider range of backgrounds is both appropriate and effective. While

a project management consultancy might have the capacity to work with “partners” across all partner areas, their in-depth knowledge will never compare, and they will never be able to achieve the quality of relationship – the quality discussed by all partners interviewed during the evaluation. This quality of partnership is one thing that sets the modality apart from other approaches.

It is relevant and appropriate to juxtapose the approaches of Framework Organisations in this discussion. The organisations have different priorities, different types of partners, different approaches (although each provides multi-year funding to longer-term partners) and different outcomes. The important word is different, as it does not imply a value judgement. It is this difference that gives strength to the outcomes of the support, precisely because a wider range of organisations with a wide range of capacity are benefiting from the support and from the relationship with international NGOs. It would be difficult to compare and value of the work done by these organisations in Serbia. Notwithstanding the qualifications discussed in the framework organisation section above, the evaluation team was generally impressed with the work of the organisations. But they are not comparable, not as organisations nor in their approach. It is the view of the evaluation team that this is an important positive of the modality.

The use of Swedish NGOs is appropriate, although they must have a field presence in each country in which they work. Swedish organisations provide a link back to Stockholm, and to Sida, ensuring a clear line of communication to the donor as required. Whether or not these NGOs use local, Swedish or other nationals as their program officers should be a matter for the organisations. It would be worth considering the use of a Swedish NGO – National NGO partnership as a framework organisation. This would provide local NGOs with strong international support and assistance in developing the work and their profile while providing Swedish NGOs with a strong local component.

Sida would benefit from clarifying its internal understanding of and arrangement regarding the delivery of the support, particularly the understandings between Sida Stockholm and Sida offices in relevant Embassies. There is not always a correlation between projects funded by this program and funding provided directly by the Embassies, and there is overlap which appears based on a lack of knowledge. Some Embassies are more knowledgeable about and/ or involved in the program.

A much clearer understanding must exist between Sida and the framework organisations regarding the responsibilities of the framework organisations and of Sida. The existing arrangement is neither detailed enough, clear enough or well enough understood by the parties. The selection of framework organisations must be done transparently, against a clear Terms of Reference. The financial framework for the services associated with overseeing the support should be provided as part of each organisation’s tender documentation. The financial framework must clearly delineate between direct program support, organisational development support (including national and regional networking activities) and administrative support. All components should be clearly justified in terms of program outcomes and administrative arrangements.

While it will be important to allow the framework organisations to operate within their existing priorities, these must fit within Sida’s overall strategy for the Western Balkans and each country, meaning these strategy statements must form part of the tender documentation and tendering NGOs must be willing and able to provide services within one or more of the strategic priorities.

A wider representation of NGOs should be represented in the tendering/ selection process, although existing framework organisations should be welcome to tender. It does not need to be pre-determined that 1, or 2, or 3 organisations will provide services– responses to the tender call should inform this decision. It may be that an organisation provides a proposal for a relatively small component of the total program – if the approach, outcomes and financial structure fall within the overall program framework, such an outcome need not be discouraged.

The processes followed by framework organisations in selection of project and partners for funding require greater transparency, and a greater emphasis on ensuring organisations in a position to design and implement projects of relevance to Sida priorities – and within the priorities of framework organisations – have an opportunity to access available funding. The selected framework organisations should manage a call for proposals in each country, by each organisation. The call should be open, against a clearly defined criteria and the decision-making process transparent and publicly announced.

- Program flexibility is important, with a focus on strong outcomes and the development of the capacities and organisational sustainability of funded organisations.
- The intent and priority of each organisations’ call (and therefore the types of activities to be funded) can and should be determined by the framework organisation, according to their priorities and their agreement with Sida.
- The program should allow multi-year agreements with funded partners in each country and should encourage funded organisations to consider, design and submit proposals for 2, 3 or 4 year programs with a clear beginning and end and a clear need for the multi-year focus to achieve desired outcomes. The purpose of the multi-year arrangements is to allow projects that require more than one year to deliver outcomes to be designed and implemented with confidence of funding arrangements – such arrangements are better for the donor and the implementing agency. However, multi-year arrangements where funding is provided to repeat an activity should be discouraged – the program focus should be on multi-year arrangements for outcomes and impact, not on consistency of funding of organisations for the sake of it.
- Single year projects should not be discouraged. It is worth considering to allow organisations funded in this way to return for follow-up funding, if it is needed and desirable. Again, however, the principle should be follow-up funding (meaning funding for specific, important value adding) not repeat funding.
- Framework organisations should be required to retain a proportion of the allocation they will provide in grants (20% is recommended). This component is to be available to be used for a) follow-up activities as described above, b) for organisations who did not apply at the initial call for proposals, c) for issues that emerge and require immediate response, d) for “special initiatives” or e) for subsequent Call for Proposals later in the program period.
- A cost-share component would be of value. All funded organisations have experience with the requirement to find 10% or 20% of a grant amount, and the requirement to find the cost-share component creates an ownership dynamic in relation to the grant and the project.

The current emphasis on results-based management should be confirmed and enhanced, with framework organisations and funded organisations required to have a set of clear outputs and outcomes – clearly linked to their priorities and the intents of their program – and to report against measurable indicators relevant to the output/ outcome statements. It is an important organisational management discipline, of relevance to all organisations in all fields. It would be worth considering having each framework organisation undertake an impact assessment of their work, at the end of the program, against their program design matrix.

The program requires a formal cooperation and coordination between framework organisations in each country. Formal cooperation in Sweden is also recommended.

The particular skills and qualities of the field staff is critical. They must be senior, i.e. with experience and “presence” as well as having the right training and employment background. Senior does not mean they must be old, but young people lacking field experience are highly unlikely to fill the requirements.

List of Interviewees

Framework Organizations

Name of the interviewee	Organization
Goran Miletic	Civil Rights Defenders
Natalije Bratuljevic	Civil Rights Defenders
Ana Lidstrom (two meetings)	Kvinna til Kvinna
Danilo Milic (two meetings)	Olof Palme International Centre

Framework Organizations Country Partners

Name of the interviewee	Organization	Framework Organization
Jovana Zoric	Belgrade Centre for Human Rights	OPC
Suzana Krstic	Organisation "Let's" (Hajde da)	OPC
Srdjan Mitrovic	Organisation "Let's" (Hajde da)	OPC
Predrag Cveticanin	Committee for Civic Initiatives (OGI)	OPC
Bogdan Djurovic	Committee for Civic Initiatives (OGI)	OPC
Ana Zorbic	Zenski Prostor (Women's Space)	KtK
Vera Kurtic	Zenski Prostor (Women's Space)	KtK
Milena Celic	Zenski Prostor (Women's Space)	KtK
Biljana Pavlovic	Pescanik	KtK
Mirjana Jovanovic	Pescanik	KtK
Sandra Farkas	Pescanik	KtK
Snezana Jakovljevic	Pescanik	KtK
Slavica Stanojlovic	Pescanik	KtK
Jelena Memet	Pescanik	KtK
Dragana Vuckovic	Labris	CRD
Marija Savic	Labris	CRD
Natasa Milojevic	Veliki Mali	CRD

Boundary Partners

Name of the interviewee	Institution/Organization	FO Local Partner	Framework Organization
Zarko Markovic	Self	BCHR	OPC
Sanja Toskovic	Self	BCHR	OPC
Nevena Dacic	Self	BCHR	OPC
Minja Blazic	Self	BCHR	OPC
Danilo Curic	Self	BCHR	OPC
Amelija Jovanovic	Youth Office Savski Venac	BCHR	OPC
Vesna Simic	Grad Nis – Department for Agriculture and Rural Dev	OGI (Committee for Civic Initiatives)	OPC
Ana Sacipovic	Osvit	Zenski Prostor	KtK
Dusan Knezevic	Self	Veliki Mali	CRD
Gorana Trajulovic	Self	Veliki Mali	CRD
Ilja Jovic	Self	Veliki Mali	CRD
Snezana Zivkovic	Romano Aliv	Pescanik	KtK
Slavica Rakic	Romano Aliv	Pescanik	KtK

Angelina Eric	Activist	Pescanik	KtK
Stanka Dimitrijevic	Book-keeping Agency "Digitron"	Pescanik	KtK
Dragica Obradovic	Political Party G17+	Pescanik	KtK
Snezana Jovanovic	Pescanik	Pescanik	KtK
Nada Budimirovic	Weekly Magazine "Grad"	Pescanik	KtK
Dejana Jovanovic	Political Party LDP	Pescanik	KtK
Mihaela Balevic	Self	Pescanik	KtK
Vesna Viskovic	Municipal Assembly Krusevac	Pescanik	KtK

External Parties

Name of the interviewee	Organization
Ana Sekulic	Sida – Swedish Embassy Belgrade
Bjorn Mossberg	Sida – Swedish Embassy Belgrade
Andrej Nosov	Heartefact Fund
Marko Karadzic	State Secretary, Ministry for Human and Minority Rights
Miodrag Milosavljevic	Fund for an Open Society
Slavica Stojanovic	Reconstruction Women's Fund
Zoe Gudovic	Reconstruction Women's Fund



EVALUATION OF SUPPORT TO THE CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

The Ministry of Science and Technology (MCT) created in 2005 is a central organ of the Government tasked to regulate, plan, coordinate, monitor and evaluate activities related to science and technology in Mozambique. From the onset of its creation, MCT was committed to develop the National Research System and to create a National Research Fund. Sida's contribution to MCT of 15.4 MSEK for the period 2007–2009 was directed to the research and innovation activities managed by MCT within the National Research System. An in-depth assessment of Sida's support to MCT was carried out in 2010. The assessment was very positive and Sida is recommended to continue the support to MCT with focus on the National Research Fund, FNI.

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