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**NGOs and Peacebuilding in Kosovo**

**Monica Llamazares and Laina Reynolds Levy**

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**Authors:**

Monica Llamazares (m.llamazares@bradford.ac.uk)

Laina Reynolds Levy (l.k.reynolds@bradford.ac.uk)

**Summary:**

The growing international interest in peacebuilding as a concept and programme area requires a critical understanding of its implementation on the ground. This audit aims to explore the definitions and applications of peacebuilding employed by local and international NGOs in Kosovo today.

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The observations, views and interpretations expressed in this paper are those of the authors.

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## 1. Introduction

Peacebuilding in the context of post-war reconstruction processes such as Kosovo's has become a popular term to describe the increasingly explicit link between relief, development and peace made by organisations involved in such interventions. This growing international interest in peacebuilding as a concept and programme area requires a critical understanding of its implementation on the ground. This audit aims to establish a current snapshot of post-settlement peacebuilding activity in Kosovo by local and international non-governmental organisations (LNGOs and INGOs hereafter). The enquiry also attempts to explore the definitions and applications of peacebuilding used by INGOs and LNGOs in Kosovo, and the extent to which there exists a consensus around the idea of peacebuilding amongst them.

Central to this discussion is an assumption that NGOs have a key role to play in building a positive peace in Kosovo. This assumption is central to the current peacebuilding approaches of most of the agencies in the 'international community.' Much of the international funding for the reconstruction process in Kosovo has been channelled through INGOs, and thence to their 'partner' LNGOs, in the belief that they are more independent, principled, and legitimate than for-profit or governmental agencies. Some of these assumptions are found to be put to the test by the realities of implementation of peacebuilding programmes, and are examined in this paper. LNGOs are also believed to have a unique capacity to positively contribute to peace-building processes such as the one underway in Kosovo; however the nature and impact of this contribution needs to be critically explored. In this paper we hope to challenge some of the myths sustained by both practitioners and academics about the inherently benign nature of either LNGO or INGO contributions to peacebuilding.

The audit builds on data collected during a survey of 21 humanitarian, development and peacebuilding organisations in Kosovo. Interviews and focus groups were conducted from 7-29 April 2003 in Prishtina/ Priština, Gjilan/ Gnjilane, Peja/ Peć, Mitrovica and Prizren<sup>1</sup>. Although the sample is neither random nor large enough to permit much generalisation, we did attempt to balance international and Kosovan participation and include small and large organisations. The researchers make no claims that the analysis represents a comprehensive or representative audit of all peace-related work in Kosovo, indeed we are acutely aware that there are many organisations doing excellent peacebuilding work who we have not had the chance to interview. Using the data collected during the survey as well as other published reports and our own experiences of researching and working in Kosovo over the past four years, we attempt to make some observations regarding the current state of peacebuilding in Kosovo and make some connections to the wider political context.

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<sup>1</sup> A note on language: Throughout this report we use Kosovo as the most common English-language spelling of the province's name, as opposed to Kosova (Albanian) or "Kosovo and Metohija" (Serbian). This does not imply any political opinion as to the appropriate resolution of the current conflict. Because of the contested status of the territory, place names are controversial. We have tried to recognise this by including the Albanian and Serbian names for cities and places within Kosovo, except where the two are substantially similar (e.g. Prizren).

We are extremely grateful to all of people who agreed to be a part of this research, and have relied on many of their insights and experiences in compiling this paper, but we bear the final responsibility for the opinions expressed herein.

## 2. Setting the Scene

### Key Statistics about Kosovo

- **Area:** about 11,000 square km.
  - **Population:** about 2 million
  - **Ethnic Composition:** 88% Albanian, 7% Serb, and 5% others (mainly Slavic Muslim (1.9%), Roma (1.7%) and Turkish (1%))
  - **Urbanisation:** over 60% live in rural areas
  - **Age:** about 1/3 under 15 years of age; more than half under 25 years
  - **Poverty:** over half 'poor' or 'very poor'
- Sources: (World Bank 1999; Statistical Office of Kosovo 2003)

Kosovo is a territory with a long history of contested and ambiguous political status, and a history of coexistence—sometimes peaceful, sometimes violent—between a variety of ethnic, linguistic and religious groups of people. A detailed historical analysis is beyond the scope of this paper, however there are many important legacies from the past that continue to shape the present, analysed more fully in works such as Noel Malcolm and Miranda Vickers' historical surveys of Kosovo (Malcolm 1998; Vickers 1998), not to mention the libraries of work on the history and sociology of the countries most recently united under the designation 'Yugoslavia'.<sup>2</sup>

For the purposes of this brief paper, it is most important to trace the changing relationship of "civil society" (broadly defined as interactions of citizens outside the formal political sector and distinct from the private, for-profit sector) to state and para-state political structures. The historical patterns of relationships between these key sectors continue to affect the context of peacebuilding work in Kosovo today.

### 2.1 The Rise of Nationalist Politics in Yugoslavia

As an autonomous province of Serbia and a constituent unit of the Yugoslav federation under the 1974 constitution, Kosovo enjoyed a high degree of self-government. During the late 1960s and 1970s, Kosovo Albanians gained substantial representation in important cultural and political institutions including the Communist Party (Malcolm 1998). The death of Yugoslavia's dictator Tito in 1980 ushered in a period of economic decline and increasing polarisation between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians, in the context of an increasing 'ethnicisation' of politics throughout Yugoslavia (Mertus 1999; Fitz 2001). Politicians, in particular ex-Serbian President Slobodan Milošević, were able to exploit the symbolic importance of Kosovo in the Serbian national

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<sup>2</sup> Space prohibits a comprehensive listing, but an overview of the field can be found in: (Ramet 1992: ; Glenny 1996: ; Lampe 1996: ; Silber and Little 1996: ; Stokes, Lampe et al. 1996: ; Allcock, Horton et al. 1998: ; Allcock 2000).

mythology as a key element of their rise to power in the late 1980s (Silber and Little 1996; Judah 1997). Beginning in 1989 Milošević's government in Belgrade rescinded the constitutional autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina, dissolved Kosovo's independent political institutions, dismissed almost all Kosovo Albanians from public sector positions and state-owned enterprises; and sponsored constant police harassment and violence against Albanians (Malcolm 1998).

## 2.2 The Birth of Civil Resistance in Kosovo

In reaction the Kosovo Albanians adopted a strategy of non-violent civil resistance, boycotting Serbian politics and creating a system of parallel schools, hospitals and other social service providers (Clark 2000). These institutions were financed by self-imposed taxation and were overseen by an umbrella political organisation called the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), led by Dr. Ibrahim Rugova. The result of these developments was a repressively maintained apartheid society. In the words of Kosovo Albanian writer Shkëlzen Maliqi,

“The distance is at present complete. Serbs and Albanians live separated from each other, the former as a privileged minority who, with the assistance of police and the army, administers and controls Kosova, while the latter, although in an overwhelming majority are subjected to powerful repression and complete marginalization in the political, social and economic life (Maliqi 1998).”

In order to provide the considerable organisation and social discipline needed for the parallel institutions to operate, the LDK drew on the traditional clan hierarchy of Albanian society, as well as on the structures and authority of the now-defunct Communist Party (ICG 1998: ; Maliqi 1998). The priority on social solidarity as part of the national struggle for independence and survival meant that internal political dissent was increasingly stifled (Judah 1997: ; Clark 2000). The powerful hybrid role of the LDK - simultaneously a resistance movement, a civil society and a one-party state bureaucracy, is one source of the difficulty Kosovo has had establishing a pluralistic civil society in the post-settlement period. Notwithstanding these pressures, several important volunteer or ‘non-governmental’ organisations were founded during the years of the civil resistance, many linked to the LDK but some independent. These included women's groups (Motrat Qiriazhi, the Center for the Protection of Women and Children), youth groups (the Post-Pessimists), human rights groups (the Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms) and many others (Clark 2000: ; IICK 2000).

Although Kosovo historically had suffered from poverty, neglect and underdevelopment,<sup>3</sup> the exclusion of most of Kosovo's work-force from the formal economy meant that by 1995 the unemployment rate had grown to about 70% (1999). In a study of poverty in Kosovo, a consortium of aid organisations asserts,

“The Kosovo Albanians adjusted to this situation in three main ways: (a) emigration, mainly to Western Europe, expanding a Diaspora; (b) return to rural areas; and (c) development of a

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<sup>3</sup> In 1978 the median income in Kosovo was just 29% of the Yugoslav average (Allcock).

large “grey” economy (i.e. informal activities of a legal nature), and of some “black” activities of an illegal nature. (Mikhalev, Westley et al. 2000)”

### **2.3 From Civil To International War**

In the late 1990’s, the Kosovo Albanians’ commitment to non-violence began to collapse due to internal dissent, lack of international support and increasingly violent police repression. A group calling themselves the Kosova Liberation Army (UÇK) began to target Serb refugee centres, police stations, military barracks and cafes. By 1998 an all-out civil war was underway (Human Rights Watch 1998). However, many civil society organisations, particularly students’ and women’s groups, continued to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict (Clark 2000). Despite heavy international pressure, Milosevic refused to end the brutal police reprisals against Kosovo Albanians. After the failure of last-ditch negotiations in Rambouillet, near Paris, on 24 March 1999 NATO began a 78-day bombing campaign against Yugoslavia. Serb forces retaliated against Kosovo’s Albanian population, driving well over a million civilians<sup>4</sup> out of their homes, many into refugee camps in neighbouring countries or into the mountains. Between March and June 1999 an estimated 10,000<sup>5</sup> people were killed in Kosovo (Williams 1999: ; IICK 2000). In addition, Human Rights Watch estimated that 500 civilians were killed by NATO’s bombing (Arkin and Ivanisevic 2000).<sup>6</sup>

### **2.4 Conclusion**

During the 1990s Kosovo Albanian NGOs adopted the role of service providers, offering a forum for community organisation and support structures away from the Yugoslav state. These activities took place firmly within the parameters of a national struggle of resistance by the Kosovo Albanian population led by the cohesive structure of the LDK, thus a highly ethnicised and politicised environment. For Serbian and minority citizens of Kosovo, civil society organisations were also highly politicised and subject to domination by powerful state structures. INGOs and other agencies in Kosovo working with LNGOs must understand that the traditional “separate but complementary” relationship between governmental and non-governmental sectors has not been a part of the organisational culture of local civil society actors. On the other hand, distrust of the state meant that Kosovo Albanian civil society developed a tradition of not communicating or cooperating with governmental structures. This means that many LNGOs have not only inherited a hierarchical managerial culture, but also lack advocacy skills to complement their strong focus on service

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<sup>4</sup> The Independent International Commission on Kosovo estimates that over the course of the NATO campaign, “approximately 863,000 civilians sought or were forced into refuge outside of Kosovo. An estimated additional 590,000 were internally displaced (IICK 2000).”

<sup>5</sup> While at least one analyst has suggested that the death toll may be far lower than this based on the actual number of bodies exhumed (Stratfor 1999), the Independent International Commission on Kosovo notes that a preponderance of the scientific evidence points to a number in the range of 10,000 (IICK 2000: 306-307).

<sup>6</sup> The conduct and implications of the war have been the subject of intensive debate, including the implications of the war for humanitarian intervention, the legality of NATO’s targeting strategy, the role and conduct of the UCK, the preparedness of the international humanitarian community for the flood of refugees, and a host of other questions which we unfortunately do not have space to document or analyse here. See, for example, (Chomsky 1999: , Ignatieff, 2001 #413).

provision. Although this may suit international organisations looking for agreeable implementing partners, it is important that other types of organisations and empowering participatory processes are supported to promote a civil society capable of engaging effectively with governmental authority without being subordinated to it.

Other key patterns to emerge from the above overview include a history of not only inter-group but also intra-group violence, the development of separate governance and social service structures in each ethnic community, the lack of ‘bridging’ or constructive relationship-building mechanisms across the pervasive ethnic divide in Kosovo, and the importance and resilience of ‘informal’ economies that permeate the political sphere through corrupt practices.

### **3. The Aftermath of War**

The NATO campaign was suspended on June 10 1999. The UN Security Council swiftly approved Resolution 1244, which sanctioned NATO action and granted the province ‘substantial autonomy and meaningful self-administration,’ while recognising the ‘sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.’ The resolution also established the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) as a transitional government. Shortly thereafter the Yugoslav forces began their withdrawal and the first contingents of the 40,000 strong NATO-led ‘Kosovo Protection Force’ (KFOR) began entering Kosovo. Within days, tens of thousands of refugees started to head home.

As KFOR advanced, thousands of Serb civilians fled Kosovo. Serbs who stayed in the province along with minorities such as Roma, who were suspected of being collaborators, became the targets of revenge attacks. Many were forced out of their homes or killed. Orthodox churches and other cultural monuments also came under attack. After the summer of 1999 only about half of the pre-war Serb population of 200,000 people remained in Kosovo, isolated in KFOR-guarded enclaves<sup>7</sup> (IICK 2000). Serb-majority areas such as the northern municipalities near Mitrovica remained under the

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<sup>7</sup> Other sources suggest a figure of closer to 200,000 displaced minority community members (ICG 2002).

authority of Belgrade and were unwilling to accept the provisional administration. UNHCR and OSCE noted the following trends in the situation of minorities in November 1999:

- “a climate of violence and impunity, as well as widespread discrimination, harassment and intimidation directed against non-Albanians...;
- a steady decline in the numbers of ethnic minorities (mainly Serbs and Roma);
- an increasing tendency towards concentration in mono-ethnic enclaves;
- continued isolation and restricted freedom of movement; and
- lack of access to public services -- especially education, medical/health care -- resulting in efforts to create “parallel” systems or activities in some areas. (OSCE 1999).”

The war had a devastating effect on the infrastructure of a province already damaged by years of under-investment and conflict. About 500,000 people lacked shelter in July 1999. There were more than 500 schools in need of repair, the health care system, the civil administration and the banking system had collapsed; roads were in ruin, village wells had been deliberately polluted, there was no electricity, telephone or mail service. The European Commission and World Bank estimated that nearly 2.4 billion US dollars would be needed for reconstruction over about four years (1999).

### **3.1 UNMIK- An Experiment In Large-Scale International Administration**

The enormous multi-national and multi-organisational peace support operation deployed in Kosovo was structurally the most complex mission ever planned, attempting to replace all of the functions of a state, and giving the UN unprecedented executive authority over Kosovo. The first regulation passed by the UN Administration, in July 1999, vested “all legislative and executive authority, including the administration of the judiciary,” in the hands of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) (Kouchner 1999). In what amounts to a fairly non-democratic form of governance, the SRSG effectively holds a veto power over all the provisional institutions of self-governance, whether they have been established by the international administration or elected by the people of Kosovo.

KFOR was given responsibility for military-security aspects, while the civilian aspects of the reconstruction were led by the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), represented by the SRSG. Various international organisations were engaged as full partners in the effort by structuring UNMIK into four ‘pillars.’ The **civil administration** pillar is led by the United Nations; **humanitarian assistance** by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); **democratisation and institution-building** by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); and **economic reconstruction** by the European Union. At the completion of the ‘emergency phase’ in June 2000, the UNHCR pillar was phased out (although the organisation maintains a presence in the mission) and replaced by a ‘**Police and Justice**’ pillar, under the direct responsibility of the UN. This quasi-governmental institutional framework is supplemented by thousands of international and local non-governmental

organisations (NGOs) ranging from international humanitarian aid agencies to local citizens' associations. While the pillar structure was designed in an attempt to promote unity of effort among the partner organisations, in practice the work of each pillar is carried out separately, with problematic coordination and frequent overlap (Yamis 2001: 22-24).

### **3.2 Phases of Peacebuilding in Kosovo**

UNMIK conceived of the progress of the mission in five phases- summarised by Daan Everts, the former head of the OSCE 'institution-building' pillar,

“The general strategy of UNMIK was envisaged in five integrated phases: in the first phase, the mission would set up administrative structures, deploy an international civilian police and provide emergency assistance to returning refugees. Throughout the second phase, the focus would be on the administration of social services and utilities and the consolidation of the rule of law. In the third phase, UNMIK would finalise preparations and conduct elections for a Kosovo Transitional Authority. Thereafter UNMIK would help Kosovo's elected representatives organise and set up provisional institutions for democratic and autonomous institutions. The concluding phase would depend on a final settlement of the status of Kosovo (2001).”

Everts' phase one constitutes the short-term or Miall, et al.'s 'negative' peacebuilding phase (1999), in which the international community assumed responsibility for governance and security in the province. This phase encompassed the transition from post-war chaos (June-August 1999) to the establishment of UNMIK, and lasted until the first elections for local municipal governments (October 2000). For our purposes this will be called the '**emergency**' phase. The second and third phases, or medium-term, of the peacebuilding process, encompassed the period when local municipal government structures were established, but almost all of the governance functions were being fulfilled by the international community. This phase will be referred to as the '**transition**' period. This phase ended with the establishment of the Kosovo Assembly and provincial government, elected in November 2001 but not fully operational until March 2002. The creation of functional ministries with authority over local governance issues such as public services and budgets marked the beginning of the fourth and fifth phases ('**consolidation**' (Ball 1996)). This current phase is defined by the struggle for power between locally elected leadership and the SRSG, the issue of final status, and a shift in the focus of the reconstruction process from short-term relief to long-term development.

#### **3.2.1. Peacebuilding in the Emergency Phase**

For several months, UNMIK struggled to deploy basic structures and personnel to carry out its mandate, while power struggles between Albanian political factions created confusion and widespread lawlessness (O'Neill 2002: ; Brand 2003). In a pattern familiar from other post-settlement situations, the operational definition of peace in Kosovo's emergency phase was simply about the absence of large-scale violence, or 'negative' peace. This meant that highly militarised, visible security was given priority over long-term peacebuilding concerns. For example, when French KFOR was able to secure the bridge over the river Ibar in Mitrovica, they calculated that it would be easier to control the area if they allowed a temporary partition of the city. While this may have been

an effective military strategy in the short term, it has proven impossible to re-integrate the city once that dividing line had been created.

After the winter of 1999-2000, the international community was keen to hold elections as a visible marker of progress towards peace and self-governance. The first post-war elections, for municipal-level government, were held in October 2000. However, despite the huge effort expended to include displaced and enclave-bound minority communities in this process, Kosovo Serbs boycotted the elections. UNMIK and other international agencies realised that the security and integration of minority communities needed to be given higher priority.

In the emergency phase, most agencies focused on urgent humanitarian needs, including providing shelter, fuel, food and water to help the newly returned refugees survive the winter of 1999-2000. The international humanitarian NGOs quickly became an enormous presence in Kosovo, encouraged by large bilateral assistance programmes from donor governments. Where they lacked the logistical capability to deliver aid, they were assisted by KFOR, in an unprecedented role as a major humanitarian actor. The INGOs were eager to engage local NGOs in the delivery of their programmes as ‘implementing partners,’ but Kosovo’s NGO sector was not sufficiently large or diverse to absorb this input, so many local NGOs in the form of ‘branch offices’ of various humanitarian organisations were created. These hybrid international/ local humanitarian structures were the primary providers of social services during the emergency phase, and enormous sums of money flowed through them. The priority on urgent aid delivery meant that other concerns, such as monitoring the programmes for transparency and honesty, were sometimes subordinated. Lulzim Peci, the Executive Director of the prominent LNGO “Kosovo Civil Society Foundation (KCSF),” remarked that in many cases, the INGOs used local partners for logistics, but were not sufficiently concerned with transferring substantive expertise or management skills, an oversight which has had deleterious effects on the sustainability of LNGOs as the international funding is withdrawn.

### ***3.2.2. Peacebuilding in the ‘Transition’ Phase***

By the time of the 2000 elections, UNMIK had greatly increased its size and capacity, and was able to assume responsibility for the civil administration of the whole province with the exception of the municipalities near Mitrovica. Politically, the focus of the international community shifted to the establishment of the municipal governing structures and the civil service to fill them, and large-scale infrastructure projects gained priority over emergency humanitarian aid. As the immediate effects of the 1998-1999 conflict were repaired, longer-term legacies began to surface, i.e. large-scale smuggling and other organised crime activities, and it became clear that parallelism, patronage and patriarchy were still strongly entrenched in both the Serbian and Albanian political systems.

INGOs during this period began to speak of Kosovo moving along the ‘relief-to-development’ continuum, as most of the urgent humanitarian needs had been met for the majority population. The

most vulnerable groups in the province were now the Serb and minority communities in the enclaves, unable to travel without armed escort, lacking employment opportunities, and isolated from the continuing support of Belgrade (however limited) enjoyed by the northern Serb-majority municipalities that shared a border with 'inner' Serbia. Belatedly, it became clear that the reconstruction of Kosovo was not just about infrastructure and elections, but also had to include 'softer' elements such as tolerance, social mechanisms for conflict resolution and multi-ethnicity.

Local NGOs found that they had to cater their programming to these rapidly shifting international priorities in order to compete for donor money. Both international and local NGOs were often guilty of creating projects specifically in response to available funding as opposed to the needs of their beneficiaries. Nora Spahiu, Manager of the Canadian-funded "Kosovo Local Initiatives Program," noted that the most sustainable local NGOs had maintained their focus on a particular issue area, rather than changing their organisational priorities to attract international funds. The more forward-thinking INGOs and LNGOs began at this stage to consider withdrawal strategies, and to prioritise building the capacity of erstwhile local staff to manage independent, 'handed-over' LNGOs. However, many INGOs did not begin this process early enough, and have had to make hurried and damaging programme cuts as aid budgets to Kosovo began to shrink.

### ***3.2.3. Peacebuilding in the 'Consolidation' Phase***

The current phase of the peacebuilding process, the 'consolidation' stage, began with the formation of the provincial government in March 2002 following lengthy negotiations over the composition of the governing coalition. The ten central ministries,<sup>8</sup> the Kosovo Assembly and the 30 Municipal Councils of the 'Provisional Institutions of Self-Governance' (PISG) have now assumed responsibility from UNMIK for most of the civil administration of Kosovo, marking a watershed in the process of devolving power to democratically elected government. However, UNMIK and the SRSG have retained specific 'reserved powers' over sensitive issues such as foreign policy, minority issues and security.

Calling the current phase 'consolidation' lays bare the central contradiction of the peacebuilding process in Kosovo— consolidation of what? In the few other contemporary examples of international administration, such as Namibia, Cambodia, Bosnia and East Timor, the clear end-point of the peacebuilding process was a functioning, independent state. In the case of Kosovo the fundamental conflict of sovereignty over which the 1998-1999 war was fought remains unresolved. Hence the visions of the future, and the resulting political strategies, of the Kosovo Serbs, Kosovo Albanians and international community remain in conflict. The initial enthusiasm of the majority community in Kosovo at the arrival of KFOR and UNMIK has given way to growing tensions during

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<sup>8</sup> Finance and Economy; Trade and Industry; Public Services; Culture, Youth, Sports, and Non-Residential Affairs; Health; Environment and Spatial Planning; Education, Science and Technology; Transportation and Communication; Labour and Social Welfare; Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (Brand 2003)

the consolidation period due to constraints on self-governance. In a recent paper for the Kosovo Institute for Policy Research, the authors argue, “Overall, Kosovars accepted UNMIK but never really felt it theirs. They saw it as political, secretive and unaccountable to the local community in any way (Muharremi, Peci et al. 2003: 11).” UNMIK’s ‘Standards Before Status’ policy, which prioritises progress in achieving European standards of governance over decisions about sovereignty, reflects a laudable focus on the ‘root causes’ of the conflict, but in some cases has been used to stifle debate on this vital issue. The resulting environment of uncertainty about the future was seen by both Kosovar and international agencies interviewed for this audit as one of the central obstacles to peacebuilding. There is even the fear that, without a final ‘settlement’ of the issue, the conflict may re-ignite in the future. Indeed, in 2003 a renewed push by UNMIK and other international actors for a direct dialogue between Prishtina/ Priština and Belgrade has considerably increased the political temperature in the province and arguably contributed to an increase in ethnically-motivated violence.

Kosovo today faces several related challenges which are at the forefront of almost every government agency and NGO strategy. Economic development or ‘income generation’ is badly needed to address the province’s poverty and unemployment, and to generate tax revenue to enable the new democratic governance structures to function. The grim economic outlook, along with the lack of security, are some of the obstacles to the return of the remaining refugees and IDPs (mostly Serb and Roma citizens living in Montenegro and inner Serbia), despite the international community’s strong policy and financial focus on this issue. Finally, the withdrawal of international personnel and funding from Kosovo is increasingly evident as more and more NGOs and staff positions are ‘Kosovarised,’ or handed over to Kosovar staff.

LNGOs are in the process of adjusting their programmes to funding cuts and also to the heavy international emphasis on returns, which these local agencies are expected to facilitate and legitimise. LNGOs across the province are involved in the promotion of inter-ethnic dialogue between ‘returnee’ and ‘host’ communities at the grassroots level. Although this arrangement appears to be a sound peacebuilding approach, the speed and nature of the return process has largely been determined by donors. The explicit link made by international donors between increasingly rushed returns and poorly managed reconciliation initiatives to support them has put immense pressure on the relationship between LNGOs and their beneficiaries. It has also exposed the lack of attention paid to explicit peacebuilding initiatives in the past four years, which has resulted in a lack of understanding about, and receptiveness to, minority returns on the part of majority communities. The increase in ethnic violence in areas where returns have been insensitively pushed by international funding supports this view. It further suggests that the involvement of LNGOs has not ‘corrected’ the heavily top-down approach employed by their international counterparts in this as well as other peacebuilding activities in Kosovo.

### **3.3 Conclusion**

The emergency phase of the post-war intervention in Kosovo was characterised by an overwhelming international presence that not only paid little attention to peacebuilding, but also overshadowed local initiatives. This gave way to a transition period in which the role of the local NGO community as the service providers for international agencies was reinforced, often at the expense of accountability to their own constituencies. The final consolidation stage, with a shift to long-term development programming and a hand over or withdrawal of programmes by international agencies, marks the beginning of the end for the LNGO boom of 1999-2001.

The upcoming fifth year of UN administration in post-war Kosovo has brought home the need to critically examine the progress made so far in the peacebuilding endeavour. However, apart from project-specific assessments carried out by international agencies, there is a lack of comprehensive evaluation of processes and a worrying absence of ‘impact assessment’ mechanisms in the activities of those NGOs claiming to promote peace and reconciliation through their activities. The remainder of this paper is devoted to analysing the dynamics and issues salient to the current phase of the peacebuilding process in more detail.

#### **4. Peacebuilding In Kosovo: Definitions & Contributions**

The term peacebuilding can be used to describe a varied set of activities or programmes, the manner that these programmes are implemented as well as their potential outcomes. It refers to efforts undertaken at different levels of the intervention and implemented by different actors (Lewer 1999: 12). Lund worries that the definition of peacebuilding is broadening to mean “eliminating every bad thing that is afflicting society and achieving every one of its esteemed values (Lund 2003: 27).” The inclusion of so many activities, levels and actors under the umbrella term peacebuilding has rendered its definition so broad that it is in danger of becoming meaningless.

For the purposes of this paper, defining a programme or project as peacebuilding implies that it promotes positive peace in three dimensions: the activities undertaken, the process of implementation, and the impact or outcomes. International post-war peacebuilding is understood as the efforts by international actors as diverse as the UN, Government development agencies, the World Bank, NGOs, NATO, and the private sector to deliver cohesive reconstruction packages that include peace and sustainable development as core aims. The grouping of such diverse actors under the label ‘international peacebuilding community’ is not done under the assumption that they comprise a homogenous entity without individual strategies and methodologies. Peace can mean different things to different people and organisations. However, the traditionally clashing agendas of the above actors have recently given way to a shared language, and, at least rhetorically, an adherence to similar principles and definitions of what constitutes a successful peacebuilding process (Llamazares 2003).

The Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee (CPCC)<sup>9</sup> offers a Peacebuilding Activities Chart intended to identify activities that may be considered part of a broadly defined peacebuilding agenda. Some of these activities are explicitly linked to peace, while others are more indirect in their approach, linking progress in spheres such as economic development or democratic governance to the emergence of more peaceful relationships and communities. Many agencies involved in the reconstruction process in Kosovo are implementing programmes that fall under one or more of the categories below, although not all of them identify peacebuilding as a core aim of their activities:

- *“Conflict Resolution*, such as community-based initiatives, second track diplomacy, mediation and negotiation;
- *Early Warning*, for example intelligence and monitoring, data collection/analysis;
- *Civilian Participation in Peacekeeping Operations*;
- *Environmental Security*, such as conflict assessment and resolution in relation to source depletion, human migration, etc;
- *Physical Security*, like demobilisation, disarmament, de-mining, protection of civilians, police/security reform;
- *Economic Reconstruction*, infrastructure development, market reform, financial/economic institution-building, micro-enterprise, credit assistance;
- *Personal Security*, targeting gender, sexual orientation and racial/cultural - specific violence;
- *Human Rights*, reporting/investigating, training, advocacy;
- *Institutional/Civil Capacity Building*, government and NGO capacity building, implementation of peace accords, promotion of transparency/accountability;
- *Governance and Democratic Development*, such as electoral assistance, civic education and training, judicial reform and training, media reform and training;
- *Humanitarian Relief and Emergency Assistance*, tackling basic needs (food, shelter, health, suffering);
- *Training*, peacebuilding training in any of the other activities, training of trainers; *Social Reconstruction*, including psychosocial trauma, reintegration of refugees/IDPs/combatants, social services, peace education;
- *Policy Development, Assessment and Advocacy*, like research, assessment/evaluation, lessons learned, public consultation (CPCC 2002).”

#### **4.1 The Growing International Consensus Around Peacebuilding**

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<sup>9</sup> The CPCC is a network of Canadian non-governmental organizations and institutions, academics and individuals engaged in a wide range of activities related to addressing the cause and consequences of violent conflict [<http://www.peacebuild.ca>].

In the 1990s, international organisations involved in humanitarian relief and development began to include a peacebuilding agenda in their programmes in response to calls for more widespread “grassroots” participation in post-war peace processes. This was partly driven by a recognition of the potential impacts of humanitarian aid on peace and conflict (Anderson 1996), partly by the expansion of INGO relations with UN Agencies and military establishments, and by an increasing formalisation of relations with their donor governments (Duffield 2002: 54). For example, a greater proportion of funding for INGO programmes coming directly from their home Governments has tended to produce a convergence of policy priorities, which in turn has been transferred to local implementing partners. Smillie and Helmich have noted a ‘homogenisation’ of INGOs (1993: 23), a result of a convergence of approaches and adherence to an increasingly standardised peacebuilding delivery package.

The arrival of an increasingly co-ordinated ‘international peacebuilding community’ to a fragile, war-torn society means that as LINGOs and CBOs (Community-Based Organisations) begin to emerge from the rubble, there is often little room for ‘alternative’ forms of organisation or local definitions of peace. The structures set up to implement post-war peacebuilding processes are often top-heavy, concentrating efforts and resources at the highest level of the intervention. In the case of Kosovo, the cumbersome UNMIK Pillar structure and hundreds of INGOs quickly overwhelmed a civil society already weakened by war. As identified by Uvin (2002), the trend towards greater coherence amongst international peacebuilding agencies severely challenges the ownership of the process by local actors.

However, there are instances when the agreement between international and local actors in regard to peacebuilding priorities can be attributed to close partnerships that produce a negotiated or shared understanding. This (unfortunately rare) kind of cooperation contributes to the reconstruction process in Kosovo with the combination of ‘international legitimacy, regional resources and local expertise,’ suitable for effective post-war peacebuilding (Schnabel 2002: 17).

#### **4.2 How Is Peace Being Defined In Kosovo?**

By the time the international peacebuilding mission began arriving in Kosovo in June 1999, the overall aims of the intervention had already been defined by UNSCR 1244 and by the coordinated agendas followed by major donor states. However, there are a number of ways in which a shared understanding of good peacebuilding practice is emerging at field level in Kosovo.

UNMIK, as the leading structure of the international peacebuilding community in Kosovo, promulgates principles and guidelines that are applicable to all actors in the field. The ‘transmission’ of this message happens through, amongst other channels, a clear ‘chain of command’ connecting policy-making offices at headquarter level at UNMIK and the two tiers of governance below: regional offices and municipal offices, which are still supervised by internationals. The arguably

‘imported’ conceptualisation of sound peacebuilding strategies and aims is embedded into, for example, UNMIK’s criteria for registration of NGOs as legal entities. Strict guidelines regarding both management structures and decision-making procedures must be met by LNGOs to be legally recognised. The NGO registration forms contain a pre-defined categorisation of activities, into which local organisations must ‘fit’ to be legally recognised (UNMIK 1999). This could be seen as pre-empting a local definition of suitable activities, and certainly has the effect of reproducing a specific and culturally situated form of organising civil society amongst local NGOs.

To this we can add the criteria applied by INGOs when selecting their implementing partners amongst local organisations. INGOs bring from their headquarters to the field a mandate-driven set of criteria that inevitably shapes the programmatic priorities and organisational structure of their local implementing partners. The INGOs themselves are often struggling to maintain their own programmes and principles in the face of problematic relationships with donor governments. The strong competition amongst LNGOs to attract international funding means that the leverage of local actors to ‘negotiate’ these principles and guidelines remains weak. When preparing funding proposals, LNGOs have to conform to international priorities and use similar terminology to their potential donor. For example, UNHCR’s ‘Manual for Sustainable Return’ sets out not just general principles, but very specific operational guidelines which all organisations wishing to be involved in returns must follow (UNMIK and UNHCR 2003). It seems that, although most INGOs in Kosovo advocate participatory partnerships, the power dynamics within these relationships means that international definitions of what kind of peace to build and how to go about it often prevail.

The international consensus notwithstanding, in this audit it emerged that peacebuilding in Kosovo seems to have some specific characteristics and definitions. It is immediately apparent that a large proportion of peacebuilding projects are focused on young people. This is partly reflective of the demographics of Kosovo, where well over half the population is under 25, and partly reflective of a value choice, in that the young people of today will build the peaceful and democratic society of Kosovo’s future. Equally, NGOs may choose to work with youth because there are fewer political obstacles and the projects generally attract less controversy.

The parameters of peacebuilding even vary from municipality to municipality within Kosovo. In some cases this is due to historical traditions of multi-ethnicity and tolerance, for example Prizren’s multi-lingual urban mix of Albanian, Serbian, and Turkish has survived into the post-war period and has meant that minority citizens in the area have enjoyed more freedom of movement than in other municipalities. Also, each municipality had slightly different experiences during the 1998-99 war, for example the Gjilan/ Gnjilane area experienced less physical destruction than northern and western municipalities. Post-war peacebuilding activities in the municipality, such as the introduction of multi-ethnic market days in Gjilan/ Gnjilane and Lipjan/ Lipjan, have succeeded through a combination of local and international factors, including the election of a dynamic young mayor, and

the active support of US KFOR for multi-ethnic activities through the creation of the LNGO “Lansdowne Multi-Ethnic Professional Organisation.”

For the areas most traumatised by the war, including the municipalities centred on Peja/ Peć and Mitrovica, peacebuilding activities need to be more low-key, to the extent that NGOs active in these areas often avoid using explicit words like ‘peacebuilding’ or ‘reconciliation.’ When engaging in sensitive activities that are likely to bring criticism from within their own community, local actors sometimes rely on the protective umbrella of their international NGO donors as an ‘alibi.’ In Mitrovica, where the continuing division of the city has kept the conflict very active, one INGO felt that an extended process of building relationships and removing political obstacles were indispensable first steps before truly sustainable peacebuilding could begin. On a brighter note, some LNGOs such as the “Multi-Ethnic Children and Youth Peace Center” and “Community Building Mitrovica” felt able to be very open about the multi-ethnic aspects of the programmes because the value of ‘bridge-building’ in Mitrovica was clear to everybody, including community members and donors.

#### **4.3 Partnership for Peacebuilding: INGO and LNGO Contributions**

By The definition and application of the concept of peacebuilding takes place within the parameters of policy structures, but also in the context of relationships between actors involved that bring these policies to life. The nature of these relationships not only determines the leverage each partner exercises over definitions of peacebuilding, but often determines the quality of the contribution each partner makes to the process. Splitting local and international NGOs into distinct categories in terms of their understanding and applications of the concept of peacebuilding is not unproblematic, at least partly because LNGOs often mirror their international partners in methods and structure. Nonetheless, the distinction between international and local actors is a useful analytical tool to explore whether each has a unique contribution to make to the peace.

Most peacebuilding literature advocates local ownership of reconstruction processes, for both pragmatic and principled reasons. Large believes that the unique resources that local actors bring to the process make it imperative that meaningful participation takes place. She argues that a successful peacebuilding intervention should enable "indigenous leadership and activity rather than importing either expectations or packaged solutions" (Large 1997: 157). Stiefel advocates local ownership that goes beyond participation to transfer control from donors to recipients as local solutions tend to be "more effective, cheaper and more sustainable" (in Barakat and Chard 2002: 827). LNGOs have attributes that distinguish them from their international counterparts, such as greater access to beneficiary communities and a deeper knowledge of the cultural and political setting. However, in Kosovo this can be a double-edged sword as the highly politicised environment under which NGOs have traditionally operated means that assumptions about their neutrality or benign intentions may be misleading.

As international and local NGOs ‘mirror’ each other in structure, methods, programs, values, definitions of peace, is it possible to discern a distinct local contribution to peacebuilding? When LNGOs implement a sensitive peacebuilding project, such as supporting the return of displaced minorities to their home villages, the international partner remains very visible throughout the life cycle of the project. For example, LNGO staff in Kosovo often drive donated vehicles with their international partner’s logo clearly visible. This means that in the eyes of the beneficiary communities the project retains a strong international as opposed to local flavour. Furthermore, as highlighted by Crowther (2001), monitoring and reporting practices reinforce the tendency of LNGOs to be accountable ‘upward’ toward the international community instead of ‘downward’ towards their beneficiaries.

The ‘closeness’ of INGOs and their local counterparts often glosses over what remains an unequal relationship, with a clear division of labour between the two categories of actors. INGOs rely on the expertise and knowledge of their local partners to identify and meet the needs of the beneficiary communities. However, the methods and activities of international organisation are quite often pre-determined by their mandate and by their own donors. Although local NGOs bring distinct attributes to the partnership, it is fair to say that most of the decisions about what projects to implement and how these projects must be managed ultimately rest with international funders. The rhetoric of partnership, capacity-building and empowerment often masks a relationship of dominance on the one hand and dependency on the other. Stubbs uses the metaphor of “colonisation” to describe the type of asymmetric symbolic and financial power relationship that sometimes characterises INGO-LNGO interaction. This leads to outcomes controlled by the international agencies’ frameworks, assumptions, meanings and practices (Stubbs 2000: 24).

Most interaction between INGOs and LNGOs in Kosovo takes place under the rubric of ‘partnership,’ a feel-good term that in reality, is applied to nearly every possible permutation of relationship, from Kosovan organisations operating as complete pawns of an international patron, through to much more independent, locally-controlled operations with varied international support. Sarah C. White, in examining the term ‘participation,’ develops a typology which highlights the range of interests, functions and forms encompassed by this catch-all term. Her typology includes ‘nominal’ participation, in which local partners are engaged as a symbolic but not substantive gesture; ‘instrumental’ participation, where the local partners are seen as a way to increase efficiency; ‘representative’ participation, where local people’s interests and needs shape the project; and ‘transformative’ participation, in which empowerment is both the means and the end of the process (White 2000: 144). The same categories can usefully be applied to ‘partnership’ as a concept, and examples of each can be found in Kosovo. Given the complexity of the peacebuilding landscape in Kosovo, any given organisation is likely to engage in several different types of partnership with a variety of other agencies, and the nature of some partnerships will change over time. Equally, each

agency develops its own approach to partnership-building, with some highly concerned to redress the power imbalance in the relationship.

Transformative partnerships represent perhaps the ‘ideal’ model, in that the local partner is empowered through the process to strengthen their confidence and abilities to positively impact on their society. Examples of this form of association are rare, although transformative elements are apparent in some projects. The USAID-funded project “Kosovo Women’s Initiative” attracted criticism when it started because it was implemented in a rushed and non-cooperative manner. However, the programme evolved into a network of ‘Local Women’s Councils,’ which granted funding to local organisations based on locally-defined criteria. The central coordinating committee was handed over to local control as an independent NGO in April 2003. The international partners, International Rescue Committee (IRC) and UNHCR continue to serve in an advisory capacity, but in essence over the course of the programme the Local Women’s Councils were empowered to act with substantial independence in supporting women’s initiatives in their own communities.

In a representative partnership, the local partners have a constitutive voice in determining the nature of the project. For example, the “All Different, All Equal” youth summer camp project in Gjilan/Gnjilane involved a large consortium of LNGOs coordinated by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). Decisions about the project were made on a consensus basis, a complex and time-consuming management method. Lorena Lando from the IOM felt that in the end, this rich and devolved planning process paid off in the results of the project, including a high level of participation from the community and the creation of good working relationships between the local partners that will enable future cooperation and coordination.

Nominal and instrumental partnerships have been more the rule than the exception in Kosovo. However, few organisations are willing to admit that local participation in any of their programmes serves purely for legitimisation, and does not actually make much difference in the shaping, implementation or follow-up of the idea. Nominal partnership is seen where, for example, a one-time event is organised, and a local organisation is engaged to give the project some kind of credibility, but in reality has very little input on the form or outcome of the project.

A clear example of an instrumental partnership takes place in the practice of international organisations distributing a ‘Terms of Reference’ document, in which the local partner that eventually wins the contract does so purely on how well they are able to match the parameters of a project dreamed up by someone else. Many international agencies routinely pass off the operational responsibility for externally-mandated projects to their local partners without actually passing over any managerial control. By failing to encourage creativity, responsibility and initiative, simply passing down ideas for projects from international agencies to local implementers serves to

disempower the local partner and compromises the long-term sustainability of the peacebuilding process.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

At the level of international conferences and policy documents, agencies involved in post-war peacebuilding seem to have an increasingly convergent definition of best practice, which generally places a high value on the engagement of local citizens through partnerships with local NGOs. At the field level in Kosovo, however, this rhetoric is belied by the reality of the top-down imposition of a particular vision of peace. Often, concerns such as coordination and cost effectiveness take precedence over principled approaches to peacebuilding. This means that the space for local definitions and contributions to peacebuilding is greatly reduced through disempowering partnerships between INGOs and LNGOs.

However, the complex realities of even a small area such as Kosovo mean that INGOs cannot effectively implement programmes without the knowledge and connections of local partners. This opens up space for more empowering, consensual approaches and gives local NGOs an opportunity to guide their international partners in the right direction. It would be misleading to claim that LNGOs are passive actors forced into exploitative arrangements by ruthless international donors. This research revealed a much more multifaceted situation on the ground, in which some LNGOs have developed into strong and independent organisations who are able to set their own parameters for what kind of peace they want to help build. Some LNGOs, however, find it convenient to reinforce the weak and dependent stereotypes that INGOs bring to the field about local partners, given the substantial financial rewards to be had through continued international sponsorship. LNGO competition for international patronage has left the non-governmental sector in Kosovo with a legacy of poor cooperation and networking within the province. In that respect the internationally-led implementation of peacebuilding in Kosovo may have the perverse long-term effect of weakening civil society.

### **5. Critical Issues**

The current situation in Kosovo is marked by the strategic renegotiation of the relationships between all of the actors involved in peacebuilding— international and local, governmental and non-governmental. The resulting changes will fundamentally affect the shape of society in Kosovo and the future prospects for a durable peace.

The number of INGOs currently operating in Kosovo is approximately 400, although this figure is expected to decrease in the following months. It is also the belief of the researchers and many of our interviewees that the current figure of 2079 registered LNGOs will also be dramatically reduced in

the near future due to international funds being cut or diverted to local government structures.<sup>10</sup> A process of natural selection amongst LNGOs is underway in Kosovo. This means that those LNGOs that are more professional or have diversified their funding and support sources will remain. The dramatic reduction in direct funding for LNGOs from international donors has already led to the closure and scaling back of many NGO operations, which represents a loss of income for many people formerly employed in the NGO sector, and will inevitably have knock-on effects in terms of the local economy. However, it can also be seen as a natural correction of the anomalous growth of NGOs in the post-war period.

### **5.1 Transfer of Support from Civil Society to Local Government**

In the absence of normal governing structures during the emergency phase, donor governments and INGOs channelled funds and support to LNGOs, producing an explosion typical of post-war settings. Now these local agencies are being encouraged by their donor partners to cooperate with the “Provisional Institutions of Self-Governance” at both the municipal and central levels as part of UNMIK’s policy of decentralisation and normalisation of governing processes. In just one example of this change, future infrastructure projects will have to be approved by the Municipal Assemblies and will need at least 15% public funding. The transfer of funding and support from civil society actors to government structures will redefine the social contract in Kosovo, as LNGOs will need to strengthen and complement, as opposed to substitute, local government service provision.

One local staff member of a bilateral funding agency noted that before the NATO intervention, Kosovar NGOs tended to work at the local level, not communicating or cooperating with (Serbian) governmental structures in any way. In contrast, Fatos Elezi, the manager of the successful NGO Resource Center in Gjilan/ Gnjilane noted that he has recently had to learn how to deal with municipal authorities, and has developed a close working relationship with them. Indeed, one possible positive effect of the growing influence of democratically elected law-makers is that NGO-led projects may have to become more accountable to people in their own community, as opposed to external donors.

However, there is a danger that the relationship between civil society actors and local government may grow to resemble the unusually close one that characterised the parallel structures of the 90s, when most LNGOs were an intrinsic component of the structures set up by the LDK to service the Kosovo Albanian community. Furthermore, as problems of corruption, lack of transparency and poor participation of minorities continue to plague municipal authorities, there is a risk that the

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<sup>10</sup> These figures come from the official records kept by the UNMIK NGO Registration Unit and are correct up to May 2003. The international and local lists include a number of organizations who have suspended operations, or had their ‘Public Benefit Status’ denied or suspended for a variety of reasons. We have not attempted a detailed analysis of the list to filter these cases out (UNMIK 2003).

peacebuilding work of LNGOs could be jeopardised once the oversight of international partners is removed.

## **5.2 INGO-LNGO Relationships**

The relationship between INGOs and LNGOs in Kosovo is being redefined by changes in funding and policy trends amongst the international community. As the international administration enters its fifth year, most of the major humanitarian NGOs are preparing exit strategies, leaving only a few specialist development agencies such as UNDP and the European Agency for Reconstruction with a long-term commitment to Kosovo.

### ***5.2.1 Hand Over and Withdrawal***

Many NGOs find themselves in the situation of “Haxhi Zeka Youth Center” in Peja/ Peć which has received almost sole support from the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) since their inception in 1999. In preparation for the handover of the NGO to local control, DRC and Haxhi Zeka engaged in an intensive process of training and other capacity-building activities to prepare staff to manage the facility on their own. In September 2003 when DRC phases out direct funding for staff salaries and rental of premises, Gazmir Raci, the Director of the Board, is confident that the Center will continue to operate. However, the loss of core funding will inevitably have consequences, for example the Center has started to charge small fees to members who use the facilities, and they may have to find less expensive premises. Perhaps on the brighter side, the independence gained by diversifying their funding sources will allow the local staff themselves to define the nature and objectives of their activities.

The Gjilan/Gnjilane NGO “Kosovo Center for International Cooperation” has been operating as an independent LNGO since January 2002 following a similar handover process from the American NGO “United Methodist Committee for Relief (UMCOR)” and has been able to develop independent partnerships with a range of donors. For example, when they received project funding from Norwegian People’s Aid, communication occurred only through e-mails, faxes, and telephone. This relationship suggests an unusual level of trust by the donor partner, which allows the local NGO more freedom in defining their projects’ peacebuilding dimension.

These cases are examples of careful nurturing of emerging independent LNGOs by their ‘parent’ INGOs. In other instances the process of handover has been poorly planned or the donor has simply withdrawn funding without making arrangements for the continuation of the work. LNGOs who are suddenly abandoned or stuck in a situation of extended uncertainty about their future will find it very difficult to respond to the needs of their community in a pro-active and creative way. This certainly damages the credibility of local organisations, but also reduces the beneficiary community’s trust in the international community and in the non-governmental sector as a whole.

### **5.2.2. Donor Funding Cuts**

The funding frenzy that characterised the immediate aftermath of the war meant that many LNGOs emerged due to the demand of INGOs rather than careful assessment of the real needs of their own communities. Equally, the current withdrawal and reduction of donor funding for LNGOs is only partially reflective of the fulfilment of the needs of communities.

Even in the well-resourced immediate post-war period, donor funding practices encouraged a competitive atmosphere and jealous project-guarding amongst LNGOs. Silke Maier-Witt, of the German NGO “Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst” in Prizren, observed that in the early stages of the international mission, INGOs invested heavily in material assistance such as setting up well-resourced offices for their LNGO partners, but not in creating cooperative networks amongst the LNGOs natural peer group- other local civil society groups. Now that the donors are phasing out their funding programmes, the staff of local organisations find themselves isolated from their peers and beneficiaries because for so long the only relationships they have cultivated are with external funding bodies. Some of the more long-established NGOs, including women’s groups such as Motrat Qiriazi, have invested considerable time and energy in creating networks of local organisations that will stand them in good stead as the international attention on Kosovo dwindles.

As competition for funds becomes fiercer, INGOs are becoming stricter about attaching specific conditions to grants. Although multi-ethnic projects have been encouraged by donors for some time, minority participation in programmes is now becoming a basic requirement for project funding. Suzana Arni, Minority Programme Officer at KCSF, commented that European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) core funding for KCSF was conditional on them restructuring the organisation to include a separate ‘Minority’ pillar to support their existing policy of mainstreaming minority participation across all their programmes. Another noticeable priority shift is towards funding programmes for the return and reintegration of displaced minorities to Kosovo. It is becoming increasingly difficult for LNGOs to access much-needed international funds without becoming involved in a process that is extremely politicised and could isolate them from their own communities if not handled in a conflict-sensitive manner.

## **6. Conclusion: Policy & Strategic Planning Themes**

The arrival of the international administration in Kosovo was a historic opportunity for the province, in which newly-formulated international ideas about the reconstruction and stabilisation of post-war societies were tested out for the first time. The message coming from the top of the ‘intervention pyramid’ has been clear: the path to peace runs directly through the creation of a liberal, market-oriented democracy. The dominant international paradigm of a ‘democratic peace’ is undoubtedly colouring the emerging institutions and processes of post-war societies. In Kosovo, INGOs have been one of the primary actors promulgating this particular vision of peacebuilding, creating or

employing a host of local NGOs to assist in this process. However, the political culture that existed in Kosovo prior to the war has also shaped LNGOs, and these patterns of clientelism, fear of controversial advocacy, mistrust of government and state structures, lack of inter-ethnic cooperation, and so on, continue to hamper the ability of local agencies to contribute to a stable, multi-ethnic, democratic future for the province. International approaches to partnership have in effect reinforced these legacies and created a pattern of exclusive client-patron relationships that have, in some cases reduced the vibrancy of Kosovar civil society.

In order for the tremendous ‘social capital’ found in Kosovo’s civil society to become a true source of ‘peace capital’ a shift needs to take place in the peacebuilding endeavour. This could not only positively transform the nature of the relationships between international and local civil society actors in Kosovo, but it could also help the negotiation of a consensual definition and implementation of peacebuilding. The following recommendation for international and local NGOs provides a few meaningful first steps towards achieving this aim:

### **3.3 Recommendations for INGOs:**

- INGOs ought to encourage networking and coalition-building amongst LNGOs through, for example, the diversification of their local partners and an encouragement of horizontal cooperation amongst them. This way each INGO would become the hub of a network of LNGOs based on geographical or programmatic proximity and developing working relationships that outlast the international partner’s involvement. However, INGOs must avoid ‘over-coordination’ to the extent of promoting homogenisation and centralisation of programmes. The nature of these coalitions amongst LNGOs should be determined by the local partners to increase sustainability. Furthermore, to promote bridge-building between communities, this diversification of partners should ensure that it includes NGOs from both majority and minority communities.
- INGOs should ensure that their LNGO partners mainstream peacebuilding concerns into all of their programming, as opposed to confining more explicit peacebuilding projects to youth activities (which is considered ‘safe’) and returns (which is the current fad). This process must be handled in a conflict-sensitive way, for example by understanding context-specific cultural and political dynamics to avoid worsening existing conflictual relationships or creating new ones.
- INGOs should undertake the handover process in a meaningful, responsible and sustainable manner. *Meaningful* in as much as it involves a transfer of competencies from international to local hands, as opposed to simply ending programmes. *Responsible* in so far as it allows the LNGO to survive beyond the life cycle of the partnership through diversification of support sources. *Sustainable* in that it should enable the local partner to continue responding to the needs

of their communities without international support. The above could be better achieved through coordination amongst INGOs in Kosovo of the timing and programme areas affected by handover strategies to minimise adverse impacts on LNGOs and avoid gaps in service provision.

### **3.4 Recommendations for LNGOs**

- The upcoming months will be key turning points for many Kosovar NGOs. In this rapidly changing environment, organisations need to develop a strong capacity for strategic analysis, planning and evaluation in order to maintain their relevance. Equally, NGOs need to have a clear definition of their mission and participatory mechanisms for incorporating feedback from their beneficiary community.
- The importance of establishing knowledge-sharing networks among civil society organisations in Kosovo cannot be overstated. As the international community reduces its operational presence (funding and personnel) in Kosovo, cooperation with other local organisations will be increasingly important for effective programming. Existing networks such as the Kosovo Women's Network and the Kosovo Civil Society Foundation could serve as examples for this kind of cooperation.
- The transfer of competencies and funding to municipal councils should be viewed not as a threat but as an opportunity. Kosovo's NGO sector has the opportunity to envision and create a new kind of complementary relationship with government at the local level. Effective relationship-building at this stage will pay off in the long-term by helping to create responsive local governance, which can provide a bulwark against inappropriate centralisation.
- The handover process should likewise be seen as an opportunity instead of a threat. Greater responsibility will bring with it the chance to design the aims and methods of each programme according to local values and needs. LNGOs in Kosovo have had the benefit and disadvantage of four years of international tutelage, and it is definitely high time for Kosovan NGOs to face the future with the confidence that they can make a unique contribution to peace in the province.

## List of Audit Participants

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Name(s)</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>
Association for Non-Violence and Peacebuilding	Nexhat Ismaili and Gazmend Murseli	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	22/04/03
Catholic Relief Services	Alan Frisk and Petar Prica	Mitrovica	24/04/03
Community Building Mitrovica	Valdete Idrizi	Mitrovica	24/04/03
Danish Refugee Council	Anne-Sophie Laenkholm	Prishtina/ Priština /	16/04/03
Forum Civil Peace Service	Silke Maier-Witt	Prizren	28/04/03
Haxhi Zeka Youth Center	Gazmir Raci	Peja/ Peć	23/04/03
International Organization for Migration	Lorena Lando	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	22/04/03
Kalabria Housewives Association	Sevdije Bunjaku and Vjollca Zeqiri	Prishtina/ Priština	07/04/03
Kinderberg International	Dr. Karmit Zysman	Prizren	28/04/03
Kosovo Center for International Cooperation	Enver Këqiku	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	22/04/03
Kosovo Civil Society Foundation	Lulzim Peci and Leon Malagozu	Prishtina/ Priština	18/04/03
Kosovo Civil Society Foundation, Minority Programme	Suzana Arni	Prishtina/ Priština	29/04/03
Kosovo Local Initiative Program, Canadian Cooperation Support Office	Nora Spahiu	Prishtina/ Priština	29/04/03
Kosovo Organisation for New Initiatives (KONI)	Nehari Sharri	Prizren	28/04/03
Lansdowne Multi-Ethnic Professional Organisation	Shpend Terziu, Shaban Terziu and Veljčko Jovanović	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	22/04/03
Multi-Ethnic Children and Youth Peace Center	Florent Hajrizi	Mitrovica	24/04/03
Nansen Dialogue Mitrovica	Abdullah Ferizi	Mitrovica	24/04/03
NGO Resource Center Gjilan	Fatos Elezi	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	22/04/03
OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Peja/ Peć Office	Have Lajqi, Arben Sheqerolli and Max Seelhofer	Peja/ Peć	23/04/03
UN Development Programme	Sofia Carrondo and Aude Fieschi	Prishtina/ Priština	17/04/03
UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Kosovo Women's Initiative	Vjollca Gjonbalaj and Violette Cassis	Prishtina/ Priština	29/04/03

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