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Report on Minority Civil Society Organisations and Government Dialogue

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Working Towards a Stable Multi-Ethnic Kosovo

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ECMI Kosovo is the principal non-governmental organisation engaged with minority issues in Kosovo, with the overarching aim to develop inclusive, representative, community-sensitive institutions that support a stable multi-ethnic Kosovo.

ECMI Kosovo contributes to the developing, strengthening and implementation of relevant legislation, supports the institutionalisation of communities-related governmental bodies, and enhances the capacity of civil society actors and the government to engage with one another in a constructive and sustainable way.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EC	European Commission
ECMI	European Centre for Minority Issues
CCC	Consultative Council for Communities
CRICR	Committee on the Rights and Interests of Communities and Returns
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CSD	Communication for Social Development
KCSF	Kosovo Civil Society Foundation
OLC	Office of the Language Commissioner, Office of the Prime Minister
NRAEWOK	Network for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Womens' Organisations of Kosovo
TACSO	Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report will present a comprehensive account of the situation of the minority community civil society organisations (CSOs) who are operating within Kosovo. This comes as the final report of the two year project *Empowering Civil Society to Participate Effectively in Policy and Decision-Making Processes through Dialogue with Government Institutions*, funded by the EU and managed by the European Union Office in Kosovo, and implemented by the European Centre for Minority Issues Kosovo (ECMI Kosovo) in partnership with Communication for Social Development (CSD) and Network of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Womens' Organisations of Kosovo (NREWOK). Through this project, ECMI Kosovo and its partner organisations aimed to contribute to the creation of the conditions necessary for a constructive, systematic and effective dialogue and partnership between civil society and the government institutions in Kosovo.

A strong civil society is necessary for the development of functioning democracy; the government needs to have competent partners who will help form effective policies and legislation and act as effective interveners between the people and the government: this is the role that CSOs should take up. This is especially important for those CSOs who work with minority communities, as their communities often face stronger battles to ensure that their voices are being heard in the local and central level government institutions.

Civil society represents "the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations."[1] Thus, CSOs can be defined as "the wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations" who are working to promote the concerns of their communities.[2]

The Situation in Kosovo

Kosovo's civil society suffers from a lack of capacity for participating effectively in the policy and decision-making processes, which means that a genuine and systematic dialogue between government and civil society has not been created, neither at the central nor local level institutions. This has led to, as ECMI Kosovo has identified through extensive research, three key challenges:

- Low understanding of the role of civil society, and a lack of trust between civil society and government institutions;

[1] The World Bank, *Defining Civil Society,* available at: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20101499~menuPK:244752~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html
[2] Ibid

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- Uneven and often weak capacities of CSOs;
- Lack of sufficient cooperation among CSOs.

Civil society is also fragmented, centrally along ethnic lines, but, also, there is a lack of communication and cooperation between the CSOs within the same communities and government institutions. The need for greater interaction between civil society organisations and government institutions has been acknowledged as sorely lacking by both sectors. The *Strategy for Government and Civil Society Dialogue in Kosovo*, gives details of the government's commitment to increasing engagement with civil society through creating a more accessible environment, along with more formal structures for dialogue.[3] "Upon drafting of this Strategy, the Government of Kosovo confirms commitment and political will to involve citizens in policy and decision-making processes, improve services to citizens through cooperation with civil society and provide financial and non-financial support for the development of civil society sector and proposed projects by this sector."[4]

The increased cooperation with civil society is a necessary stage on the road to EU membership for Kosovo: having adequate structures and mechanisms for civil society cooperation is a necessary criteria for countries before they can join the EU.[5]

The Situation of Minority Community Civil Society Organisations in Kosovo

Minority communities, especially, face additional obstacles to participating due to their continual marginalisation, and their lack of full integration into Kosovo society and institutions. For example, the lacking implementation of the legal framework of the Law on the Use of Languages has negatively affected minority communities' participation in public life, something that has impacted strongly on the integration of the community, and their economic and social prospects. Although there have been some notable successes, Kosovo still does not have regular, systematic and effective dialogue between minority CSOs and Government institutions. Any interaction that does occur tends to take place on an *ad hoc* basis, and this is especially true for minority community CSOs, who do not have strong links or paths to dialogue with the local and central level institutions. Moreover, there are a limited number of minority community CSOs who are engaged with this dialogue when it does occur, with only a few of the larger CSOs engaging, and with the smaller, grassroots CSOs not being given this opportunity.

When considering minority community CSOs – those CSOs who specifically deal with one, or more, minority communities within Kosovo – they suffer strongly from the marginalisation effects, as well

[3] Office of Good Governance, Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo, *Government Strategy For Cooperation With Civil Society, 2013-2017*, (October 2013).

[4] Office of Good Governance, Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo, *Government Strategy For Cooperation With Civil Society, 2013-2017*, (October 2013), pp. 2.

[5] TACSO, *DG Enlargement: Guidelines for EU support for civil society in enlargement countries, 2014-2020*, (2013) pp. 2.

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as issues surround a lack of access to funding, and poor human resources, amongst other things. This was highlighted by the organisation Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (TACSO), which works across the Western Balkans and Turkey. In their report on the CSOs capacities in 2010, TACSO highlighted that, "In general, CSOs representing minority communities are less developed and their restricted access to donors and government means they wield less influence with both municipal and central authorities" .[6]

In order to help address this situation, and increase the interaction and trust between these two sectors, ECMI Kosovo, and its partners, implemented the project *Empowering Civil Society to Participate Effectively in Policy and Decision-Making Processes through Dialogue with Government Institutions*, a project funded by the EU and managed by the EU Office in Kosovo. Over the course of the project, ECMI Kosovo has worked closely with Communication for Social Development (CSD), a Gračanica/Graçanicë-based Serb non-governmental organisation (NGO) and the Network for Roma Ashkali and Egyptian Womens' Organisations of Kosovo, a network with thirteen (13) NGOs and ten (10) activists working together to empower women from these communities.

In order to create the necessary conditions for constructive, systematic and effective dialogue and partnership this project implemented a three-pronged approach:

1. Awareness-raising and trust-building activities;
2. Capacity-building and supporting advocacy work on selected policy areas;
3. Support to civil society coalitions and networks.

This was done a set of different activities aimed at strengthening minority community CSOs. These varied from developing a project website (http://.www.ecmikosovo-empoweringcso.org) and an online database of minority CSOs (www.ecmikosovo-empoweringcso.org), which function in Albanian, Serbian and English. The project's website contact activities' reports, publication and all relevant information on the project and its activities. The CSO database was compiled from data collected by a questionnaire developed by ECMI Kosovo and distributed to more than 100 active CSOs in the selected municipalities across all five (5) regions: Gjilan/Gnjilane, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Pejë/Peć, Prishtinë/Priština, and Prizren. Other activities included sets of dialogue and trust-building sessions between minority CSOs and central and municipal government representatives, designed to increase channels and create mechanisms of communication and cooperation, including the development of a *Guidebook on Civil Society participation in Policy and Decision- making Processes*; training programmes and support for the development and implementation of advocacy proposals, including sub-granting, which aimed to increase minority CSOs ability to advocate both at the local and central level in Kosovo; the establishment of minority CSO networks with the ultimate goal of enabling them to advocate with one voice for their specific needs and interests, for instance in the areas of education and language[7]; and promotional videos on minority issues and minority civil

[6] TACSO, *Civil Society Organisations' Capacities in the Western Balkans and Turkey: A comparative study of the eight country CSO needs assessments*, Oct 2010, pp.10
[7] Currently, only Serbian CSOs are organised in a network in Kosovo (KPAN – Kosovo Policy-Action Network).

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society-government dialogue which aimed to increase the awareness and understanding of the wider public of the role of civil society and the importance and value of an effective civil society-government dialogue. The promotional videos addressed specific issues that matter to minorities and highlighted concrete successes achieved by civil society throughout the project.

This report will be based on the experiences gathered throughout the implementation of the project. It will highlight good practices and major challenges encountered and provide a series of recommendations on how to further improve minority civil society-government relations.

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II. MINORITY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS BEFORE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

Kosovo's civil society has not yet managed to form strong connections with the governmental and institutional structures. This has led to a lack of dialogue between these two sectors, and thus a lack of exchange of ideas and best practices between these institutions. This issue was addressed by the *Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society,*[8] which foresaw actions that are necessary to create a constructive, genuine and systematic dialogue between civil society and government institutions.

Moreover, minority communities in Kosovo still face larger obstacles that they have to overcome in order to participate fully in public life. Thus, ECMI Kosovo and its partner organisations, through this project, focused their attention specifically on the problems that are suffered by minority communities in their engagements, and to build their capacities to interact.

There are, however mechanisms within the governmental institutions, both at the central and municipal levels, which should allow for civil society organisations to participate effectively in policy and decision-making processes.

Level of engagement of CSOs

CSOs act as a multiplier for the engagement of civilians in the decision-making processes. Representative democracy, as Kosovo uses, is based on the principle that, along with elected representatives for the people, there will also be more public participation than just voting, as they need to have sustained interaction and engagement with the government. By engaged participation citizens can move the government towards governance through the processes of steerage and accountability, as well as solidifying the authority of citizens, benefitting both the government and its citizens.[9]

It is through CSOs that this can most effectively occur: they provide a way of meeting this need and providing a stronger, more focused voice for communities and their interests.[10] This is especially important for minority communities within Kosovo, as effective CSOs will successfully contribute to the formation of regulations, policy documents and laws, ensuring the protection and promotion of minority rights.

Currently, Kosovo does not have a systematic dialogue between CSOs and the government institutions, despite there being various legal and institutional mechanisms in place for this. All

[8] Office of Good Governance-Office of the Prime Minister, Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society 2013-2017 (2013).
[9] TACSO Manual for CSOs and Citizen Participation, 22
[10] Ibid, 24.

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current interactions between the government and CSOs are conducted on an *ad hoc* basis.[11] Moreover, where there are consultations, CSOs reported that their follow-up processes with the government were not satisfactory.[12] According to a report commissioned by TACSO in October 2013, only 31% of the CSOs answered positively when asked if they have been consulted in drafting laws and other documents and 63% of them said that some of their contribution was taken into account, while 59.09% said that they received no feedback on the result of the consultations.[13]

The Government of Kosovo has recognised the importance of a strong civil society in building democracy within Kosovo, and thus has also recognised the importance of CSOs. In 2013, the government, in conjunction with CIVIKOS, published the *Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society* which set out a roadmap for increased cooperation between 2013 and 2017. However, according to evaluations, there has been limited actual commitment by the government, thus hampering the effectiveness of any attempts to increase cooperation.[14]

Only 31 per cent of CSOs responded positively to the question of whether they had been consulted in law drafting – TACSO, January 2014

In order for CSOs to be effective and to produce real change and impacts within wider Kosovo society, they need to have strong engagement with not only all levels of the government, but also with each other both intra- and inter-ethnically. CSOs, especially those working with minority communities within Kosovo, however, are often fragmented and have very limited interactions with both each other and the government institutions. It is hard, however, to measure the effectiveness of CSOs; even as their importance has become more widely recognised, there is a lack of data to answer questions of the ideal number of CSOs in a society, the best methods for engagement etc.[15]

ECMI Kosovo, and its partner organisations through the implementation of the project aimed to raise awareness of the role of civil society and on the importance of its participation in the policy and decision and policy-making processes and to increase trust between civil society and government institutions; to strengthen civil society's capacities to effectively engage in policy and decision-making processes at the local and central level institutions; and to foster inter- and intra-ethnic cooperation among civil society organisations in Kosovo.

[11] European Commission *Kosovo* 2014 Progress Report*, (2014) pp.12(http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20141008-kosovo-progress-report_en.pdf)
[12] Ibid, pp.12
[13] Kosovo Needs Assessment Report, (Jan 2014) pp.16.
[14] European Commission Kosovo* 2013 Progress Report, pp.10
[15] UN, Dec 2004 "Role of CSOs in Governance" Dr Aisha Ghaus-Pasha, pp.3.

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III. MINORITY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS COOPERATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

Kosovo's civil society has not yet managed to form strong connections with the governmental and institutional structures. This has led to a lack of dialogue between these two sectors, and thus a lack of exchange of ideas and best practices between these institutions. There are mechanisms within the governmental institutions, both at the central and municipal levels, which should allow for civil society organisations to effectively participate in government decisions. However, these mechanisms suffer from issues of not being fully implemented, either through a lack of awareness or a lack of funding.

In 2013, the Government, in conjunction with CIVIKOS, published the Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society which set out a roadmap for increased government cooperation with civil society between 2013 and 2017.

This problem was addressed by the *Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society*, which foresaw actions that are necessary to create a constructive, genuine and systematic dialogue between civil society and government institutions.

Moreover, minority communities in Kosovo face larger obstacles to overcome in order to participate fully in public life. Thus, ECMI Kosovo and its partners, through this project, focused their attention specifically on the problems suffered by minority communities in their engagements, and to build their capacities to interact with central and municipal level institutions as well as each other.

Minority CSOs and Governmental Central Level Institutional Cooperation

Research on minority CSO participation in central level institutions before ECMI Kosovo and its partners began this project's activities, showed that it was not at a satisfactory level and that is was unstructured. While there were some notable success stories, in terms of drafting laws such as the Law on Access to Public Documents, the Law on Non-Governmental Organisations and the Law on Legislative Initiatives,[16] there are still many issues with these mechanisms. For example, it was estimated that, in 2011, 90% of the laws and policy documents produced by the Kosovo Government were not made with any consultation with civil society.[17] All current interactions between the government and

In 2013, it was estimated that 90% of laws were created with without consultation with civil society – TACSO, 2011.

[16] TACSO, *Growing Together: Civil Society Involvement in the Legislative Process – Good and Bad Practices*, June 2011, pp. 13

[17] TACSO (Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations), *Growing Together: Civil Society Involvement in the Legislative Process – Good and Bad Practices*, June 2011, pp. 13.

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CSOs at the central level are conducted on an *ad hoc* basis.[18] Moreover, where there are consultations, CSOs reported that their follow-up processes with the government were not satisfactory.[19]

ECMI Kosovo and its partners also noted that, when there was cooperation between minority community CSOs and government institutions, it was predominately on the municipal and not central level. This occurs despite the existence of several central-level mechanisms for representing communities, such as the Consultative Council for Communities (CCC) and the Committee on the Rights and Interests of Communities (CRIC). There are also legal provisions for CSOs to participate in the legislative process in the Assembly of Kosovo, *inter* alia, through public hearings.[20] Moreover, there is the Kosovo Ombudsperson Office, which is an independent body to investigate complaints of human rights abuses.[21]

This means that CSOs lack integration to the central proposals, as there is not a formal structure for taking part in policy making processes and decisions. This is especially detrimental to minority communities, as effective CSOs will successfully contribute to the formation of regulations, policy documents and laws, and will ensure that their communities get more representation.

Activities to increase cooperation between CSOs and Central Level Institutions

To address this issue, ECMI Kosovo and its partners, over the two years of this project, organised several different activities to address the issue of the lack of cooperation and informal structure. These activities included dialogue sessions between CSOs and their Assembly Members, trainings on increasing cooperation between CSOs and central level institutions, and meetings with representatives from central level institutions such as the CCC, CRIC, Office of Language Commissioner, Office for Communities and Returns and Ombudsperson including also Members of the Assembly representing minority communities.

During the first year of the implementation of the project, ECMI Kosovo organised a number of meeting, trainings and dialogue sessions between CSO and central level institutions with the aim of increasing the level of their cooperation, creating mechanisms to improve their communication and cooperation and address issues relevant for minority communities, as proposed by the CSO representatives.

Several communities had a chance to meet for the first time with their central representatives to discuss the key issues for their communities.

[18] European Commission *Kosovo* 2014 Progress Report*, (2014) pp.12(http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20141008-kosovo-progress-report_en.pdf)
[19] Ibid, pp.12
[20] See e.g. KCSF (Kosovo Civil Society Foundation), *"We and Them" – Citizen Participation in Kosovo*, October 2011, p. 9-13.
[21] For specific information on the mandate of the Kosovo Ombudsperson see the Law on Ombudsperson (03/L-195). Available at: http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/2010-195-eng.pdf

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The second round of activities during the second year of the implementation of the project, aimed to provide an opportunity for CSO representatives and representatives of the central level institutions to follow up on the issues raised throughout the previous training and dialogue sessions.

Meetings, trainings and dialogue sessions with Serbian Community representatives



The Serbian members of the Kosovo Assembly argued that the Serbian CSOs were not pro-active in cooperating with the government, and that, members of the Committee on the Rights and Interests of Communities, have never been monitored by CSOs, even though there were many issues raised by the CRIC impacted heavily on the Serbian community. They lack of communication and cooperation, and accoutring to CSOs' representatives, Assembly Members and Serb representative working in government institutions in the local and central level lack will.

The second year activities, however, highlighted different issues than those raised in the previous year, with the focus shifting from CSOs lack of engagement to the Serbian politicians. None of the Serbian Assembly Members were present, but sent representatives. While the CSOs said that they had indeed become more active, they argued that the Kosovo Serbs politicians were apathetic towards any negotiations, and were not sufficiently protecting the security of their community.

Meetings, trainings and dialogue sessions with Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities representatives

The Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian minority communities CSOs also argued that there was no cooperation between the government and CSOs, a claim that was disputed by the political representatives who were present in several meetings. Moreover the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian minority communities CSO representatives, stressed their concern that the *Strategy for the Integration of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo* was not being implemented by the government due to lack of will, program and budget.

The second year activities again focussed on the issue of employment for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian minority communities, and the implementation of the central level Strategy. Both CSOs and politicians agreed that they need to be pro-active in promoting employment of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian minority communities by creating a forum or focus group so that politicians and CSOs can regularly exchange data and issues that affect them. Finally, both sides addressed the newly raised re-migration issues occurring, with many reports that members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian minority communities are leaving Kosovo to live in other countries over the past several

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months. This issue must be urgently addressed by both CSOs and politicians, at both levels, to ensure that the conditions for these communities to stay are created.

Meetings, trainings and dialogue sessions with Bosniak and Gorani Communities representatives



Many of the Bosniak CSOs registered are politically associated, which can lead to factions within the CSOs participation as they can be seen as opposition in political terms. There have also been some notable examples of successful interactions between Bosniak CSOs, such as on the issue of removing barriers to Bosnian farms so that they receive subsidies from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Within the same meeting, however, the Gorani community stated that there is virtually no co-operation between Gorani community CSOs and the Gorani politicians at the central level.

The second year activities were attended by CSO representatives from all areas of Kosovo, including Mitrovicë/Mitrovica and Pejë/Peć, as well as representatives of the Gorani and Bosniak communities at the central and municipal levels. Both communities raised concern about their lack of employment in public institutions, while the Bosniaks raised the concern that the Law on the Use of Languages was not being implemented within Prizren/Prizren. The Bosniak community also highlighted that the lack of economic opportunities mean that many of them are considering leaving, something that is concerning to both parties in the talks. The Gorani community representatives also highlighted their concerns about the lack of central policing for the border between Dragash/Dragaš and Albania, and the security issues this is creating.

Meetings, trainings and dialogue sessions with Turk Community representatives

The Turkish meeting with CSOs and central representatives was a positive meeting, with the CSO representatives saying that they had a good level of cooperation with the Turkish Assembly Members. The CSO representatives were not critical of their relationship with the central level institutions at all. However, the only issue that was raised by all the representatives was that there is a constant problem with the Municipality of Prizren/Prizren implementing the Law on the Use of Languages with the use of the Turkish language.

The second year activities, there was a good attendance from both CSOs and the central level representatives. Again, the CSOs highlighted that they have good co-operation with their Assembly representatives. However, they also expressed concern that there are still on-going issues with the

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implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages when it comes to the Turkish community, and that the last year has not seen much progress on this issue.

Outcomes from these activities

Meeting, training and dialogue sessions facilitated by ECMI Kosovo and its partners, brought together minority CSO representatives and central level representatives, including Assembly Members, proved to be fruitful. Central government representatives and Assembly Members, presented their role and responsibilities of the institution they represent; share their contacts; gave them an opportunity to raise issues that were specific to their communities; and showed willingness to create mechanisms which will improve the communication and cooperation with CSOs' representatives that work for the protection and promotion of minority rights.

Seven (7) CSOs who are members of the Serbian and Gorani Networks, and three (3) Roma, Ashkali and Egyptiian CSOs have been accredited by the Office of the President of Kosovo

The meeting between the CCC and the representatives of minority community CSOs resulted to be a success. The CCC representatives presented the role and mandate of the CCC and offered the possibility to all interested minority CSOs to apply for accreditation from the President of Kosovo and nominate representatives of CSOs to be members of the CCC. Ten (10) CSOs are accredited by the President of Kosovo. As a result, two (2) out of five (5) Serbian members of the CCC are members of the Serbian CSO Network which was established by ECMI Kosovo, two (2) representatives from the Gorani and three (3) representatives from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities were appointed to be members of the CCC for a mandate of two (2) years.

This result has shown that, when provided with the initial contacts both side are willing to engage in discussions, and begin to formalise the processes of dialogue. In the meetings, trainings and dialogues sessions it was strongly suggested by the representatives of minority community CSOs', local and central level institutions, and Assembly Members the establishment of a platform or forum which will aim at providing the chance for these representatives to easily exchange information, raise issues specific to their communities, and work together for the protection and promotion of minority rights.

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Minority CSOs and Local Level Institutional Cooperation



Engagement with the Municipal governments is also a key for the increased effectiveness of the minority community CSOs. Many of these CSOs in Kosovo are not large organisations, and work within limited areas, and thus it is central for them to establish strong links with the local municipal officials.

All municipalities are required, by law, to create a Communities Committee, in which all communities are represented, and which is responsible for reviewing the compliance of the municipal authorities with applicable laws and reference to communities' rights.[22] There should also be a Deputy Chairperson for Communities, and a Deputy Mayor for Communities in each municipality. However, it seems that, at the municipal level, CSO representatives are also consulted on an *ad hoc* basis, and that this happens more rarely than at the central level.[23] At the local level, as well as the central, there should be public meetings held to inform citizens of decisions, and ask for feedback.

The cooperation between CSOs and municipal level institutions also suffers as there is not a uniform system for cooperation, with each municipality forming their own practices.[24] This is something that needs to be addressed by both the government of Kosovo and also donors and members of civil society to ensure that there is, in the future, a coherent system created.

Activities to increase cooperation between CSOs and Municipal Level Institutions

In order to address the lack of cooperation and communication between minority community CSOs and local level institutions, ECMI Kosovo and its partners, implemented several activities designed to increase the interactions and trust between municipal officials and minority community CSOs. These included trust-building workshops, producing policy briefs on key local issues, as well as providing structures to formalise discussions with minority communities in the municipalities.

ECMI Kosovo, and its partners, organised a total of eighteen (18) workshops covering all municipalities in Kosovo. On average, there were around 25 participants per training including CSO representatives and municipal officials. These workshops showed that, across many municipalities, minority CSOs and municipal officials were willing to engage, but that the structures and formalities that are necessary for a successful relationship are not coherently in place.

[22] Law on Local Self Government, Article 51. Available at: http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2008_03-L040_en.pdf
[23] TACSO, *Beyond Zero: Institutional Arrangements for Cooperation with Civil Society*, August 2011, p. 19.
[24] TACSO, *Cooperation between Local-Self Governments and CSOs in the Western Balkans and Turkey: Progress Report since the Bečići Conference February, 2011*, (2013), pp.27

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Willingness to cooperate

Each municipality showed willingness to cooperate with the representatives of minority civil society, but there were greatly varying levels across Kosovo. For example, in the meeting in Gračanica/Graçanicë, they registered that since 2012 the levels of cooperation have been increasing, as civil society and municipal officials worked together to organise their summer of culture and entertainment. Organising such events also gave the municipality and CSOs more open and direct access to each other, expanding their trust and scope for cooperation.

The workshop in Ranilug/Ranillug had very few municipal officials present, with only five (5) officials representing both Kamenicë/Kamenica and Novobërdë/Novo Brdo, in a workshop of more than twenty (20) people. The workshop participants recognised that there was not good dialogue between the CSOs and the municipality, and the was attributed to the possibility that the CSOs mainly see the municipality in terms of financial support, as donors, and not as partners who are working towards achieving the same objectives. The participants were stating that they hoped that, through the workshops organised by ECMI Kosovo, this issue could begin to be addressed, and they could begin to negotiate a relationship that focuses on the need for cooperation in all areas.

Understanding of Processes

There were also varied levels of understanding of interactions between the municipal government and the minority CSO, with Gračanica/Graçincë and Prizren/Prizren showing the highest levels. Both of these municipalities registered that they, respective to other regions, have a reasonably high level of cooperation between minority CSOs and the municipality, even though there is room for increased cooperation. In order to address this, ECMI Kosovo, along with its partners CSD and NRAEWOK, within the framework of the project, supported the development and implementation of advocacy plans for local minority community CSOs outside of the main centres for civil society in Kosovo. What ECMI Kosovo also noted during these activities is the differing level of engagement between the municipality and different minority ethnic groups. For example, in Prizren/Prizren, the Bosniak and Gorani communities' workshop highlighted that the CSOs in the region feel that they are not seen as associates in building a society, but as political affiliations who might also be seen as competition.

In order to address this lack of understanding of the processes, ECMI Kosovo created, published and distributed a booklet entitled ***Civil Society Participation in Decision-Making Processes***.[25] This provides civil society, as a whole, a definitive reference for what rights CSOs have under law and how their interactions with government, at both the central and local level should occur.

[25] Available at: http://www.ecmikosovo.org/wp-content/Publications/Hand_book_and_manuals/2013-04_ECMI_Kosovo_Guidebook_-_Civil_Society_Participation_in_Decision-Making_Processes/eng.pdf

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Outcomes from these activities

The activities proved successful in beginning to provide the local institutions and CSOs with a formal structure to increase their dialogues. Significantly, across all municipalities the local institutions and CSOs were keen to co-operate together, and to formalise their structures for dialogue. It was also promising that these discussions addressed the issue of CSOs being seen as competition for political institutions instead of as institutions that should be cooperated with.

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IV. CAPACITY BUILDING AND ADVOCACY TRAINING FOR MINORITY COMMUNITY CSOS

ECMI Kosovo, and its partners, identified through extensive research that CSOs in Kosovo, especially those working for minority communities, suffer from weak capacities meaning they cannot advocate for their issues or effectively participate in public life. Amongst other issues, they often lack a full understanding of the functioning of government institutions and their respective processes and participation mechanisms.[26] They also commonly lack adequate skills in various areas such as advocacy, lobbying, and legal research, drafting and analysis.[27]

Through a continuous and targeted capacity-building approach and support, ECMI Kosovo and its partner organisations sought to build and enhance CSOs' skills and capacities to effectively engage in the policy and decision-making processes at the local and central levels, building on the effectiveness of the dialogue sessions discussed in the previous chapter.

The aim of ECMI Kosovo and its partner organisations was to comprehensively strengthen CSOs and target the CSO's capabilities to participate effectively in policy and decision-making, ensuring that they are developing sustainably so that they can operate independently in the future through trainings and continuous support. Thus, ECMI Kosovo within the framework of its two projects *"Empowering Civil Society to Participate Effectively in Policy and Decision-Making Processes through Dialogue with Government Institutions*, a project funded by the EU and managed by the EU Office in Kosovo" and *"Supporting Effective Governance for Minority Communities in Kosovo"* financed by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) designed a comprehensive and a tailor-made Advocacy Skills & Community Rights Programme for Kosovo Civil Society Organisations.

Throughout a 1,5-year period (from **June 2013** to **October 2014**), selected **CSOs and CSO coalitions** benefited from a comprehensive support programme which combined theory and practice, the focus being on the latter:

Capacity-building



Participants receive structured, action-oriented training to increase their practical capacities and skills to effectively advocate for their interests and their rights, and obtained a certificate after the successful completion of the programme:

- **Advocacy Skills & Minority Rights Training:** Between June 2013 and October 2014, participants

[26] TACSO, *Beyond Zero: Institutional Arrangements for Cooperation with Civil Society*, (August 2011) pp.21; KCSF, *"We and Them" – Citizen Participation in Kosovo*, (October 2011) pp. 28

[27] TACSO, *Growing Together: Civil Society Involvement in the Legislative Process – Good and Bad Practices*, (June 2011) pp.21

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took part in a comprehensive, tailor-made and interactive training consisting of around 15 sessions.

- **Regional Study Visit:** In 2014, participants will also take part in a study visit to FYROM so as to promote regional cooperation, establish useful links and ensure a constructive exchange of good practices and know-how in the region.

Implementation of Advocacy Activities

In parallel to the training programme, selected CSOs and CSO coalitions developed and implemented Advocacy Campaigns and addressed issues of their concern, with support from ECMI Kosovo and its partners:

- **Advocacy Plans Development and Implementation:** All applicant CSOs were required to present Advocacy Proposals with preliminary, initial ideas on advocacy activities they would like to undertake to address concrete problems or issues. Selected CSO and CSO coalitions were supported in developing more detailed, targeted one-year Advocacy Plans, building upon their submitted proposals. These Advocacy Plans included objectives and activities to be conducted with support from ECMI Kosovo and the project partners.
- **Advocacy Sub-grants:** Selected CSOs or CSO coalitions received advocacy grants to implement activities foreseen in their Advocacy Plans (a maximum of **2,000 Euros** per Advocacy Plan).
- **Continuous Support:** In addition, selected CSOs and CSO coalitions received continuous support, including technical and legal support, assistance in the organisation of media activities (a one minute promotional video for each selected CSO and CSO coalition), facilitation of dialogue with relevant government institutions, and assistance with research and editing materials (e.g. leaflets).

These activities aimed to strengthen the ability of minority community CSOs to interact with, and influence, the government, both at the municipal and central levels, in order to ensure that their interests are being taken into account during governmental processes.

Capacity Building for Minority CSOs

To address the issues highlighted above, ECMI Kosovo and its partners designed an Advocacy Skills & Community Rights Programme for Kosovo Civil Society Organisations which consisted of the:

Organisation of fifteen (15) training sessions during 2013 and 2014 on the following issues:

- CSO participation in Kosovo;
- Minority Rights: General Overview and main concepts;

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- Kosovo CSO Domestic Law and Institutions;
- Overview of mechanisms of redress (direct mechanisms: right to petition, right to citizen's initiative, right to referendum and citizen complaints) + Indirect mechanisms + Issue-based mechanisms (OLC, MEST and Independent Commission, Independent Oversight Board of the Kosovo Civil service, IMC);
- Advocacy;
- Media and social networks (how to get your message across);
- Project Development;
- Writing and Presentation skills + networking;
- Practical tools for record keeping and filing complaints;
- Addressing institutions and understanding their work (CCC, CRIC, OCA).



The trainings brought together members of CSOs from different minority communities across Kosovo, giving them a chance to share their experiences and discuss challenges they face in reaching relevant institutions at the local and central levels to raise issues concerning minority communities and were facilitated by high level experts from Kosovo and the region on the selected issues. The selected CSOs and CSO coalitions were the main target groups; however, CSOs who were mapped on the CSO Database were also invited to attend the trainings.

The participants evaluated all of these trainings as very useful, and pointed out that this was a great opportunity for them to highlights key issues and problems relevant to their communities and helped them to identify channels to address these issues. These meetings addressed a wide variety of issues, such as: the socio-economic opportunities for minority communities, the use of languages; segregation in education, especially the 'Mustafa Bakija' School in Gjakovë/Đakovica; freedom of movement, especially in relation to the Bosniak mahala and Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North; women's rights and gender equality; relations with the government; and civil society wider strategies for participation. As part of the support programme, the selected CSOs and CSO coalitions recorded and broadcasted promotional videos which aimed at promotion their organisation, their mandate and work they do to protect and promote community rights. Promotional videos of BRIGA, PIRAMIDA, CDKD-SP, ICEC,

*One notable **success story** is that through the Advocacy Training Programme, Bosniak CSOs were able to successfully advocate in Prizren/Prizren so that all communities are now represented in the Municipal Communities Committee, as is required by law, but had not previously occurred.*

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CZRC-OPA, and OSG were broadcasted on ECMI Kosovo youtube channel, ECMI Kosovo website and facebook, CSD and NRAEWOK website.

Study Visit for selected minority CSOs



ECMI Kosovo and its partners also organised, for selected minority CSO representatives a study visit, to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). This occurred in the final quarter of the project, and was open to all CSOs who were registered with the database.

The representatives were given a chance to dialogue with counterparts from FYROM on issues such as education in minority communities, the implementation of the law on languages and employment in public institutions and publically owned enterprises. Moreover, ECMI Kosovo and its partners facilitated the chance for the Kosovan representatives to meet the Assembly Committee for Inter-ethnic Relations and the State Secretariat for Implementation of the Ohrid/Ohër Framework. This provided them with more insights into how FYROM is protecting minority rights, and what lessons Kosovo might learn from it. They addressed questions such as whether the minority work in FYROM only focuses on the Albanian minority, or whether there is work with other communities.

The CSOs from Kosovo exchanged contacts and engaged strongly with the FYROM Institutions with the potential for cooperation in the future

The Development and Implementation of Advocacy Campaigns

One of the central issues that can be seen from the lack structure of Kosovo's civil society is that the minority community CSOs are not being effective when it comes to advocating for change. An open call for applications was released, in which around 500 leaflets, entitled *"How to Apply?"*, were distributed in Albanian, Serbian and English, ECMI Kosovo and its partners, formed an independent Selection Board to consider all application from minority community CSOs based on the criteria set. They proposals were judged according to their quality of ideas and engagement with constituents, a clear focus, and a clear method of representing minority communities. The Selection Board specifically chose grassroots CSOs who are not based in the cities with tight links to donors. Six (6) CSOs that were chosen, four (4) were singular CSOs, while two (2) were coalitions of two (2) CSOs who decided to advocate for issues together. The issues selected from the selected CSOs and CSO coalitions were presented in six (6) Advocacy Campaigns.

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After selecting four (4) CSOs and two (2) CSO coalitions and developing Advocacy Campaigns, ECMI Kosovo, CSD and NRAEWOK, during 2013 and 2014 developed a tailored-made, targeted and results-based Advocacy Training Programme consisted fifteen (15) training sessions, involving civil society representatives from other countries in the Balkan region as trainers. As part of the ECMI Kosovo programme, selected CSO and CSO coalitions received technical and legal support for the implementation of their Advocacy Campaigns, assistance in the organisation of media activities (6 promotional videos for the selected CSOs and CSO coalitions), facilitation of dialogue with relevant government institutions, and assistance with research and editing materials and a 2,000€ sub-grant for each selected CSO and CSO coalition for the implementation of the Advocacy Campaigns.

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BRIGA

Representing the Serbian community in Goraždevac/Gorazhdevc in the Pejë/Peć region.

Activities:

- General Advocacy training especially for women;
- Increasing the participation of women in decision-making processes at the municipal level;
- Lack of publication of vacancies in the Serbian language.

PIRAMIDA

Representing the Egyptian community in the Pejë/Peć and Istog/Istok regions.

Activities:

- Addressing Egyptian drop-outs from primary and secondary schools;
- Increasing education on health issues;
- Awareness-raising on employment, especially targeting women .

The Center for Integration of Minority Communities (ICEC)

Representing the Bosniak, Serb, Turk, and Roma communities in the Prizren region.

Activities:

- Municipal Communities Committee should include the Ashkali, Egyptian and Gorani community;
- Public municipal use of all official languages;
- Municipal Bosnian language.

Omladinski Savez Gore – OSG

Representing the Gorani minority community in the Gora region.

Activities:

- Equal representation in employment for all communities;
- Printing educational materials relevant to this issue.

Coalition of CDKD and Slobodna Produkcija

Two CSOs, representing Serbs, Roma, Bosnians, and Montenegrins, working in the regions of Gjilan/Gnjilane, Kamenicë/ Kamenica and Novobërdë/Novobrdo;

Activities:

- Implementation of the Law on Access to Public Documents;
- Proportional use of sports and cultural facilities;
- Proportional allocation of budget.

Coalition of CZRZ and OPA

Two Serbian CSOs working in Southern Kosovo, centrally in Parteš/Partesh and Klokot/Kllokot.

Activities:

- Advocate from Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Youth and Sports and Ministry of Environment for support in Partesh/Parteš;
- Decrease unemployment in these regions.

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Outcomes from the Advocacy Plans

The CSO organisations engaged in these Advocacy Plans have achieved some notable successes as a result of the activities undertaken within these proposals.

ICEC: Successfully advocated with the Municipality of Prizren/Prizren to have all communities represented on the Municipal Communities Committee, including the Gorani, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. They also applied pressure to the Municipality for the equal right to be educated in Bosniak, including organising roundtables on this issue, which was successful to an extent, although there is still a lot of progress to be made in order for the municipality to adhere to its legal duties. Finally, they held several roundtables on the issue of the respect of the 10 per cent quotas for minority communities in public institutions. The municipality was receptive to these meetings, and ICEC will continue to advocate for these issues with the connections that they have established in the institutions.

OSG: Most of the work of OSG was incorporated within the Gorani Network that was established as part of this project. They did organise several roundtables on the issues equal representation of all communities in public employment, and established good connections with the Municipality, which will be used to develop their advocacy in the coming months.



PIRAMIDA: Within Pejë/Peć, PIRMIDA were successful in working with the Municipality to deal with the issue of drop-outs within the minority communities. They worked with municipal officials to advocate for identification of out-of-school children and addressing issues of re-integration. However, with the recent trend of emigration of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, they are facing new issues of integration that need to be addressed by the Municipality.[28] PIRAMIDA were also successful in their aim of increasing education for women within minority communities, especially with reference to health issues, where they ran several roundtables and trainings on this issue, which began to



[28] For more information on this topic, please see the ECMI Kosovo Information Bulletin on the topic, entitled *Challenges to Kosovo's Integration Efforts: Rising Emigration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians*. Available at: http://www.ecmikosovo.org/?p=5847

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engage the community on these issues, and give them more information on issues such as reproductive health, and children's health issues.

CZRZ-OPA Coalition: The coalition was successful in establishing contacts within the relative Ministries for targeting their advocacy. However, while there were not any definitive decisions taken by these Ministries, they were engaged with the issue, and are in the process of formulating plans to deal with the problems brought to their attention by CZRZ-OPA. They also managed to establish good contacts with the Municipal Representatives for Agriculture, Youth and Environment within Partesh/Parteš. They have, along with the Municipality, undertaken activities in Partesh/Parteš, Donja Budriga/Budrigë e Poshtme and Pasjane/Pasjan, which engaged on issues of youth and culture. Finally they have begun the organisation of a famer's union, which will represent a large proportion of farmers within Partesh/Parteš.

BRIGA: The CSO during the implementation of the Advocacy Plan gave a series of training for Serbian women on best methods for employment, including dealing with the applications and following up applications. Moreover, they met with the relevant authorities to express their concern that adverts are not commonly produced in Serbian, and the institutions responsible for this agreed to address this issue and do their best to ensure that in future the news of vacancies is disseminated through Serbian language channels.



CDKD-SP: The coalition held numerous meetings with authorities on their issues central to the advocacy plans, but the delay in establishing a municipal government in Kamenicë/Kamenica hampered the effectiveness of these meetings. However, there was good engagement on the issue of equal access to sports facilities and this is an issue that will be followed up on. On the issue of access to public documents the coalition again held several meetings and regularly advocated for equal and easy access, and this has produced some movement and success from the municipality who are more open to providing translations and open access to all documents. They also monitored the dissemination of capital within the municipality, but they could not get definitive answers on how much is spent on each community. However, by raising the issue and monitoring it, CDKD-SP has put pressure on the municipality to publically share these details and be more open.



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V. CREATION OF INTER-ETHNIC MINORITY CSO NETWORKS

Civil society in Kosovo is largely fragmented: it is not only often divided along ethnic lines, but there is also frequently a lack of communication and cooperation among Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from the same communities. In view of the particular needs and internal fragmentation of most minority communities in Kosovo, ECMI Kosovo and its partner organisations within the project aimed to foster the communication and cooperation of inter- and intra-ethnic CSOs with the ultimate goal of enabling them to advocate for their specific needs and interests while united through one voice.

Through ECMI Kosovo's extensive field work, communities have expressed their desire to develop a channel for dialogue and a means to better organise their activities. Communities have stressed the need to improve policies, increase commitment and programs of Government Institutions of the Republic of Kosovo in regards to the integration of non-majority communities in Kosovo, and to ensure full respect for the rights of non-majority communities in Kosovo. Thus, in 2014, a pilot initiative aimed to launch the process of intra-ethnic CSO dialogue through the establishment of a Serb and Gorani intra-ethnic minority CSO networks, while taking into consideration Kosovo's distinct context, particularities, and experiences, along with good practices from other Western Balkan countries. This initiative is especially crucial as party representation within these communities is highly polarized and often characterised with antagonistic, hostile behaviour. The establishment of these networks aspires to create an environment which fosters dialogue and opens a direct form of communication within the networks.

The growing trend of an increased number of networks has begun to have a positive impact across communities within Kosovo, increasing their ability to influence and advocate for change.

The Anamorava/Pomoravlje Network (http://www.serbcommunitynetwork.com) stretches through south eastern Kosovo, and has generally been characterised with stable inter-ethnic relations. However, the Serb community living in this area faces similar problems to other Serb communities, especially the youth. The establishment of a network fosters a link between various CSOs from the region and better advocate for their respective local government structures. Since many of these municipalities are newly established through the decentralisation process, the network is essential to providing a secure channel to work together. Moreover, many Serb inhabitants from this area feel they are underrepresented in comparison to other regions in Kosovo, showing the necessity of the network in order to make their voices heard at the central level and one within the Serbian community, operating in the Anamorova/Pomoravlje.

The Gorani Community Network (http://www.goranicommunitynetwork.com) is the first such structure to bring together all CSOs from the Gorani community. Considering that the Gorani community is one of the most marginalised minority communities in Kosovo, this is a major development in terms of their ability to lobby and advocate for their issues.

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Gorani and Serb community networks are in a process of being registered. Their aim is to work together on protecting and promoting human rights of their respective communities in Kosovo. The Networks' aims include:

- ✓ Identification of issues facing their community in Kosovo;
- ✓ Advocacy regarding the issues facing their community in Kosovo;
- ✓ Raising awareness of institutions in relation to serious issues affecting welfare of this community;
- ✓ Issuance of joint public media statements on issues of concern for their community;
- ✓ Raising various issues facing their community to the relevant central- and local-level institutions.

In the Serbian network thirteen (13) CSOs were selected to join the network. They work across the municipalities of Kamenicë/Kamenica, Šilovo/Shillovë, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Parteš/Partesh, Novobrdo/Novobërdë, and Klokot/Kllokot. In the Gorani network there were seven (7) CSOs who signed the Platform agreement to join the Network, with all of them working in the Prizren/Prizren and Dragash/Dragaš network.

The Gorani Community Network (http://www.goranicommunitynetwork.com)



Within the Gorani community there were several CSOs based in the Prizren/Prizren region who showed active interest in promoting the human rights issues of their community, and who recognised the need for a network of organisations to aid the raising of Gorani issues which have previously been difficult to raise within Kosovo as a whole. They recognised the need for a network to promote these, as there has previously been very limited cooperation between the Gorani community CSOs, which has limited their impact. There were ten (10) CSOs who were selected to join the Platform, who work in the Dragash/Dragaš region.

These networks have work on thematic issues which they have highlighted as affecting all of their communities across Kosovo. The Gorani community highlighted three issues: the problems of returning students in schools, the proposition of decentralisation creating a Gorani-majority municipality, and the problems of employment and economic opportunities for Gorani. Based on the selected issues, ECMI Kosovo and its partner organisation supported the Gorani community network to draft three (3) questionnaires and conduct a research. Approximately 300 Gorani representatives were involved in the research by filling in it the questionnaire. After conducting results, three (3) policy briefs were drafted and published on the ECMI Kosovo, CSD, NRAEWOK, project's and

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network's website. The Briefs highlighted the need for the CSOs within the communities to work together in order to ensure that their issues are successfully advocated for. These Briefs will also be used by the Networks as they move forward to advocate for the issues of central importance to their communities within Kosovo.

The quick reaction from Gjilan/Gnjilane and several other municipalities to the issues raised in the Policy Briefs, especially the brief focused on youth and culture, showed that publishing these kinds of materials can engage the Municipality with the issues that are of central importance for the minority communities.

The Gorani network successfully managed to integrate themselves into the civil society community of Kosovo. Through ECMI's support they have established connections with donors, gained funding and donations, as well as increasing their research and advocacy skills.

With the support of ECMI Kosovo and its partners, made a website in which they documented their work and activities within the network. The Gorani Community Network (http://www.goranicommunitynetwork.com) provides details of their work, roundtables, research as well as contact details for the Secretariat.

The Anamorava/Pomoravlje Network (http://www.serbcommunitynetwork.com)

The Serbian community also highlighted the issue of employment and economic opportunities, as well as the issues of transparency and accountability in the local government, and the youth activities available for the Serbian communities. The three (3) policy briefs are online at the ECMI Kosovo website, project's website and Serb community website in English and Serbian languages.



Based on the selected issues, ECMI Kosovo and its partner organisation supported the Serb community network to draft three (3) questionnaires and conduct a research. Approximately 600 Serb representatives were involved in the research by filling in it the questionnaire. After conducting results, three (3) policy briefs were drafted and published on the ECMI Kosovo, CSD, NRAEWOK, project's and network's website. The Briefs highlighted the need for the CSOs within the communities to work together in order to ensure that their issues are successfully advocated for. These Briefs will also be used by the Networks as they move forward to advocate for the issues of central importance to their communities within Kosovo.

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VI. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Finally ECMI Kosovo, and its partners, would like to present the conclusions and recommendations which can be formed from the implementation of this project over the past two years. These recommendations are based on both the initial aims of the project, and the experiences during the two years of implementation. ECMI Kosovo, and its partners, would like to present the following recommendations to both minority community CSOs and the central and municipal level governments in order to continue the increase of minority community dialogue with government institutions.

Structured dialogue between minority CSOs and government

The project began with the aim of creating a more structured dialogue between central and municipal level officials and representatives of minority community CSOs. ECMI Kosovo and its partners identified that either there was no relationship as CSOs were viewed as antagonistic, or there was a paternalistic relationship, with the institutions not esteeming the CSOs and the work they are capable of.

Through the activities such as the **dialogue sessions** between minority CSOs and their institutional representatives, ECMI Kosovo and its partners, have shown that there is need, and also at many levels willingness, to engage with this project. Across all communities, the dialogue created between the civil society representatives and the central and municipal level institutional representatives was fruitful, and worked to create a structured place for the exchange of ideas and constructive criticism. This is something that is greatly needed by both communities, and it will work to ensure that there not just greater links between the two, but that there is also more transparency and accountability.

Nearly all communities, in their meetings with the officials in the second year of this project, suggested that these sets of dialogues be formalised and continued in the coming years. This shows that these types of formalised discussions have begun to address the issues of a lack of structural dialogue and that they are of importance to both sectors. Thus, ECMI Kosovo and its partners, recommends that in light of this, both minority community CSOs and their political representatives at the central and local levels, work to **formalise and structure their dialogue to ensure that it encompasses constructive criticism as well as support for ideas**.

Moreover, the **Law on the Use of Languages** is a common issue that has been highlighted across the two years of the project by nearly all the communities. This is something that all institutions need to work towards implementing, especially at the municipal level. As well, the **CCC, CRIC** and **Ombudsperson** need to **continue engagement** with the minority community CSOs to ensure that there is effective dialogue between the sectors.

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Increased interactions and access between smaller minority CSOs and donors

Another aspect of this project aimed to address the problem that there are very **few minority community CSOs who can use these links with the government or international donors**. There are many CSOs who do not have the know-how or capability to apply for funding from the larger international sources, or who can enter fruitful discussions that might lead to more prominence. Thus, ECMI Kosovo and its partners specifically targeted those CSOs who do not have these kinds of links.

This was done centrally through the advocacy trainings and the development support and sub-grants. These proved to be successful in engaging the smaller organisations and shows how, when provided with some support, these CSOs can successfully engage with the donors and work to advocate for their communities rights. Thus, this project aimed to stimulate the smaller CSOs within minority communities to grow and access funding from other sources, something that was successful, and needs to be continued in the coming years. Both smaller CSOs need to work to be aware of how to apply to donors, and also the donors need to focus their efforts on supporting the smaller CSOs within minority communities and not funding the same CSOs continually.

This might also be done through the use of larger CSOs partnering with smaller ones from minority communities. ECMI Kosovo's and CSD's support of smaller communities through the sub-grants and advocacy training, proved fruitful and showed that, if a consortium is formed, this can greatly advantage the local communities.

Another method that showed to be fruitful through the implementation of this project was the creation of the networks for the Gorani and Serbian communities. This again showed that consortiums can aid smaller CSOs to access funds and support them in integrating to wider civil society as a whole. Two (2) Serbian members of the networks have now joined the CCC as members, and are working to promote their communities' within the central level institutions and dialogues.

Ensuring access for grass root CSOs to local and central level institutions

Finally, the project has facilitated the access of many minority communities to the central civil society structures, in particular the Gorani community. This community does not fall into any category currently focused on by the international donor community, and moreover suffers strongly both as being a minority in Albanian majority municipalities and also from the tensions that exist with the Bosniak community, which is centrally a division along political lines, but has hampered them in terms of issues such as what schools their students can attend. Representatives of these civil society organisations have stated that it is only through ECMI Kosovo, and its partners, effort with this project that they have been able to join organisations such as the CCC.

There is a wider issue, moreover, of some civil society organisations being overlooked within their own community, as they might be too small, or work in areas where the donors and international

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communities are not focused. For example, this is true for the Serbian CSOs working in the Anamoravë/Poljemorova region, who are often overlooked as this is a relatively stable region. The network created by ECMI Kosovo and its partners within this region has shown that, when issues within these regions are highlighted effectively, such as through the production of the Policy Briefs on these issues, there can be real discussions and the potential for real change within this region.

This is a trend that needs to be continued throughout Kosovo, to ensure that there is effective cohesion between the minority and majority members of civil society, and also cohesion within the different members of one community. ECMI Kosovo, and its partners, through the work that has been done in this project, are hopeful that this climate can be created within Kosovo, and moreover that the members of civil society wish it to be so. This can be achieved through the pro-active efforts of CSO representatives and also institutional representatives as well as donors.

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