

# Sharing Common Culture: Balkan Theatre Networks for EU Integration

## FINAL PROJECT EVALUATION

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Centre for Common Ground, Macedonia

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## Acronyms

- Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)
- Balkan Theatre Network (BTN)
- Centre for Common Ground (CCG)
- European Union (EU)
- European Commission (EC)
- Student Cultural Center in Nish (SKC)
- Centre for Drama Education in Mostar (CDO)
- Civil Society Organization (CSO)
- Search for Common Ground (SFCG)
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

## Executive Summary

*Sharing Common Culture: Balkan Theatre Networks for EU Integration* (BTN) was a peacebuilding program conducted by the Center for Common Ground (CCG) in Skopje, Macedonia between January 2011 and November 2012. The project was funded with €224,754 from the European Commission for Directorate General Enlargement, and was designed to respond to the ongoing challenge of establishing core EU values such as tolerance, unity, and interethnic diversity among and within Balkan communities.

This report contains the final conclusions of an external evaluation conducted in December 2012 using in-person interviews, both individual and in groups, as well as a short electronic survey distributed to youth participants. The intended audience of this evaluation is CCG Macedonia, and as a secondary audience the European Commission donor. The evaluation is aimed at assessing the level of effectiveness and sustainability achieved by each of the above objectives in order to promote learning that improves peacebuilding at CCG both conceptually and programmatically. Only the indicators listed in the original program logic framework as being required by the final evaluation were investigated, and these are listed in the Indicator List in the Appendix.

### Summary of Findings

The overall project goal was: **“to harness the power of culture to reinforce a participative democracy based on EU common values by enhancing regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations, while respecting and promoting national cultural heritage.”** In pursuit of this goal, the project had three objectives. Their results are summarized below, and analyzed in detail in the latter sections of this report.

Objective 1: To encourage creation of new networks of cultural CSOs as basis for sustainable inter-cultural dialogue and cooperation within the region and between the region and the EU.

Result: Objective 1 was partially achieved. The six NGOs that implemented the drama program in each city participated in networking activities with one another, and five are hoping to maintain contact with one another post-project. Though CCG conducted some outreach activities to other organizations in Macedonia, the network did not meaningfully expand beyond these initial project partners, or outside of the Balkans. These five indicated that they felt very positively about having established relations with one another, and that they have maintained informal and irregular contact. Many have plans for future cultural exchange visits in the future. However, most organizations indicated that without future funding or logistical support from CCG, the network will not remain active.

Objective 2: To increase awareness of and access to different cultural traditions within and beyond national boundaries through the exchange of cultural experiences.

Result: Objective 2 was fully achieved among the 82 students who participated in the project. These youth felt extremely enthusiastically about their opportunities to create their own drama productions, to share them in their home cities, and to visit other Balkan cities for additional performances. The majority of them believe that because of the BTN project, particularly the regional touring aspect, that they learned more about other Balkan cultures and were eager to do so again. Many believed that the BTN project had given them a rare opportunity for creative self-expression about problems in their

communities that were relevant to their daily lives. In addition, the youth felt that they had gained performance skills as well as personal skills, like maturity, improved communication, and self-esteem. In Nish, some of the youth participants even started an independent youth drama initiative which recruits other youth in the town for the production of film and theatre.

Objective 3: To increase youth participation in production of inter-ethnic, intended-outcome and interactive theatre performances.

Result: Objective 3 was fully achieved among the 82 youth who participated in the project. Through the project, the youth developed new friendships across ethnic lines and increased their personal levels of tolerance and respect for other culture in the region. Many believed that the theatre productions also may have had a positive influence within their community on alleviating ethnic tension. The youth understood this project as internally focused within the Balkans, to them, connection, relationship to, or dialogue about Europe or their identity as Europeans was not a significant component of this project.

The project had a small number of outstanding challenges that should be addressed in future projects. First, many of the drama programs did not recruit a very ethnically balanced mix of students; often there were only one or two minority students in each group. Secondly, many of the drama projects faced logistical difficulties related to transportation, timing, and weather. Finally, CCG had difficulties managing expectations and relationships with partner organizations, who were not always responsive and communicative in ways that were important. CCG is aware of each of these challenges, and should work on them further if this project is repeated.

## Balkan Conflict Context

Despite some successes in macro-political stability, communities in Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia have maintained high degrees of ethnic tension and separation. Across the region, nationalism is often the default position among youth, who are growing up among the legacy of violent conflict from the 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>1</sup> Competing historical narratives of victimization proliferate, and are encouraged by politicians to sew division and prevent democratic political transitions. Reducing these tensions is key not only to fulfilling aspirations of joining the European Union, but more importantly, for the stability and prosperity of the Balkan region over the long term.

Despite the successful implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement in Macedonia, ethnic tension has been on the rise for the last six years. An increase Macedonian ethnic nationalism and school segregation among youth combined with slowed decentralization and weak government support for inter-ethnic dialogue risks undermining its recent progress in ending fighting among Albanians and Macedonians.<sup>2</sup> In Bosnia, the Dayton Agreement has failed to provide stable governance and to alleviate ethnic tensions. Youth there are regularly confronted with violent history that has ravaged their communities, and both political religious leaders in many communities exacerbate inter-religious

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<sup>1</sup> Deasy, Kristin. "War Babies The Balkans' New Lost Generation." *World Affairs Journal*. November/December 2011. Accessed at <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/war-babies-balkans%E2%80%99-new-lost-generation>

<sup>2</sup> "Macedonia: Ten Years After the Conflict." International Crisis Group, Europe Report N 212. 11 August 2011. Pg 1. Accessed at [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/balkans/macedonia/212%20Macedonia%20---%20Ten%20Years%20after%20the%20Conflict.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/europe/balkans/macedonia/212%20Macedonia%20---%20Ten%20Years%20after%20the%20Conflict.pdf)

tension.<sup>3</sup> Finally, in Serbia, while ethnic tensions among adults have significantly decreased, high levels of unemployment, rising inequality, and general disaffection have left youth with more discriminatory attitudes. The challenges, and the lack of opportunity for regional dialogue and exchange, have left youth with limited exposure to their peers from other countries, and little encouragement for inter-ethnic engagement and dialogue within their own communities.

## Project Narrative

The overall goal of the program was to **“to harness the power of culture to reinforce a participative democracy based on EU common values by enhancing regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations, while respecting and promoting national cultural heritage.”** In pursuit of this goal, CCG identified three core objectives:

1. To encourage creation of new networks of cultural CSOs as basis for sustainable inter-cultural dialogue and cooperation within the region and between the region and the EU;
2. To increase awareness of and access to different cultural traditions within and beyond national boundaries through the exchange of cultural experiences;
3. To increase youth participation in production of inter-ethnic, intended-outcome and interactive theatre performances.

CCG organized a series of activities that worked toward creating drama programs for secondary school students in six cities: Struga and Kumanovo in Macedonia, Nish and Kragujevac in Serbia, and Mostar and Bugojno in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).<sup>4</sup> CCG worked with the **Student Cultural Center (SKC)** in Nish, Serbia and **Center for Drama Education in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina (CDO)** as implementation partners for each of their respective countries, and then directly managed the programs in Macedonia.

The program had three target groups: youth leaders, youth participants, and the general public. Youth leaders were a group of arts professionals who were responsible for implementing the drama program by teaching the youth in scriptwriting, directing, acting, costume making, and other elements of theatre production. Each project site had approximately three youth leaders. The youth participants, sometimes referred to in this report as “youth” or “students”, were the secondary school students who wrote and performed the drama productions. Although the project documents listed the youth leaders as the primary target group, the evaluator determined in conversation with the project staff that the primary target group was instead the youth participants, with the youth leaders as the secondary target group and the general public as the tertiary target group. Though they were not explicitly listed as a target group in the program documents, the civil society organizations recruited as project implementers in each city were also an informal target group, as Objective 1 targeted strengthening the strength of relationships between these organizations.

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<sup>3</sup> Steubner, Renata. “The Current Status of Religious Coexistence and Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina.” United States Institute of Peace. November 2009. Pg 1. Accessed at [http://www.usip.org/files/resources/religion\\_education\\_bosnia\\_herzegovina\\_pb.pdf](http://www.usip.org/files/resources/religion_education_bosnia_herzegovina_pb.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>In the original proposal, Sarajevo was identified instead of Bugojno as the target community for the second drama program in BiH. According to program staff, this change was made on the recommendation of the local partner organization, which believed that Bugojno would be a better location because that community is smaller and has less access to cultural activities than Sarajevo.

Primary project activities involved a kickoff launch event for civil society organizations, identifying and training youth leaders, advertising the drama programs in each city, facilitating the implementation of the drama programs, facilitating travel for some of the youth participants to present their plays in other project cities, and organizing a closing event in Skopje for all of the drama participants to meet and present their work.

## Methodology

The findings contained in this report are the result of eight days of data collection conducted December 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, 2012 and January 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013. There were two days of data collection at the CCG headquarters in Skopje, and six days of data collection in the field: one day in Struga, Macedonia, one day in Nish, Serbia, one day in each city in Bosnia, and two half days in Kumanovo, Macedonia. Conclusions are based on individual and group interviews conducted with youth leaders, youth participants, civil society organization representatives in each location, and in some cases also with teachers and parents of youth participants. A “List of Interviewees” can be found as the second item in the Appendix at the end of this report. Additionally, a short electronic qualitative survey was used to triangulate findings from youth participants and gauge the representativeness of data collected during student interviews. The two evaluation criteria used in this report are Effectiveness and Sustainability; details on both as well as the lines of inquiry are available in the Appendix under “Inception Report.”

There are a small number of limitations that affect the validity of the conclusions presented in this report. First, there was no baseline survey conducted to provide a pre-project comparison point. The project staff did conduct a formative research report that focused on students’ access to and participation in culture, but it did not provide an effective comparison point on cultural access for the changes targeted by the project. Secondly, the formative research did not address the other main objectives of the project in promotion of interethnic dialogue and tolerance and therefore did not provide a strong comparison point for the subject matter reviewed in this evaluation. In each interview the evaluator inquired directly about the changes experienced and witnessed by participants over the course of the program to account for this.

Secondly, the rapid timing for both the planning and implementation of the evaluation limited the quality and quantity of data collected. For instance, the evaluator was unable to identify interview participants based on random selection, or to visit the two project sites in Bosnia. The limited timing for both planning and implementation of the evaluation caused some limitations which led to the inability of the evaluator to fully engage with participants to the extent desired. For example, the evaluator was only able to speak with a small number of parents and teachers in Struga and Nish, and did not speak to these groups in any other cities. The evaluator was also only to interview a majority of the youth participants in half of the project sites, as youth interviews were organized at the last minute and many students were not available. Lastly, the lead evaluator and author of this report was not able to be present at the interviews in Bosnia, and instead worked through a local evaluation assistant. As a result, the data collected on the programs in Bosnia is not as thorough or as complete; though the data provided in this report is believed to be accurate, the information and analysis from Macedonia and Serbia is more robust.

Despite the limitations, given the 50% youth participant response level of the online survey and the relatively high percentage of youth leaders and civil society representatives who were interviewed, the

data collected likely represents an accurate picture of the achievements of the program as they relate to these three target groups. However, because the evaluator did not collect data from any members of the community who were not direct participants in the project, this report can only make speculative conclusions based on interviews that did take place as to the overall effect on the community of the drama program performances and subsequent facilitated debates.

The selection of interviewee participants was jointly administered between the evaluator, CCG, and its partner organizations with careful collaboration so as not to produce bias in the data. Youth, youth leaders, parents, teachers, and CSO members were openly invited to interview in each community, but given the short notice provided in many project communities, parents and teachers were only interviewed in two of the six project communities. There is a small risk of some self-selection bias primarily with the students who volunteered to be interviewed in Nish and Kragujevac in Serbia and in Kumanovo in Macedonia; in each city, all students were invited to be interviewed but only those who were available and willing were interviewed.

## Project Analysis

### Civil Society Network Building

*Objective 1: To encourage creation of new networks of cultural CSOs as basis for sustainable inter-cultural dialogue and cooperation within the region and between the region and the EU.*

#### Relevant Indicators

Indicator	Baseline	Result
<b># of new networks created both formal and informal, during and beyond the duration of the action</b>	None	1 new informal network created among 6 CSO organizations across 3 Balkan countries; 10 organizations have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create a formal network <sup>5</sup>
<b># of inter-regional exchanges between participating artists, both formal and informal, during and beyond the duration</b>	None	9 inter-regional exchanges; 18 intra-regional Balkan exchanges and 7 intra-regional European exchanges. <sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> “Informal network” is defined as a group of organizations who maintain some level of independent contact to facilitate the exchange of ideas or cultural programs; “formal network” is defined as groups who have signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) created through the project, but may or may not actually be active in communication or exchange with one another. The 10 organizations that signed the MoU include CCG, SFCG in Brussels, and the Student Cultural Centers in Nish and Mostar, plus several additional organizations from Macedonia recruited by CCG and the partner organizations.

<sup>6</sup>The total number of exchanges was determined by counting the number of countries represented at each meeting activity, such as the inaugural gathering and drama touring visits, assuming that one exchange occurred between each set of two countries. This number is not representative of actual conversations or relationships formed between people or organization, and could not be verified independent of the activity participant list



## of the project

This evaluation verified that there were six civil society organizations were included in the informal network activities of the project:

- Student Cultural Center in Nish, Serbia
- Student Cultural Center in Kragujevac, Serbia
- Art A in Kumanovo, Macedonia
- Center for Culture Struga in Struga
- Centre for Drama Education in Mostar, BiH
- FEDRA in Bugojno, BiH

Objective 1 was evaluated using criteria of Effectiveness and Sustainability. The lines of inquiry used were:

- How successfully did the project create new networks of cultural civil society organizations? Where the networks exist, how successfully do they facilitate intercultural dialogue a) within the region and b) between the region and the EU?
- To what extent do the civil society networks created by the project have the capacity to continue to exist independently after the end of the project?
- To what extent do the civil society networks created by the project have the ability to facilitate intercultural dialogue and cooperation after the end of the project?
- To what extent have the primary, secondary, and tertiary target groups taken steps to continue the youth drama programs on their own?

Each of the organization listed above has as their primary organizational purpose the creation and exchange of cultural and artistic productions, such as folkloric dance, music, and theatre. As a result, all impacts of the program in relation to network building, shared experiences, and future programmatic exchanges are relevant in the cultural sphere, but are unlikely to have substantial impact on civic or political affairs as the term “civil society organization” often implies.

### General Conclusions

**The BTN project was successful at establishing an informal network among most of the organizations that directly organized and implemented youth drama programs.** All six civil society organizations interviewed established both active and passive connections with other organizations through the network that is currently being maintained without the active facilitative role of CCG in organizing meetings or communication between parties. Each organization made new network connections through the drama exchanges created by the regional touring activity and the EU-Balkan Theatre Event organized in Skopje in December 2012 and mentioned their desire to meet for exchanges with one another again. Four of the organizations were actively planning such exchanges, such as visits by folkloric groups.

Additionally, while each of the CSOs had been involved previously with other networks of cultural organizations to varying degrees, they **each found their involvement with the BTN project to be positive for many reasons, though the benefits of expanding their organizational network were**

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provided by CCG. Additionally, youth, youth leaders, and CSO representatives described many informal exchanges, such as emails between CSO representatives or Facebook friendships between youth that could not be counted.

**experienced in different degrees by different organizations.** The organization in Struga, for example, had few previous contacts with other cultural organizations and greatly appreciated the change to meet and exchange with other cultural organizations. In contrast, Art A in Kumanovo focused much more on the benefits of the funding provided through the program than the opportunity to connect with similar organizations. Both CSOs in Serbia and in Bosnia were very experienced with international and intercultural exchanges, but were grateful for the opportunity to have more of these.

In contrast, **the program did not foster significant growth of the network or strengthening ties between existing members.** Interviews with program staff and with CSO representatives indicated that the bulk of their time and effort during the project was spent on preparing for, implementing and showcasing the youth dramas rather than on professional development or explicit networking among organizations. The project took place with the expectation that the founding partner organizations that signed the Memorandum of Understanding would each take initiative to expand the network to new organizations and cultivate these relationships in each of their own countries. According to program staff, CCG reached out to four new organizations in Macedonia and organized two meetings to discuss using the network as a tool for exchange and possibly training, as it was the responsible implementing partner in Macedonia. Given the limited time allotted for data collection, it was not possible to verify this with the new Macedonian network members, or to assess what these two meetings achieved.

**Outside of Macedonia, CCG's partner organizations did not follow through on their commitment to network outreach.** When asked if they had formed any new relationships with other organizations through the BTN network that they were currently maintaining, the CSOs interviewed mentioned ad hoc interactions with one or two of the other core implementing partners whom they met in Skopje, but made no mention of taking initiative for other outreach activities or being involved in an active, formal network with other organizations.

**Furthermore, tools designed to foster independent collaboration between organizations in the network also appear to have not been used.** For instance, although the program staff indicated that a blog and Facebook page were created to help foster the network's development, none of the CSOs mentioned these tools as being useful to helping them connect with or learn more about one another. The Facebook page is filled exclusively with posts from the organizer, and the link to the blog<sup>7</sup> provided from the Interim Narrative Report was not functional at the time of this report writing, though the project staff indicated that the SFCG office in Brussels had developed and posted some content.

**Regarding multiculturalism, only one of the six organizations emphasized that their involvement in the BTN was significant for bringing more multicultural artistic content to their organization. However, three of the six emphasized the value of the BTN for building relationships and facilitating cultural exchanges with centers in other countries throughout the Balkans, which they are eager to continue. This was not the case for mentorship or relationship building with European organizations, as none of the organizations mentioned any contact or relationship building with European organizations, but many believed that their involvement in the EU program helped to spread EU values of facilitating dialogue and interethnic tolerance.**

**With no further interventions from CCG, there will be some limited cultural exchanges between the implementing partners in five of the six cities, but the BTN will not continue to function as a structured, formalized network with regular meetings or interaction.** Four organizations expressed a serious intent to maintain the partnerships that they had developed and have already taken steps to do

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<sup>7</sup> [www.balkanculturalnetwork.com](http://www.balkanculturalnetwork.com)

so. However, the financial support provided by the BTN project played a meaningful role in facilitating in-person exchanges, which three of the six organizations mentioned as being the most useful method of maintaining contact. Both of the organizations in Bosnia believed that if CCG is no longer involved, the network will not be able to survive at all. Overall, without further funding, it is likely that passive, long-distance communication by phone and email will continue in some cases, but the benefits for the network in terms of both cultural exchange and organizational development will remain limited.

### Site Specific Conclusions

#### 1) Struga

The CSO representatives in **Struga** found their involvement with the BTN to be extremely significant because it facilitated more direct collaboration and engagement with other cultural organizations than they had experienced before in the past. Because they operate in a more rural, low-budget environment with limited cultural life, before the BTN program they had only limited opportunities for cultural exchanges with some national folkloric groups. The CSO representatives stated, as a result of the BTN program, that they gained tangible ideas from this visit about how to operate and develop as an organization, such as creating a snack bar to facilitate socialization among students, which they learned from the CSO in Kragujevac. However, communication with other CSOs in the network has generally been limited to a small number of phone conversations and emails, as the staff believe that in person exchange is much more significant. Without further funding, communication and hosting visits will generally be very limited, with the exception of a planned visit for a folkloric group from Kragujevac to visit their center. The CSO representatives from this organization were deeply grateful for the opportunities provided to their center and community for the BTN, and were eager to see them continue. Lastly, they also found the BTN to be valuable because the theatre drama was one of their only projects that involved producing art that was multiethnic and celebrated different cultures.

#### 2) Kumanovo

The biggest impact of the BTN program for **Art A in Kumanovo** was not the networking opportunities, but the financial and logistical support provided by CCG. Art A has had some previous collaboration with other organizations through Blue Sky, a large international youth network sponsored by the British Council, and a larger, well-funded intercultural art center in Kumanovo called the Inter Ethnic Project Kumanovo which conducts similar interethnic youth theatre projects. As a result, Art A operates in an environment with significant interethnic or socially-themed theatre activity, but usually has little or no budget to implement drama programs and spends most of its time fundraising and organizing for support. They were very grateful for CCG's financial and organizational support for their drama project so that they could avoid spending a majority of their time making the play, rather than fundraising and planning for its support. Intercultural exchange did not appear to be a significant element of their involvement in the network. Furthermore, Art A did not report any significant relationship building with other organizations; though they would gladly engage with network members in the future, they commented that they will not take initiative to do so. Said one representative, "We don't push it too hard to do a joint project, but we keep with the flow; if it happens it happens."

#### 3) Nish

The **Student Cultural Center in Nish** is an active and well-established organization that operates in a larger city with substantial cultural life. This organization benefitted from both the networking

opportunities and financial support; though it already has both of these independently, the center was appreciative and eager for both to be expanded. Specifically the center was active with seven to nine other organizations abroad and in Serbia previously, such as touring other theatre productions in Kragujevac. However, they reported that they still made significant new connections with five other organizations, such as with Mostar's Centre for Drama Education, which they intend on actively engaging to bring to Serbia.

The two representatives also stated that regardless of CCG's future involvement with them, they will continue such networking activities because they are very important, though they always appreciate additional financial and organizational support, especially for touring and in-person visits. They reported that as a result of the BTN, they are also actively trying to network with other organizations in Nish to share ideas about doing similar projects. They are eager to expand these activities and are grateful that their future endeavors can build on this progress. Furthermore, as a state funded organization, they emphasized that the BTN had given them a unique opportunity to build relationships with NGOs and learn how to organize and implement theatre productions from scratch and that involve regional touring.

#### 4) Kragujevac

The **Student Cultural Center in Kragujevac** has been active in the cultural sphere for over 35 years, during which time it has engaged with hundreds of other cultural organization inside and outside of Serbia. Like in Nish, they found their engagement with the BTN project to be significant because of the additional exchange opportunities and learning to build a drama production from the writing through the performance stages. The CSO representatives stated that they built contacts with seven new organizations through this project, and that the relationships built would be used to facilitate future cultural exchanges. Next year, for example, they will participate in a cultural festival in Struga, and they are also working to "develop cooperation" with the Centre for Drama Education in Mostar.

#### 5) Mostar

**The Centre for Drama Education was the implementing partner in Mostar.** It's representatives commented that the play was well received in their city; "We attracted a bigger attention from the media. After each performing of the play, an olive tree is planted so the City has got a few olive trees on the Boulevard. Children perform the play on regular basis, and each performing contributes to our impact." The CSO representative interviewed pointed out that with other artistic activities in the city, the public usually prefers comedies in order to avoid having to talk about difficult social issues. With the BTN play, however, the opposite occurred, and that once the youth started to work through important topics in the community, they began to open up and understand things in a new way. The contacts made with the partners in Kumanovo, Nish, and Kragujevac will be maintained, but they believed that the network as an independent entity would not survive without CCG. Their main feedback on their involvement with the BTN is that the project was well designed overall, but that they would prefer more attention be paid next time to the quality of artistic results, and to budgeting more for performances and travel and less on "some mass arrivals" when such meetings could occur over skype.

#### 6) Bugojno

The **Theatre FEDRA in Bugojno** has been active in the theatre realm since 1965, and has produced a minimum of 3 plays annually for the last 15 years. They have a history of working both locally and

internationally, including with funding from the US Embassy and doing joint projects or partnerships with organizations in Austria, Bulgaria, Romania, and Belgrade. For this reason, the BTN project was not significant in bringing substantial new knowledge of other cultures to the organization or the city or in changing the way that people in the community talk or relate to one another. However, the engagement overall was still positive and facilitated additional connections- such as a planned exchange visit with a folkloric group in Kragujevac in May 2013. The CSO representative interviewed stated that for his/her organization, the BTN project was much more about youth exchange than network formation, and that while he only became involved in the program at a later stage, he was still glad to have done so. The most positive aspects of the program for Bugojno were the student travel, the four performances, and the post-play discussions, which all “will animate the children to engage more in the theatre for such exchange”, but regretted that the final event in Skopje was organized during Eid, an important Muslim religious holiday.

## **Cultural Knowledge and Participation**

*Objective 2: To increase awareness of and access to different cultural traditions within and beyond national boundaries through the exchange of cultural experiences.*

### **Relevant Indicators**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Result</b>
<b># of cultural performances created and produced</b>	None	At least 6 theatre dramas produced; At least 63 total performances
<b># of audience members</b>	None	Approximate total of 1500 audience members at drama premiers
<b>% increase of number of art professionals who state increased capacity and role as a consequence of participating to the action</b>	None	Determining a % increase is not possible without a baseline. None of the youth leaders described increased capacity and role as an important aspect of their involvement in the program.
<b># of new cultural initiatives and relations developed at grass-roots level as result to action exposure</b>	None	2 new grassroots cultural initiative; youth participants in Nish made their own youth cultural association; 4 youth in Struga wrote a new play for the Red Cross
<b># of new partnerships and collaboration developed as result of the action</b>	None	See above; 1 new grassroots cultural initiative
<b># of initiatives engendered by the action during and beyond its duration</b>	None	See above; 1 new grassroots cultural initiative

Objective 2 was evaluated using the evaluation criteria of Effectiveness and Sustainability, according to the following lines of inquiry:

- To what extent has youth engagement in cultural activities, particularly those that increase awareness of different national cultures, changed? Have youth attitudes, behaviors, or skills changed as a result of their participation in the project?
- How likely are the youth engaged by the project to continue to engage in cultural activities, including inter-ethnic cultural activities?
- How likely are both the primary and secondary target groups to share their skills, knowledge and intercultural experience with members of their own community after the project?

This section assess how well the BTN project increased the participation in, awareness of, and access to culture as well as the extent to which the project promoted learning about new ethnic cultures among youth and youth leaders. Because of time limitations, the evaluation did not include data collection from audience members or members of the general community in each city. All conclusions related to the community impact of the program are based solely on the views of youth, youth leaders, and CSO representatives interviewed.

For the purpose of this evaluation, “culture” is understood in the strict sense of values, beliefs, or practices of various ethno-religious groups in the Balkans. All impacts of the program related to behaviors and attitudes towards another group of people as well as passive effects of cultural learning through building inter-ethnic relationships will be discussed in the Objective 3 section of this evaluation. Lastly, because all four communities experienced similar degrees of change in this area, there will be no section on site-specific conclusions.

## **General Conclusions**

### 1) Cultural Participation and Access

**The BTN project engaged 82 youth in cultural activities by providing them with a platform to write, produce, and perform one new play.** A total of 82 students from the six project cities participated in the program, the majority of whom were involved in acting or writing capacity.

**The BTN project also increased youths’ skills in the dramatic arts as well as their interest and desire to participate in cultural activities again.** Every youth and youth leader interviewed for this evaluation felt extremely positive about their involvement in the drama programs, and left eager for similar cultural and particularly drama-specific opportunities in the future, though many face continued barriers of access to doing so. Out of 45 survey respondents, 30 indicated that they were “a lot more” and 8 indicated that they were “a little more” likely to participate in cultural programs again. The program therefore had a clear positive impact on student enthusiasm for art and culture activities.

Across cities, youth felt sincerely artistically inspired and creatively engaged, and particularly relished their ability to express their views and emotions publically through the stage. Each student interviewed commented that the program had helped them improve their skills in acting, drama writing, and/or theatre production, and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work directly with theatre professionals as a part of their training. Many youth even developed a desire to pursue acting and

theatre professionally, although the issue was raised in at least once instance about whether the program had provided unrealistic hopes among a student to pursue an acting profession. Particularly in Struga and Nish, both youth and CSO representatives were incredibly eager to see this specific program continued to have more activities with the play that has already been produced.

**In most of the cities, there was a mix between students who had done cultural projects before and those who had not.** This suggests that the BTN project successfully engaged some students who had never had cultural opportunities before, but also gave opportunities to students already engaged in other dramatic projects- potentially limiting the ability of the program to increase access to culture among youth. However, this issue was difficult to assess clearly due to the limited number of students available for interviews. In Nish, Kragujevac, and Kumanovo, all but two students interviewed (the only two Roma students interviewed) had participated in cultural programs, and often even drama programs, previously. Youth in Mostar and Bugojno all similarly mentioned that they had worked in the theatre, music, or in other cultural formats previous. The cities varied in degree of preexisting opportunities for students to participate in culture; for instance, in Struga the BTN project was significant for bringing a drama program where none had existed, but in Kumanovo, another NGO created an environment where students were used to seeing and participating in youth dramas about diversity and tolerance themes. This other NGO, called the Centre for Intercultural Dialogue, was created by youth who formerly participated at the SFCG Bridges for Culture program back in 2005, which did the exact same type of drama activities with students, though exclusively within Macedonia.

**The BTN project provided community access to future cultural opportunities in at least five cities, and increased youth access to participatory cultural activities in Nish and Kragujevac.** As described in the previous section, the network connections made across at least five of the six cities and have already led to concrete plans to facilitate cultural exchange in the coming year; the NGO in Kumanovo has taken no initiative to continue network activities and it was not possible to verify the degree to which this was done in Mostar. The planned exchanges of folklore and drama groups are likely to allow community members to attend a greater number of cultural events in their city than they had access to previously.

Specifically in regard to youth, in both Serbian cities, the program increased the capacity of the civil society partner to run similar programs again. As the CSO representatives explained in their interviews, they are already well-established and funded organizations, and learned how to create youth drama programs “from scratch” as they had not done before but would like to do so again. In the Macedonian cities, limited finances remain such a significant barrier that the BTN project likely did not increase their ability to provide similar programs to youth in the future without additional outside funding. That said, in two of the six communities, the demand for such programs across the community has increased as more youth and families have witnessed the personal benefits of the program for their peers and neighbors.

**Outside of Struga, the project was perceived by both youth and CSO representatives as incredibly significant, but more for the specific attributes of the program than because it brought access to a new cultural opportunity.** The majority of youth interviewed in five of the six cities mentioned having participated in a youth theatre program before, either through their schools or through NGOs. Kumanovo stands out in this regard, as its students had not only done drama programs before but had done internationally funded NGO drama programs that promoted ethnic tolerance and diversity- themes they viewed as tired and forced. Five of the CSOs had actively worked to produce drama programs, and in at least one instance, youth drama programs, in the past. As a result, both groups found the drama project to have been incredibly meaningful for them on a personal, organizational, or

community level, but because it involved creating a play that the students wrote, because it involved regional touring and youth exchange, and in all cities but Kumanovo, because the play shared messages of tolerance and diversity.

## 2) Cultural Awareness

**The project appeared to have no effect on awareness of cultural activities among both youth and youth leaders.** All youth leaders commented in interviews that because their academic and professional lives center on the arts, they are already very knowledgeable about and directly involved in the cultural life of their communities. In this vein, the program had no overall effect on their participation in or access to cultural activities, though each saw their involvement in the BTN project as having been rewarding on a personal level for the opportunity to interact with youth and learn from their experiences. The youth interviewed focused much more on access to culture in terms of limited money, time, and opportunity when discussing their past and future cultural participation, but none expressed that they had not previously participated in cultural activities due to a lack of awareness or information. All youth communicated that they were eager to pursue similar theatre projects if and when the opportunity arises.

**Youth leaders experienced some small changes mostly related to cultural awareness-** and again only among some. Most work in the theatre or some other form of artistic production professionally and are very aware of the cultural life in their communities. Most are active and plan to continue in this matter- hence no major change. Those who had worked with youth before counted this as a new, positive experience; those who had this as their first time with you noted that it helped them to understand younger generations better and want to work with them again.

## 3) Cultural Knowledge

**The BTN program improved youth understanding of different cultures in the Balkan region.** The regional touring and socialization aspects of the program significantly increased youths' knowledge of and exposure to other cultures in the region. Almost 96% of the 45 students surveyed indicated that they learned either a little or a lot more about another culture through the program. When interviewed, all student spoke extremely enthusiastically about the opportunities they had to travel to other cities, and about their observations of how people lived and behaved in each new place. One Bosnian student mentioned visiting a Macedonian museum, and students from Nish talked about observing new architecture in Mostar, as well as the way that Christians and Muslims behave differently while living in the same town. Most indicated that if the program were to be repeated, they would like even more opportunities to travel and exchange, perhaps with youth groups from outside of the Balkans.

**The production of the dramas themselves had only limited influence on youth's understanding of one another's cultures or of their own cultures.** Youth, youth leaders, and CSO representatives across all six cities understood the dramas they had produced much more as an opportunity to share about their community problems and challenge conventional social thinking than as a chance to share about the particular values, beliefs, or practices of their own ethnic group or of other ethnic groups in their town. In no cases did students report that participating in the theatre program helped them to have more awareness of their own ethnic or regional cultures. Instead, almost every case where a youth or youth leader spoke about learning about a new culture, it was in reference to visiting new communities in person or engaging with other youth at the closing event in Skopje. Also, while most of the plays included multiple languages, in four of the six communities these languages did not feature prominently



and students were not made to speak their non-native language as part of the play. In no cases did youth describe having to learn about or adopt the customs of a different ethnic community as part of their play.

**Unlike the youth, youth leaders did not experience any major changes in their in their participation, awareness of, or access to culture.** Almost all youth leaders are employed professionally in the theatre as actors, directors, or producers; the remaining others were recent university graduates with artistic degrees, television professionals, or costume designers. The majority of youth leaders believed themselves to have already been very aware of and involved in the cultural life of their community, and saw their involvement in the BTN program to have been just another experience in this category. All intend to continue to pursue opportunities both in the cultural realm and on projects that work with youth in the future.

**Additionally, only a small number of youth leaders mentioned learning something new about a different culture.** Many youth leaders believed themselves to have already had significant exposure to people from different ethnicities, either because of their travels abroad or because they lived in a more ethnically mixed capital city. One youth leader from Nish commented that his generation, which grew up in the former Yugoslavia, had more exposure to people from different ethnicities than the current generation of youth. Those youth leaders who did admit to having learned about a new culture often had participated on the regional touring, and like the students, believed that these trips helped them to understand the history, lifestyles, and culture of other people in the Balkans.

**Despite not having gained any new cultural awareness, all youth leaders were very glad to have participated in the program and believed that they benefitted personally from their involvement.** Many youth leaders commented that the program had helped them to better understand the youth in their community, and the problems those youth face on a daily basis. Others believe that the program strengthened their artistic talent, or helped them to adopt a more generally open attitude toward other people. Said one Serbian,

*“I learned so much from this program. I learned how to be a better person. I learned to be positive, to be honest, to be more artistic in every way because the kids inspired me to be a better person and a better actor.”*

### **Inter-Ethnic Dialogue and Engagement**

*Objective 3: To increase youth participation in production of inter-ethnic, intended-outcome and interactive theatre performances.*

#### **Relevant Indicators**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Result</b>
<b># of youth who directly participated in production of theatre performances</b>	Not applicable	82 youth participants
<b>% of participating young</b>	None	When asked about European

**people who report that they feel a sense of belonging to Europe as well as to their own community**

identity or relationships in interviews, youth did not see this as a relevant topic to their participation in the project. When surveyed about how the BTN project affected their beliefs about the importance of their country being a part of Europe, 49% said they believe it is "much more" important and 38% said it is "somewhat more" important.

Objective 3 was evaluated according to criteria for Effectiveness and Sustainability according to the following lines of inquiry:

- To what extent did the project contribute to a change in awareness of and participation in cultural activities and exchanges among youth?
- To what extent has the project contributed to inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation within the region?
- How likely are the youth engaged by the project to continue to engage in cultural activities, including inter-ethnic cultural activities?
- How likely are both the primary and secondary target groups to share their skills, knowledge, and intercultural experience with members of their own community after the project?

### **General Conclusions**

**Over the course of the project, youth learned to overcome many of their previous stereotypes and prejudices.** During interviews in five of the six communities, youth frequently commented that they believed before the program that they did not hold any prejudices against other ethnic groups, but that through their involvement in the program they became aware of the prejudices that they actually held and learned to overcome them. Others said that it convinced them about what they already believed in regard to tolerance and how to treat other people. Over the course of the program, youth were actively encouraged to reflect on and talk about their prejudices, and youth leaders facilitated discussions that they believe helped youth to learn to be more open minded.

**Learning about the personal challenges, histories, and life stories of one another helped students to increase mutual tolerance and a sense of shared identity.** In Bosnia and in Macedonia, the vast majority of students believed that they learned that they have "a lot more" in common with youth from different ethnic background; in Serbia, where there were far less respondents, most students indicated "a little more." Similarly to learning what they had in common, 98% of youth surveyed learned something about the histories of different Balkan ethnicities. In interviews, youth across countries commented that they had only limited exposure to youth from different countries before, especially in comparison to previous generations. Many said that upon meeting the youth from different cities, they were initially wary but soon formed close friendships and identified similar interests and life challenges. Together, this survey question and the interviews indicate that the BTN project was successful at helping to "humanize the other" and show Balkan youth that they have more similarities than differences.

*“We learned that we did not know anything about [Balkan culture]. [There is] high tension between two cultures in Macedonia. We thought the situation is the worst here in Mostar, but when we saw what’s going on in Macedonia....all of us have the same problems no matter which culture we come from.”*

**Youth in every city made new friendships with students from different ethnic backgrounds.**

Socialization was widely reported as one of the most significant changes that resulted from the program. Youth frequently repeated in interviews that they were glad for the opportunity to have met and formed close relationships with so many new people, though this was stressed more in the interviews outside of Bosnia, where most students had been close friends before joining the program. These new relationships had a significant inter-ethnic component as well; before the program, 23 of 46 students surveyed, or 50%, said that they had 5 or more friends of a different ethnic background before the program. After the program, this shifted to 35 students, or 76%. Interview responses indicated that all students made friends of different ethnicities in other countries through the touring activities, and in both Macedonian and Serbian cities, students made friends of different ethnicities whom they actually spent time with in their own home towns. The international friendships are mostly maintained how through Facebook rather than direct exchange. Many youth reported that they were pleased at how easily they were able to relate to the other youth from different countries when they met during their exchange visits.

**Securing an appropriate ethnic balance of youth participants proved a difficult challenge for program staff in each project city.** Most drama programs only had a small number of minority youth participants; for instance, there was only one Roma and one Albanian student in the Kumanovo program, only one Roma student in the Nish program, and the only Roma student in the Kragujevac program left because of illness. Program staff noted that they were aware of this challenge from the beginning, and often took special effort to recruit youth from different backgrounds through the schools. They faced the added difficulty of not wanting the program recruitment to appear forced, or to create the public impression that they were re-enforcing ethnic differences by choosing participants along ethnic lines. The recruitment of the Roma student in Kumanovo demonstrates that the program’s efforts toward ethnic balance yielded some result, but need additional effort in future iterations of the program.

**The BTN project also offered youth the opportunity to share messages of interethnic tolerance, human equality, and the value of diversity with their peers, parents, and communities.** These messages were embraced to different degrees by students in each city, though most students interviewed acknowledged that there were divisions among ethnic groups in their city and that their drama productions were relevant to these divisions. The play in Mostar was an exception, as the plot focused on issues of teen sexuality, such as pregnancy and homosexuality. In no community did students report the play having a negative impact on either their personal relationships or relationships between ethnic communities in their cities, and all students reported that they were very happy for the opportunity to participate in the project, and would gladly perform in a theatre production again in the future.

**There were many positive spillover effects of the program, including new skills that will assist youth in both their personal and professional lives.** When asked in interviews if they learned any new skills that would help them get along with youth of a different ethnic background, all youth in Serbia and Macedonia responded that they had not (the question was not asked in Bosnia). However, almost all of the Serbians and Macedonians students believed that they learned just "a little more" about how to get along with students from different backgrounds, but in Bosnia the effect was more pronounced, with 10 of 17 students saying they learned "a lot more" and 6 saying they learned "a little more". The interviews

with the Bosnian students were inconclusive about the reasons for this difference, but Macedonian and Serbian students interviewed all generally believed that they already had exposure to people from different ethnic backgrounds in their own communities and generally knew how to behave around them. The fact that most students outside of Bosnia indicated "a little more" is indicative of the comments by many students that they already believed that all people were equal, which is possibly why many indicated in interviews that they did not learn new cooperation skills, but that the BTN program helped them to understand what that means at a deeper level. Youth, youth leaders, parents, and CSO leaders also all reported that youth gained new skills in communication, presentation, and in some cases self-esteem and concentration. These skills are in fact applicable to inter-ethnic relations and can be used in future interactions with individuals from different ethnic communities.

**Unlike the youth, the youth leaders experienced some limited, but mixed positive results from their involvement in the program.** Two of the youth leaders stated that they learned new conflict resolution skills from the playwriting workshop activity- one referenced learning about making win-win situations, and the other referenced learning about how to avoid zero-sum thinking. One youth leader said that she learned that it is a virtue to discover human differences, and that she gained more experience regarding tolerance and working with different cultures. In contrast, many other youth leaders said that the program had no influence on her thinking about other ethnicities or her friendship circles, because she had always been prejudice free. For instance,

*"No, I have not changed. As I belong to the generation who lived before 1990s, I have never ever had any prejudices nor stereotypes toward other cultures. Over the last ten years, we have travelled a lot with the theater, we have been getting to know different cultures, but being very close and known to us, so this project has only confirmed our beliefs that the beauty and richness of socializing lie in diversities. I think the youth has changed. We originate from a small town and youth did not have opportunity to get to know other cultures, so this project has enabled them to expand their horizons and perspectives, as well as, to develop into cosmopolitan personalities, which is the goal of our theatre."*

**In some instances, the performances of the youth dramas also increased the openness of community attitudes toward inter-ethnic relations.** . When asked on the survey how the BTN project impacted levels of ethnic tension in their communities, of the 46 respondents, 25 students said that there was "a little less" and 14 students said that there was "a lot less", for a total of 84.7%. One youth leader pointed out that in Struga, there were many Macedonian Muslim parents in villages who were usually strict with their children and not very tolerant. These parents initially set strict limits on their children's participation in the program. Over time, however, they became more tolerant to the idea of the BTN project and liked the responses that their children gave so shifted to being more supportive of their participation. She noted that achieving such openness usually takes a very long time- and this is a reason why the program should continue. Similarly, in Kumanovo a youth leaders reported that the Roma student's father appeared very happy when dropped him off at the bus before the regional touring trip to Mostar. This was described as significant because it is unlikely that in the past a Roma father would have permitted his son to travel alone with a group of Macedonians. The single question and short anecdotes are not conclusive of overall results, and many interviewees said in person that it was too early to make such judgments. Still, the survey data indicates that there at best there was a noticed improvement in ethnic relations in the project communities, and at worse there was little harm created.

**Finally, there were a small number of individuals involved with the program who enjoyed participating in a theatre project, but believed that the required inclusion of certain themes was too pushy.** Several of the students in Kumanovo and one of the youth leaders in Struga expressed regret

that the plays were required to be about tolerance and the elimination of stereotypes, in several cases because these themes are already discussed about frequently and that programs of this nature make dialogue forced and reify differences. A greater number of youth and youth leaders who enjoyed the themes of the play still commented that if they did a similar program again, they would like to address other themes, such as their personal lives or community problems not related to ethnicity. Overall, this issue did not appear to be a major point of contention throughout the program other than among a few individuals.

### **Site Specific Conclusions**

The section below describes the content of the plays in each project site, and how the project was viewed overall by the students. It also provides, where possible, some context about both the level of interethnic tension and the vibrancy of cultural life in each city.

#### **A. Struga**

“Timeline”, the play produced in Struga, depicted a romance story between a Macedonian boy and an Albanian girl, and according to students, its main message to the community was that “all people are equal.” The students appeared proud to present such a message; Struga is heavily mixed between Macedonians and Albanians as well as Christians and Muslims, though these communities do not often voluntarily mix or intermarry. There are also divisions in the town between those who live in the town and those who live in surrounding villages. The play included dialogue in both Macedonian and Albanian, and some of the Macedonian students were required to perform pieces in the Albanian and Turkish languages. It was shown on seven occasions, including on trips to Kragujevac and Skopje for the regional touring.

There were several incidences and difficulties that occurred in Struga during the project, but these had only a marginally detrimental influence on the overall positive influence of the play. First, the production faced numerous logistical challenges, including very cold weather with limited available heating, transporting students who lived in villages back and forth from rehearsals, difficulty finding available spaces to practice in, and students missing some short periods of school in order to practice. The CCG program staff worked closely with the local CSO partner to overcome these challenges to be best of their abilities, and students were adaptable to these difficult conditions because of their enthusiasm for being part of the project. The other major difficulty involved another amateur theatre director in town who had previously worked with a small number of the youth in the BTN project. He spread negative rumors about the BTN project drama, encouraged two of his former students to withdraw from the program, and tore down flyers promoting the BTN project drama in the community. CCG responded to these incidents by meeting with parents, who were supportive of the project continuing, and students took initiative to counteract the influence of the director by brainstorming creative ways to make their posters less destructible. All 18 youth interviewed in Struga strongly believed that these incidents did not mar the overall benefits of their involvement in the program or create a negative effect on the community.

One youth leader interviewed summed up the influence of the project by saying,

*“In Struga, in this region, in the high school there are many fights and conflicts which are mainly based on nationality- between Macedonians, Albanians, etc. What is important for this project is that children openly and willingly participated in this project. There were no such conflicts of any kind- no open*

*conflicts. On the contrary, this project brought them close together where they realized that they shared the same problems and stereotypes. They discovered more similarities than differences. This group of children who participated came very close together, and were mixed ethnicities. Macedonians, Muslims, and Albanians, and they came together closely. This presented in their society that they can actually function together and that similarities overcome differences. They were great examples for the other children who are conflict-makers in their high school.”*

## B. Kumanovo

“From Vienna With Love”, the play produced in Kumanovo, was produced in two parts. Part One was a comedy/romance about Macedonians and Albanians who travel to Afghanistan to look for work and end up in a café bar being watched by police who are looking to arrest gamblers. It was written primarily in Kumanovsky, the local dialect. Part Two consisted of individual, non-fictional monologues written by each of the students about personal issues in their own life. The play was performed a total of five times between Kumanovo, Mostar, Struga, and Skopje and involved the participation of 1 Roma youth, 1 Albanian youth, and X Macedonian youth, though some of the Macedonian youth were from Bosnian parentage. Though multiple languages were spoken throughout the play, no student was required to speak in a new language. When interviewed, one of the youth leaders mentioned that there were 7 languages spoken in the play and many students had to speak a different language at one point during the performance. However, the youth focused much more on the role that Kumanovsky and did not mention speaking in languages other than Kumanovsky as a significant part of their role in the play.

It was difficult to assess the success of the play in promoting messages of inter-ethnic tolerance and diversity because of differences in views between the youth and the CSO representatives, who also worked as youth leaders, and the two additional youth leaders employed for the project. The three youth interviewed stated that they enjoyed their participation in the play, but did not like the themes of Part One, which they viewed as forced and tired. In their view, internationally funded plays promoting inter-ethnic tolerance and diversity are produced too frequently in Kumanovo through the Center for Inter-Ethnic Dialogue, another non-profit. The youth also believed that these themes were not relevant to them and had been forced upon them by the play writer who had been hired; that although different ethnic groups lived largely parallel lives in Kumanovo, the “live and let live” attitudes they had adopted were sufficient. Secondly, the students were upset at having to perform the play in Kumanovsky against their wishes, which they said gave the play a rudimentary and comical tone that they did not appreciate. Three of the five youth leaders- who also formed the strongest personal bonds with the students- shared the student’s views on language and content of the play. In particular, the interviewed students and these three youth leaders believed that Part Two “saved” the play because it had much more personal and relevant content. One youth leader commented,

*“The young people here have bigger problems than ethnicities and religion- they are too young for that. Maybe this project should be a project about personal things- knowledge, experience, about things that young people think about, like sexuality [and other teenage problems]....Most projects in Balkan countries are about ethnic and religious issues. I don’t like it.”*

Another shared a similar view:

*“In Balkan countries here, we live together and know things. We know our cultures. You always have opportunities to talk to people from different religions and talk about things in their culture. All of us have a lot of experience in projects like this, we already know. We already work with different people for*

*seven years. You don't really start learning about different cultures...you don't find out something big like in the beginning. Now you learn more about people themselves and not their culture. Learning about cultures is learning about the boundaries between them."*

These views were not shared by the final two youth leaders, who believed that the program had a positive impact on the youth and improved their exposure to and ability to interact with youth of other backgrounds. One youth leader commented that in Kumanovo, Macedonians and Albanians usually attend separate theatres, but that this production was unique for bringing them both together to watch the same play, and that the audience was so large that many people did not have seats. One also insisted that the play was better than previous inter-ethnic plays in Kumanovo for several reasons, including offering a constructive example of Macedonians and Albanians resolving their differences, and because the youth actors actually engaged each other in different languages on stage, rather than just reading off their lines. However, these youth leaders admitted to have spent less time with the students and to have not developed strong personal relationships with them, and it is therefore likely that their knowledge of the change among the youth and significance of the program is less accurate.

Despite these differences of view, the play in Kumanovo did play a positive role on the integration and acceptance of a Roma student into the Macedonian community. The student reported that some members of the audience taunted him during the play, and that some members of the audience had trouble relating to the play. To him, this reaction was expected, and despite it, he was grateful to have been in the play because he now has Macedonian and Albanian friends, and he is also now better received by the Macedonian community. Even the Macedonian youth who were unexcited by the themes of the play about tolerance and diversity admitted that this had been their first opportunity to befriend someone who was Roma, which they appreciated.

### C. Nish

In Nish, the youth produced a play called "Bridges", which was about a group of high school friends who explore the challenges in their lives related to ethnic tension, child abuse, sexual orientation, and class status. At the end of the play, all the students switch roles and problems. Though Nish is not as ethnically mixed as the Macedonian communities, there is still some degree of inter-ethnic violence among youth. One youth leader commented that there is a lot of repressed anger and tension related to the conflicts in the Balkans that occurred before the students were born. For this reason, the themes of tolerance and human equality promoted by "Bridges" were appropriate for the community context. One of the youth summarized the core message of the drama by a line from the script: "For each one of us, its easily forgotten that we are all in a way different. When we start to abuse others, its easy to get into that role and forget that we had once been abused. Once we realize this, then we can make a difference?" The drama was performed in Nish, some towns around Nish, Skopje, and at a theatre festival in Mostar, where "Bridges" won the award for having the best message.

In addition to the pre-planned performances, the drama production in Nish has had extensive outreach into the community. The Student Cultural Center in Nish took initiative to organize a large number of performances of the play outside of those required by the BTN project, such as in high school and villages around Nish and at the Nish theatre festival. According to the CSO representatives, the drama has also received attention in the local media because of the international exchange component of the program. Additionally, the students are recording a music video of the theme song for the drama, which they wrote themselves.

The Roma student involved in the play described the personal significance of his participation in Bridges by saying,

*“This project was so important for me because it was my mission. Because I have this problem about gypsy and Serbs and I want to do something, but I haven’t- I don’t have possibilities to do things about this. And this program helped me to do that...My role had contributed a lot to the overall impression of the play because of my real life story...We put into our show some specific things that are actually in the society; we started to deal with aspects of every day social problems in society itself. It meant a lot to me because I feel good when I am able to do something useful.”*

#### D. Kragujevac

In Kragujevac, the play “Whoever I Am, I Am A Turtle” was about a high school field trip to Greece, where students misbehave when they are unsupervised by their adult chaperones. The play portrays multiple stereotypes, such as of “geeks, a gay person, gypsies, etc.”, who all wear masks during the play because they are ashamed of who they really are. It also focused on student drug use, including the induced drug addiction, rape, and eventual suicide of a Roma student. At the end of the play, the masks are removed. According to the youth, the main purpose of the play was to dispel stereotypes because levels of prejudice in their community are high. The cold winter temperatures presented a substantial obstacle to the drama production, but the students were still very glad for their participation and the bonding opportunities it provided them.

Youth, youth leaders, and CSO representatives gave mixed responses to the impact of the play on themselves and on the community. All of the students commented that they had been taught at home not to have prejudices, but that the program helped to build on the positive values they already possess. They were also glad that their involvement in the drama helped to raise awareness among their peers. One of the youth leaders agreed, and thought that the play helped the youth to speak about their own problems and become more aware of the problems of others. The commented,

*“The issues of identity in their story brought some changes that took place on their personal lives and profiles. It’s like all those students have opened up and shown their true colors.”*

Some of the adults interviewed, however, believed that the community was caught off guard by the intense content of the play, and that many parents and teachers came away from the performances more shocked at the unsupervised behavior that occurred on field trips rather than aware of the need for greater tolerance of differences. Said one,

*“People didn’t really relate to the story about the Roma girl and did not show a great interest in her background and want to continue on the Roma girl subject. They were more focused on the drug problem part of the play.”*

By promoting these values, the project successfully promoted EU values, though they were not explicitly recognized as such during the project. Youth leaders across the cities commented that they worked to facilitate dialogue about issues of tolerance, diversity, and human equality, but that they did not explicitly connect them back to the European Union, the geopolitics of Europe, or the need for Balkan integration into Europe.

#### E. Mostar



“The Olive Tree”, which was written and produced in Mostar, was about borders, both literal and metaphorical. There is a border outside of the city with two guards who prevent people from coming and going across, which reflected on issues of divisions between people and the way that powerful individuals profit off of conflict. Each time the play was shown, the students planted an olive tree in that town. Like the students in all other cities but Kumanovo, the students were grateful for the opportunity to shape their own artistic production on a topic that was important to them. The students commented that in their town, politicians are constantly fueling ethnic tension, but that in reality the relations among people are somewhat better. They shared that they gained a large number of new friends and learned to overcome their own personal prejudices through becoming involved in the program. One student in particular noted that since joining the program, someone in town had yelled at him to go to his own part of the city, and he reacted calmly, asking why he had been yelled at in such a way. The person was shocked, and the student walked away in peace.

According to the CSO representatives, the theatre audience in Mostar is not very sophisticated in terms of attending cultural activities, and usually prefers performances that are comedies in order to avoid having to discuss social issues. The presentation by the youth was opposite this trend, as the youth themselves opened up through the performances, and sometimes the audience did as well. However, he did note that the audiences were not always eager to participate in the discussion sessions following the plays.

*“All these socializing and getting to know other people, I liked so much. A man that was described to you by others as the worst man in the world, once you meet him, you realize that he became a better friend to you than others who you knew before. It is really priceless.”*

*“We learned to act, but to tell the truth, we became much more serious, in a way.”*

#### F. Bugojno

The youth in Bugojno produced a play called “Spring Awakening”, a variation on the popular rock musical play by the same name, which was about teen sexuality, violence, and bullying. The play was performed three times in towns around Bosnia in the last year, including for an association of parents whose children are drug addicts. The youth felt like they had the opportunity to express their own creativity, and were happy to present the problems of youth in their town, which their friends responded positively to during the show. All 10 students interviewed agreed that they learned respect for other people and tolerance, and were able to use their play to generate dialogue about key problems. Two of the youth commented that there is a lack of empathy among youth, which they tried to change through their play, by discussing the taboo topic of sexuality.

Regarding inter-ethnic relations, the youth all believed that the situation in Bugojno was very positive, unlike Mostar, and that they all already had friends of another ethnicity; sometimes they mix and share cigarettes at school, but there is also some division generated by parents, such that students attend separate café bars and often hang out in ethnically separated groups. It is unlikely that the youth in Bugojno developed new inter-ethnic friendships in their own city, since one youth leader commented that they had all been friends since before the program and all of the youth participants were Bosniaks. He also shared that tensions among youth in his city are uncommon, and in that way Bugojno can be a model for other towns. It is also unlikely that the program had a significant impact on increasing their access to or passion for culture, since all of the youth appeared very involved in arts and culture previous to this project. Al had worked previously with the FEDA Youth Scene, and many had also been

involved in folkloric dance and musical activities. For this reason, they also did not believe that the program helped them to learn more about their own culture, but they did describe learning about Macedonian culture, and being pleased at how sociable and amicable the students were from Struga and Kumanovo.

*“The project helped us to get introduced with problems of youth as we belong to that particular group and it helped us to see how we can help in resolving of conflicts and to motivate others. Theater is the most efficient for it enables to get a clearer look at various experiences. The project was about exchange. In Skopje we got introduced with habits of other cultures and it helped us to understand that all of us are equal and that all of us have same problems regardless of our differences. All of us have the same problems in our communities.”*

*“It was about meeting of new, interesting people and exchange. It is such a treasure to have someone like us in Serbia and Macedonia. They like as same things as we do, and we have similar opinions they love the same music, and we found the people we were looking for long time.”*

## Recommendations

### Effectiveness

1. **In the program design phase, plan for more activities to recruit a better ethnic mix of students in each city.**

In five of the six project sites, only one or two students of an ethnic minority participated in the project. This represents an opportunity lost to deepen the impact of the project; the primary interethnic friendships formed by the project occurred across cities, so students maintain most of their contact over Facebook rather than in person, where they can challenge the divisive social norms in their own communities. The project staff was aware of this challenge from the beginning, and took extra initiative to recruit students from ethnic minorities. These efforts yielded some results by recruiting the small number of minorities who did participate, and in any circumstance it can be challenging to recruit an ethnically balanced group of students without appearing to reify ethnic differences or make a project that looks too much like a forced harmonization initiative. However, future programs should include additional effort here, despite the difficulties of the task. One option would be to pursue direct outreach to community groups that service ethnic minorities and have them assist with recruitment. Project staff should also consider whether it is advisable to target ethnically mixed cities or if mostly mono-ethnic cities can still make good project sites as long as there is still inter-regional exchange.

2. **Plan and budget for additional touring activities.**

Interviews with project staff indicated that some of the touring activities had to be reduced for budgetary reasons; for instance, transporting participants from Struga who lived far outside of town to and from the project proved to be more costly than anticipated. However, the regional touring was one of the most successful aspects of the project, and was met with universal enthusiasm by youth, youth leaders, and CSO representatives who believed that the touring was linked to changes in the attitudes and behaviors among youth. This was a clear area of success, and should be expanded upon in the future to deepen the effectiveness of the project. The project organizers may also want to try variations, such as a summer camp or exchanges with Europe. In particular, having exchanges with Europe might

increase the project's effectiveness in encouraging Balkan youth to feel connected to and allied with Europe.

### **3. Strengthen partner organization management.**

Program staff mentioned regular difficulties getting partner organizations to properly respond and engage with the management aspects of the BTN project, such as data collection, planning, and hiring an evaluator. There were clearly some elements of urban and rural divide, with the rural partner in Struga eager to see the program succeed but without the capacity to do so independently, and more established organizations, like in urban Nish, enthusiastic about the program but unwilling to invest the time or money into really engaging with CCG as partners. While program staff mentioned working diligently to correct for these challenges, many problems persisted, and impacted issues such as the timing and quality of the evaluation.

In future efforts working with partner organizations, CCG should consult other organizations, such as SFCG in Brussels, on how to better manage local partners, who may have different expectations in terms of roles, deliverables, and professional conduct. Partner organizations should also be carefully selected for capacity and buy-in; they should be willing to dedicate some of their own financial resources and staff time to seeing the project succeed. It may also be advisable to include stipends for staff at partner organizations in the budget so that there is someone who has a contractual responsibility and financial incentive to be a partner more fully in the project.

## **Sustainability**

### **4. Increase the number and frequency of network building activities.**

Given the limitations on time and budget, the project staff was much more impactful in program effectiveness than in sustainability. The key area where sustainability limitations were felt was in the networking building activities. It may not have been reasonable to expect a thriving network among CSOs to have resulted from the BTN project, as the majority of activities and project staff time was oriented toward the implementation of the drama program. Furthermore, four of the six CSOs indicated that they were already involved in substantial cultural exchange within the region, and for this reason network building activities may not be as necessary or relevant for them. However, if building a network among CSOs remains a top priority, it may be advisable to budget additional funding, activities, and time to bring this network to fruition.

## **Conclusions**

**Objective 1, which was “to encourage creation of new networks of cultural CSOs as basis for sustainable inter-cultural dialogue and cooperation within the region and between the region and the EU” was partially achieved.**

First, the evaluator was able to verify six organizations as participants in some form of networking activities: the Student Cultural Center in Nish, the Student Cultural Center in Kragujevac, Art A in Kumanovo, the Center for Culture Struga, the Centre for Drama Education in Mostar, and FEDRA in Bugojno. These organizations were the primary implementation organizations that managed the drama

programs in each project site. Program documents and staff interviews demonstrated that there were other organizations from Macedonia included in the network building activities, but individuals from these organizations were not interviewed. They were also not mentioned by the CSO representatives included in this study as organizations they had ever spoken to or made contact with. For this reason, it is unlikely that the network building activities that did occur had a substantial impact outside of the main six organizations.

Of these six organizations, five mentioned a desire to stay in contact and have future exchanges with other organizations they met at the final event in Skopje. However, but they were also clear that without additional funding and organization provided by CCG, that these relations would be infrequent and informal. Each was eager to see CCG continue its role, and none mentioned taking initiative for a leadership role in maintaining ties across organizations. Additionally, none of the organizations mentioned signing the Memorandum of Understanding, having structured and regular forms of communication with the other offices, having formalized expectations for their role in a network, or having concrete plans for network activities, such as trainings or outreach to new members. Only one of the organizations saw their organizational capacity improve as a result of the program, the other five were incredibly glad to have been able to participate but don't have the means to do so again on their own without future support.

More positively, this objective is marked as "partially achieved" because many of the organizations mentioned concrete plans for future exchanges with other organizations, such as through the touring of folkloric groups or other theatre performances. It was not clear that these exchanges will be frequent, or that their results will be shared within the network. However, the BTN network project has concretely expanded the number of cultural events occurring in the Balkans, as well as the number of events that occur to share art between cultural groups.

**Objective 2, which was "to increase awareness of and access to different cultural traditions within and beyond national boundaries through the exchange of cultural experiences." was fully achieved.**

82 youth in all six project sites heavily stressed that their touring visits to other cities in the Balkans significantly increased their awareness of cultural traditions and practices in other cities. The majority of youth also stated in interviews that their involvement in the BTN project increased their exposure to different cultural activities, and made them enthusiastic about participating in future cultural events. Each felt not only that the BTN project had given them a rare opportunity for creative self-expression about issues that mattered to them, but that it also increased their skills in cultural performance and participation.

This change did not extend to the youth leaders who participated in the program. All youth leaders believed that their experience in the BTN project made them enthusiastic to continue working in the arts and with youth, but most believed themselves to be aware of the cultural life and traditions happening in both their immediate communities as well as across the Balkans. The program also had no effect on increasing their access to culture participation, because they are all employed in the arts professionally. Lastly, because most youth leaders grew up in the former Yugoslavia, several mentioned that they had previous life experiences learning about and engaging with other Balkan cultures, and that is was the youth who lead more separate, and often more prejudiced, lives.

**Objective 3, which was “to increase youth participation in production of inter-ethnic, intended-outcome and interactive theatre performances” was also fully achieved.**

82 youth across six cities in three countries increased their participation in inter-ethnic theatre performances. Youth in five cities participated in theatre performances where the group in their own cities was of mixed ethnicity, and all youth were able to engage with youth from different ethnic backgrounds through their touring activities around the Balkans, through which they formed close personal friendships. Additionally, many of the youth gained new skills in drama production, costume design, public speaking, and facilitation and had a noticeable increase in their self-confidence.

The vast majority of students indicated that their involvement in the BTN project also increased their levels of tolerance and respect for ethnic and other forms of diversity. Students commented that they formed close personal friendships with youth of different backgrounds, and that it was important that they share messages of interethnic harmony in their communities. Many even believed that the performances of their plays had a role in decreasing ethnic tension, and taught them that they had more in common with other Balkan youth than they previously believed.

## Appendix

### List of Indicators

This is a list of the indicators that were used in the final evaluation of the BTN project. They include all indicators mentioned in the initial project logic framework as required for examination in the final evaluation, with the addition of several indicators that were also measured in the pursuit of the evaluation objectives. The sole exception is the indicator, “% increase in the number of audience members who demonstrate new knowledge of traditional cultures other than their own, and an interest in furthering that knowledge,” as there was no baseline, audience pretest during the monitoring phase, or opportunity to interface with audience participants during the evaluation data collection phase.

1. # of initiatives engendered by the action during and beyond its duration
2. # of inter-regional exchanges between participating artists, both formal and informal, during and beyond the duration of the action
3. # of new networks created both formal and informal, during and beyond the duration of the action
4. # of cultural performances created and produced
5. # of people in attendance
6. # of youth who directly participated in production of theatre performances
7. # of new cultural initiatives and relations developed at grass-roots level as result to action exposure
8. % increase of number of art professionals who state increased capacity and role as a consequence of participating to the action
9. # of new partnerships and collaboration developed as result of the action

10. % of participating young people who report that they feel a sense of belonging to Europe as well as to their own community

### List of Interviewees

	Youth	Youth Leaders	CSO Representative	Parents	Teachers
<b>Struga</b>	19	3	2	2	2
<b>Kumanovo</b>	3	5	3 <sup>8</sup>	0	0 <sup>9</sup>
<b>Nish</b>	3	3 <sup>10</sup>	2	4	3 <sup>11</sup>
<b>Kragujevac</b>	3	2	2	0	0

The Program Manager and the Country Director for CCG were also interviewed.

### Interview Questionnaires

#### Youth Participant Interview Questions

##### *General*

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Ethnicity
4. Assuming you had just met me and I knew nothing about the BTN project, what could you tell me about your experience with it?
5. What were your major likes and dislikes about the program?
6. What did you learn from being involved in the play?
7. Tell me about your play- how did it go, what was it about, what was the main message, how did the community like it?
8. What are relations like here in your community between people of different ethnic backgrounds? Is there much fighting or tension between youth, or are things ok?

##### *Culture*

9. Before the program, what kind of cultural activities had you been involved in?
10. Are you planning to participate in cultural activities again? Please describe.

<sup>8</sup> These three individuals were also among the five youth leaders interviewed.

<sup>9</sup> Interviewing teachers in Kumanovo was not directly relevant, as the play production and performance took place over the summer.

<sup>10</sup> One of the three youth leaders was also a CSO representative.

<sup>11</sup> These three teachers work at the school where the formative research in Nish was done and where the play was performed, but with one exception, they do not personally know or teach the youth involved in the program.

- a. Are these activities something you will go out and look for, or just do if the opportunity comes up?
11. Do you think of yourself as someone with artistic talents? Can you describe a new artistic skill or talent you learned from the program?
12. Have you learned anything new about your own culture in this program? Describe.
13. Have you learned anything new about other cultures here in the Balkans? Describe.

#### *Inter-ethnic Relations/Conflict Resolution Skills*

14. Did you make any new friends in the program- both here in Bosnia and abroad? Tell me about them, and how you maintain your relationship.
15. Did you learn anything about how to get along well with youth from other ethnic background? What did you learn? Do you think you will ever use this skill?
16. Are you doing anything new on your own as a result of the BTN project? Please describe.

#### *Europe*

17. Do you feel like your community is a part of Europe? Is this something you see changing, or wish would change?
18. Did the theatre program influence your thinking about Europe or what it means to be European at all?

#### *Closing*

19. If the CCG were to run the BTN program again, what would you have them do differently?
20. If you had to identify the single most significant change that you experienced over the program, what would it be?
21. Is there anything else you would like to share?

### **Youth Leaders Interview Questions**

#### *General*

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Occupation
4. Ethnicity
5. Assuming you had just met me and I knew nothing about the BTN project, what could you tell me about your experience with it?
6. What were your major likes and dislikes about the program?

#### *Culture*

7. Did the BTN program have any influence on your feelings toward working with youth?
8. How well aware are you of cultural activities going on in your community? Are you very engaged in the cultural life of your town?

9. Have you learned anything new about your own culture in this program?
10. Have you learned anything new about other cultures here in (your country)?
11. I also know you met other people in the region. Have you learned anything new the culture of people from other places in the region through this program?

*Inter-ethnic Relations/Conflict Resolution Skills*

12. Did you get training through the theatre program? If so, what kind and what was it like? What was the most and least valuable?
13. Were there any conflicts among the youth that you worked with? Did you help them resolve the conflict? Tell me about this.
14. Did you learn anything through being involved in this program that will help you resolve conflicts in your own life? What about with people from different backgrounds?
15. Is there usually tension and conflict between youth of different ethnicities in the community where you worked?
16. Were there any conflicts in the youth drama group that you worked with? How were they resolved? Tell me about this.
17. Did you learn anything in the theatre project to help you resolve your own conflicts in the future? What about with youth from a different background? Details.
18. Do you have any personal relationships through the theatre project that you think will continue? How many? How many with people from outside of the community you live in? Is this different from the people you would regular meet in your life anyway?
19. Did your involvement with the theatre program make you want to be more active helping in other areas or problems with your community? Such as be engaged with an NGO, volunteering work, etc.
20. Are you doing anything new on your own as a result of the theatre project? Please describe.

*Closing*

21. If the CCG were to run the BTN program again, what would you have them do differently?
22. If you had to identify the single most significant change that you experienced over the program, what would it be?
23. If you had to identify the single most significant change that the youth you worked with experienced, what would it be?
24. Anything else you would be willing to share?

**CSO Member Interview Questions**

1. Could you tell me a little bit about your organization and the projects that you do?
2. Could you tell about any of your experiences working with other CSOs on cultural projects before the CCG program?
  - a. What were the orgs and where were they based?
  - b. How often did you work with them?
  - c. How did you collaborate? What was your relationship like?



- d. What type of cultural projects did you do together?
3. Pretend I am someone who does not know anything about this program. Could you tell me about what is the Balkan Theatre Network?
4. What has been your involvement with the Balkan Theatre Network? Are you still involved? What is the network up to now?
5. Have you or your organization benefitted in any way from working with the Balkan Theatre Network? Any negative things?
6. Are you doing any initiatives with other partner organizations that you met through the Balkan Theatre Network?
7. Are there any individual people you met through the Balkan Theatre Network who you have plans to stay in touch with?
8. Has the overall impact of your organization on the community changed at all since you became involved in the Balkan Theatre Network?
  - a. For instance, have you noticed any changes in the way that people talk or relate to one another in your community?
  - b. Have you noticed any differences in how they engage with cultural programs?
9. Let's talk about the projects that your organization does. Are your cultural projects usually specific to your culture or do they involve many cultures? What other cultures do you focus on in your programs?
  - a. Has the Balkan Theatre Program helped you to work on projects that involve any new cultures?
10. After working with the Balkan Theatre Network, do you feel your understanding of different cultures has changed? Which culture and what do you now know about them that you did not before?
11. Have any of your programs influenced your community's relationship with the EU?  
I am especially interested if your programs have helped people to adopt values that are important in Europe or to develop relationship with people or organizations in Europe.
12. What will happen to the future of the Balkan Theatre Network if CCG is no longer involved? What activities and projects will the network do?
13. Do you think the Balkan Theatre Network should continue? Why or why not?
14. How can CCG help the Balkan Theatre Network to survive? Why?
15. If CCG were working with the Balkan Theatre Network, what advice would you give them for the future?

### **Parents Interview Questions**

1. Ethnicity
2. Number of children in the project
3. If I were a new parent in the neighborhood thinking of enrolling my child in this drama program, what would you tell me about the drama program and your child's experience with it? How it works, what it was like, what they learned, etc.
4. Before the theatre program, what kind of opportunities did your child have to participate in cultural programs?

5. Before the program, how much opportunity did your child have to interact with youth from different ethnic backgrounds?
6. Have you noticed any major changes in your child since they started participating in the BTN program?
7. What were the main things that you think your child learned from the program?
  - a. Did they learn any new skills?
  - b. Did they learn any new behaviors?
  - c. Did they learn any new values?
8. Now that the program is over, do you think any of these changes will stay the same or go back how they were?
9. Would your children do well in other artistic programs? Why or why not?
10. How does your child handle conflicts with other youth? What about youth from different ethnic backgrounds? Has the drama program had any influence on this?
11. Have you learned anything new as a result of watching your children/students participate in the drama program?
12. Are your children involved in civic activities that contribute to your community, like volunteering or working with a civil society organization? How so? Has the BTN program had any influence on this?
13. Have you learned anything new as a result of watching your students participate in the drama program?
14. Looking at your whole community here in (your community), what do you think was the biggest or most important impact of the program?

### **Teacher Interview Questions**

#### *General*

1. Ethnicity
2. Occupation
3. Gender
4. Do the students in your classes usually have the opportunity to participate in cultural activities?
5. Do the students in your classes usually have much chance to interact with youth from other ethnic backgrounds?
6. How often do most of the students in your classes experience conflicts with people from different ethnic backgrounds? How do they manage it?

#### *Questions on the students who participated in the theatre program*

7. How many of your students participated in the drama program?
8. What was your student's experience like in the drama program?
9. What do you think was the best part of the program? What was the worst part that should be changed?

#### *Questions comparing youth participants to youth non-participants*

10. Did the students from the drama program have any positive or negative influence on the other students that you noticed? All or some? Can you give an example? (ref ind. 19)
11. Have you noticed any major changes in your child since they started participating in the BTN program?
12. What were the main things that you think your child learned from the program?
  - a) Did they learn any new skills?
  - b) Did they learn any new behaviors?
  - c) Did they learn any new values?
13. Are your students involved in civic activities that contribute to your community, like volunteering for something or working with a civil society group? How so? Has the BTN program had any influence on this?
14. Do you think this program will continue to have an influence on the students? If so, what?
15. Do you think these students will continue like this now that the program has ended?

*Questions about themselves*

16. Have you learned anything new as a result of watching your students participate in the drama program?
17. Looking at your whole community here in \_\_\_\_\_, what do you think was the biggest or most important impact of the program?

### Survey Results

	Serbia	Bosnia	Macedonia	Total Number	% of Total
<b>The theatre program resulted in _____ tension in my community.</b>					
<b>A lot more</b>	0	0	1	1	0.02173913
<b>A little bit more</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>No more, no less</b>	0	4	2	6	0.130434783
<b>A little less</b>	4	7	14	25	0.543478261
<b>A lot less</b>	4	6	4	14	0.304347826
<b>TOTAL</b>				46	
<b>Before the program, how many close friends did you have of another ethnic background?</b>					
<b>0 friends</b>	2	1	0	3	0.065217391
<b>1-2 friends</b>	4	3	5	12	0.260869565
<b>3-5 friends</b>	1	3	4	8	0.173913043
<b>More than 5</b>	1	10	12	23	0.5
<b>TOTAL</b>				46	
<b>After the program, how many close friends did you have of another ethnic background?</b>					
<b>0 friends</b>	0	0	0	0	0

1-2 friends	2	1	1	4	0.086956522
3-5 friends	1	1	5	7	0.152173913
More than 5	5	15	15	35	0.760869565
TOTAL				46	

**As a result of the BTN program, I am \_\_\_\_\_ likely to participate in cultural programs than before.**

Much less	0	0	0	0	0
A little less	0	0	1	1	0.022222222
No more no less	0	6	0	6	0.133333333
A little more	1	1	6	8	0.177777778
A lot more	7	10	13	30	0.666666667
TOTAL				45	

**As a result of the BTN program, I know \_\_\_\_\_ about someone else's culture than before.**

Much less	0	0	0	0	0
A little less	0	0	1	1	0.022222222
No more no less	0	1	0	1	0.022222222
A little more	6	6	8	20	0.444444444
A lot more	2	10	11	23	0.511111111
TOTAL				45	

**I have learned \_\_\_\_\_ about how to get along with people from different ethnic backgrounds.**

Much less	0	0	0	0	0
A little less	0	0	1	1	0.022222222
No more no less	0	1	1	2	0.044444444
A little more	7	6	15	28	0.622222222
A lot more	1	10	3	14	0.311111111
TOTAL				45	

**I learned that I have \_\_\_\_\_ in common with you from another ethnic background.**

Much less	0	0	0	0	0
A little less	0	0	1	1	0.022727273
No more no less	1	0	2	3	0.068181818
A little more	5	4	5	14	0.318181818
A lot more	2	12	12	26	0.590909091
TOTAL				44	

**I learned \_\_\_\_\_ about the history of another community or culture.**

Many things	1	8	8	17	0.377777778
A few things	7	8	12	27	0.6
Nothing new	0	1	0	1	0.022222222
TOTAL				45	

**As result of this program, I believe \_\_\_\_\_ that being a part of Europe is important to the future of my country.**

Much less	0	0	1	1	0.022222222
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Somewhat less	0	0	1	1	0.022222222
No more no less	1	1	2	4	0.088888889
Somewhat more	2	8	7	17	0.377777778
Much more	5	8	9	22	0.488888889
TOTAL				45	

## Evaluator Terms of Reference

### **EVALUATION of the project** *Sharing Common Culture: Balkan Theatre Networks for EU Integration*

#### **Terms of Reference**

*September, 2012*

## **1. Background**

### **1.1 Context and Project Description**

In January 2011, Centre for Common Ground (CCG) from Skopje, Macedonia has launched the project called “*Sharing Common Culture: Balkan Theatre Networks for EU Integration*”, a regional project where CCG, as the lead, is in partnership with Search for Common Ground (SFCG) from Brussels, Belgium; Student Cultural Center (SCC) from Nish, Serbia; and Centre for Drama Education (CDE) from Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project is funded by the European Commission, DG Enlargement in Brussels.

The project creates opportunities that provides developmental experiences for young people and increases their participation to cultural events while celebrating the diversity of theatrical traditions in the Western Balkans. Furthermore, this project aimed at creating a network of arts professionals and youth leaders who are committed to developing cultural relations at the grass-roots level in future, as well as to develop partnerships between cultural organizations, CSOs, educational institutions, youth leaders and the wider community.

The **Overall Objective** of the action is **to harness the power of culture to reinforce a participative democracy based on EU common values by enhancing regional cooperation and good neighborly relations, while respecting and promoting national cultural heritage.**

The **Specific Objectives** of the action are to:

1. To encourage creation of new networks of cultural CSOs as basis for sustainable inter-cultural dialogue and cooperation within the region and between the region and the EU;
2. To increase awareness of and access to different cultural traditions within and beyond national boundaries through the exchange of cultural experiences;
3. To increase youth participation in production of inter-ethnic, intended-outcome and interactive theatre performances.

The **Outputs** of the action are:

- 1 regional network of cultural organizations is created
- 90 youth newly trained in drama skills -- 30 per country
- 12,000 youth who watched locally produced dramas
- 1,920 youth who participated in facilitated discussions
- 1 Manual produced
- Statement of Intended Outcomes document with educational curriculum for targeted groups;
- 1 video documentary is produced, subtitled in English, Macedonian, Serbian, Bosnian and Albanian and distributed
- 6 new dramas produced
- 60 interactive performances locally and 36 regional performances
- 1 formative research report

The **primary target group** includes the group of youth leaders and drama educators from the three Balkan countries whose artistic and leadership capabilities to empower youth will be strengthened by the Common Ground Approach and by the creation of sustainable partnerships with other cultural organisations in the region and in the EU. The number of individuals in this group is approximately 12 – 15 people, including the theatre staff from each partner organization.

**The secondary target group** are youth drama teams – aged 15 to 19 – from the three Balkan countries who learnt necessary skills to conceptualize design, perform produce and perform intended outcome performances, but who also learnt about European values, the role of arts in fostering intercultural dialogue, and the role of youth in a participative democracy. Approximately 30 adolescents were mobilized in each country (3 teams of newly trained actors, set designers, costume designers, playwrights).

**Final beneficiaries** of the action is audience of the theatre performances, including those participants in the discussions that follows each performance, as well as the people who are exposed to the action's activities through the media documentary broadcasted both in the three Balkan countries and across the EU.

## **2. Purpose and Objectives**

### ***2.1. Purpose of the Consultancy***

The **purpose** of the consultancy is to allow for the measurement, assessment and analysis of the impacts of the project regarding changes achieved on target groups in terms of new knowledge, greater understanding and changes in awareness and attitudes.

### **2.2. Objectives of the Consultancy**

In close collaboration with Centre for Common Ground:

- a. Define the optimum structure (number and scope of surveys required to meet the needs) for the evaluation;
- b. Design and implement qualitative instruments to capture most significant change stories, understand and assess the mechanisms of social and individual changes brought about and inform key evaluation questions identified by the team.;
- c. Provide recommendations to enhance the quality of future youth projects giving an emphasis on how to use more effectively CCG tools to foster behavior change.

## **3. Scope of Work**

**Location:** the evaluation will be conducted in Macedonia (Struga, Skopje, and Kumanovo); Serbia (Nish and Kragujevac) and BiH (Mostar and Bugojno). The preparation phase will start on 10<sup>th</sup> of October.

### **The work includes:**

- Finalized technical offer including a detailed evaluation methodology, evaluation schedule, budget, sampling strategy, data analysis plan, roles and responsibilities of the evaluators' team;
- Collaboration with the project staff to identify evaluation components and key evaluations questions.
- Desk Review
- Design of qualitative tools and guidelines
- Fieldwork
- Data entry, coding and cleaning
- Data analysis

- Draft report
- Final report reviewed and finalized

## **4. Methodology**

Final methodology and procedures will be developed in conjunction with the CCG Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator.

### Desk review

Review relevant data

### Qualitative Research

Qualitative research methods **might** include:

- a. Semi-structured interviews of key informants (Key Informants Interviews – KII).
- b. Focus group discussions (FGD) with target groups/stakeholders.
- c. Case studies consisting of evidence of change at a personal or organizational level.

## **5. Deliverables**

The following specific deliverables will be expected:

- Final Evaluation implementation schedule
- Questionnaires, discussion guides and other data collection tools
- End line fieldwork report
- End line data electronic files, KII and FGD records
- Final Evaluation Report

## **6. Time-Frame & Schedule**

The timeframe of the final evaluation (including report writing) shall be executed in the period from December 5<sup>st</sup> till December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012.



## 7. **Qualifications of the consultant team leader**

- Masters preferred or equivalent combination of education and relevant work experience. At least five years of M&E experience, three years specifically in designing and implementing surveys in the framework of EC-funded programs.
- Experienced in all aspects of survey management; including training and management of moderators, validity testing, quantitative analysis, etc.
- Experience of the Balkan context
- Excellent written English skills preferred
- Strong organizational and prioritization skills.
- Strong computer spreadsheet/word processing/data base/SPSS skills required
- Ability to work both independently and in a team.
- Strong interpersonal skills

### **Inception Report**

Evaluation Plan for Final Evaluation of  
“Sharing Common Culture: Balkan Theatre Networks for EU Integration”  
Skopje, Macedonia  
December 2012

#### **Overview**

This is an evaluation proposal for completing a summary evaluation of “Sharing Common Culture: Balkan Theatre Networks for EU Integration.” This 23 month project was funded by The European Commission and seeks to promote participatory democracy based on EU common values by promoting national cultural heritage and enhancing good neighborly relations and regional cooperation. The evaluation will use a utilization-focused approach and will cover the three key regions where the program was implemented: Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The evaluator will apply the OECD DAC Peacebuilding Evaluation Criteria of effectiveness and sustainability and will adhere to the SFCG External Evaluation Guidelines.

The evaluation will be conducted in December 2012 with approximately 10-20 working days. Data collection in the field will take place between December 3rd and December 7th and will be conducted by an external evaluator with assistance from two translators (one for Macedonian, one for Serbian) and one independent local data collector (in Bosnia and Herzegovina) provided by the Centre for Common Ground (CCG) and the partner organizations Students Cultural Center (SCC) from Nish, Serbia and Center for Drama Education (CDE) from Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The evaluation report is scheduled to be completed by December 20th. The results of the evaluation, including data collection and analysis, will provide guidance to CCG in developing future culture-based and theatre specific peacebuilding programs in the Balkans region. The evaluator will work with the Country Director for CCG in Macedonia and the DM&E Manager based out of SFCG’s Washington DC office to determine and finalize evaluation methods and refine lines of inquiry.

## Background

The Centre for Common Ground (CCG) proposed this project in June 2010 to address the legacy of violence in the Balkans and still limited progress toward a building vibrant, multi-ethnic democracies in the former Yugoslavia. Inter-ethnic communities still lack coexistence and communication skills. Furthermore, as EU accession offers support for both political and economic development, promoting positive inter-ethnic relations becomes particularly salient.

Given these challenges, culture offers a unique vehicle to promote awareness of local histories, enhance public dialogue, and celebrate community differences. In the wake of violence in the Balkans, interest in both one's own culture and the culture of "the other" have been reduced, creating an opportunity to revitalize cultural practice through the promotion of traditional European values, such as coexistence, inter-ethnic collaboration, and reconciliation. Culture becomes a particularly salient theme in regard to youth, who remain both one of the most marginalized communities from national dialogue, but who also hold the greatest potential overcoming the inter-ethnic hatred that has plagued the region by engaging in community culture activities.

The project intended to contribute to the goal of harnessing the power of culture to reinforce a participatory democracy based on EU common values by enhancing regional cooperation and good neighborly relations, while respecting and promoting national cultural heritage. It has three main expected outcomes:

- 1 To encourage creation of new networks of cultural CSOs as basis for sustainable inter-cultural dialogue and cooperation within the region and between the region and the EU
- 2 To increase awareness of and access to different cultural traditions within and beyond national boundaries through the exchange of cultural experiences
- 3 3. To increase youth participation in production of inter-ethnic, intended-outcome and interactive theatre performances

The 23 month project was implemented under the leadership of the Centre for Common Ground (CCG) in Macedonia and through partnerships with SFCG in Belgium, the Student Cultural Center Nish from Serbia, and the Center for Drama Education from Bosnia and Herzegovina. It chose theatre as a vehicle for cultural expression, and worked with three target groups to create, perform, and discuss dramas dealing with relevant social, historic, and inter-ethnic issues.

The primary targets were six groups of youth leaders and drama educators from Balkan countries who were selected for their artistic talents and ability to mobilize and empower youth in their communities. The secondary target groups were youth drama teams, also from each of the three countries, of individuals aged 15 to 19, who were selected to learn the necessary dramatic skills to produce theatre performances and develop their knowledge of European values, the role of youth in participatory democracy, and the role of art in fostering intercultural dialogue. Lastly, the various audiences of the theatre performances created by the secondary target group were intended to benefit from the program through their exposure to the contents of each drama and the subsequent facilitated discussions and media documentary broadcast that followed.

The theory of change for this project involved a combination of cultural engagement, public debate, and relationship building as a way to promote inter-ethnic harmony and democratic values. Core activities for the program were intended to include a two-day inaugural gathering to facilitate collaboration between project partners, collaborators, key stakeholders, and potential network members; the

development of curriculum for the theatre program; the playwrights seminar, training the drama teams, seminar for training of facilitators for post-performance discussion, writing, producing, and performing the plays; EU-Balkan Theatre event showcasing each play and facilitating public debate; producing and disseminating a video documentary on the project; and finally a lessons learned summit. It is important to note that as a result of cost limitations, the theatre dramas were able to complete in-country touring, but not in-country and regional touring as originally planned. Beyond this, there were no other noteworthy changes between the intended and completed activities.

### The Evaluation

The goal of this evaluation is to improve culture-based peacebuilding programs by CCG and SFCG in the Balkans and outside of the region. Drawing from the OECD Development and Cooperation (DAC) Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Criteria, the core objectives are effectiveness and sustainability. The evaluation will assess how effective the project has been at achieving core identified objectives, in particular at creating and maintaining civil society networks, engaging youth in inter-ethnic cultural activities, and increasing youth awareness and access to cultural experiences. It will also collect data on how well the civil society networks are likely to continue into the future independently, and whether individuals involved with the youth dramas have plans for their continuation post-project. Finally, the evaluation will contribute recommendations on how CCG can utilize existing outputs in order to strengthen their inter-ethnic cooperation activities, and more broadly replicate positive results.

**Effectiveness (OECD/DAC):** The extent to which the intervention's objectives were achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

- Were the intended objectives achieved? Specifically, to what extent did the project contribute to a change in awareness of and participation in cultural activities and exchanges among youth?
- How successfully did the project create new networks of cultural civil society organizations? Where the networks exist, how successfully do they intercultural dialogue a) within the region and b) between the region and the EU?
- To what extent has youth engagement in cultural activities, particularly those that increase awareness of different national cultures, changed? Have youth attitudes, behaviors, or skills changed as a result of their participation in the project?
- To what extent has the project contributed to inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation within the region?

**Sustainability (OECD/DAC):** The continuation of benefits after an intervention after major assistance has been completed.

- To what extent do the civil society networks created by the project have the capacity to continue to exist independently after the end of the project?
- To what extent do the civil society networks created by the project have the ability to facilitate intercultural dialogue and cooperation after the end of the project?
- How likely are the youth engaged by the project to continue to engage in cultural activities, including inter-ethnic cultural activities?
- How likely are both the primary and secondary target groups to share their skills, knowledge, and intercultural experience with members of their own community after the project?
- To what extent have the primary, secondary, and tertiary target groups taken steps to continue the youth drama programs on their own?

### Audience

The primary audience for this evaluation is the Centre for Common Ground. The findings will inform future program design, including for the possibility of playing a role in sustaining the civil society network activities. CCG will also use the evaluation for recommendations on how to use existing outputs to further other interethnic dialogue and cooperation initiatives. The secondary audience is the European Commission, the major donor for the project and SFCG in Belgium.

### Evaluation Methods

A. *Evaluation Type*: This will be a summative evaluation, led by an external evaluator and assisted by local data collection and translation assistance hired locally by the Centre for Common Ground.

B. *Approach*: The evaluator will apply a utilization focused evaluation approach. The evaluator and project leadership have agreed that the evaluation should be able to inform decisions about how best to strengthen and replicate the positive outcomes, as well as ways to deploy existing outputs to further the original goal of the project.

C. *Data Collection Methodologies*: The evaluator will use a triangulated approach to collect data. First, an electronic survey will be distributed to all of the youth who participated in drama teams (approximately 90 youth at 30 youth/country) to assess a) their knowledge of national cultures within the Balkans, b) their access and commitment to cultural activities, both current and in the future, c) and their attitudes toward their communities, other regional communities, and the European community. Secondly, the evaluator will conduct three to four small group interviews with parents, teachers, local government officials, civil society network members, and/or youth drama trainers in five locations: Skopje, Struga, and Kumanovo in Macedonia and in Nish, Serbia. Individuals involved with the program in Kragujevac will travel to Nish to participate in interviews during that day of data collection. The Bosnian evaluation assistant will separately conduct similar group discussions in Mostar and Bugojno in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Focus group discussions will focus on identifying the overall changes among youth skills, attitudes, and cultural awareness in each community. In the case of civil society focus groups, discussion will focus on the sustainability of network connections and their ability to promote positive relations among ethnic groups.

Finally, key informant interviews and most significant change stories will be used where time allows in each location to determine overall changes at the community level and the likelihood that outcomes will be sustained. In both focus groups and key informant interviews, the evaluator and evaluation assistants will work to ensure that participants are representative of the community in regard to gender, and where appropriate age and status.

The findings from each of these tools will be analyzed and used to provide CCG feedback on key points of both success and failure as well as to be informative to the extent possible for the reasons behind these results. The evaluation report will contain recommendations on how to improve future cultural programming in the region in promotion of democratic values and EU integration.

### D. *Scope*

The evaluation will take place in Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina in all project communities except for Kragujevac in Serbia. In each community, the evaluator will interview small groups of individuals (2-4 people) from each of the following clusters: youth leaders and trainers; parents and teachers, civil society network members, and local government officials. The evaluation will be primarily qualitative, but will have some limited quantitative data through survey responses provided by the youth drama participants. The numbers from the survey will not be statistically significant, but

sample size will be close to the population size (approximately 30 respondents/site) to be able to speak with confidence about the results.

### Evaluation Plan

A. *Location*: The primary data collection will take place in Skopje, Kumanovo, and Struga in Macedonia, Nish in Serbia, and Mostar and Bugojno in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The final evaluation report will take place remotely from within the United States.

### B. *Deliverables*:

- 1 Inception Report and Evaluation Plan Matrix
- 2 Evaluation Report: a short (no more than 30 pages) report emphasizing evidence-based recommendations for the project and program The report will include the following sections:
  - a) Executive Summary
  - b) Introduction to the Conflict Context
  - c) Description of the Project
  - d) Commentary and Analysis of the program, emphasizing learning and evidence-based recommendations
  - e) Core Recommendations
  - f) Conclusions
  - g) Appendix: List of interviews, data collection methodology, biography, bibliography

C. *Duration and Working Days*: The duration of the evaluation will be between 10 and 20 working days, including data collection days and evaluator travel.

### Expected Deadlines

Evaluation Plan and Inception Report- November 30<sup>th</sup>

Data Collection Completed for Macedonia and Serbia: December 7th

Data Collection Completed for Bosnia and Herzegovina: December 10th

Draft Report: December 21st

Final Report: January 15th

### Logistical Support Needed

The evaluator will coordinate with the Center for Common Ground for all of the logistic needs. This includes translation of the data collection tools between December 1st-2nd, translation during interviews and focus groups, logistical coordination of transportation between data collection sites, hiring and coordination of local evaluation assistants (including for Bosnia and Herzegovina), dissemination and reverse translation of the electronic survey, and coordination of interview meetings and focus group discussions.

The evaluator will also need access to program documentation, included translated pre-test and post-test results for activities that are relevant to the objectives of the evaluation, formative research documents, planning documents, and any video recordings produced during the implementation of the project.

### The Evaluation Team

The evaluation team will be comprised of one external evaluator, one Macedonian translator, one Serbian translator, and one Bosnian evaluation assistant.

### Evaluation Matrix

Effectiveness (OECD/DAC): The extent to which the intervention’s objectives were achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

- Were the intended objectives achieved? Specifically, to what extent did the project contribute to a change in awareness of and participation in cultural activities and exchanges among youth?
- How successfully did the project create new networks of cultural civil society organizations? Where the networks exist, how successfully do they intercultural dialogue a) within the region and b) between the region and the EU?
- To what extent has youth engagement in cultural activities, particularly those that increase awareness of different national cultures, changed? Have youth attitudes, behaviors, or skills changed as a result of their participation in the project?
- To what extent has the project contributed to inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation within the region?

Sustainability (OECD/DAC): The continuation of benefits after an intervention after major assistance has been completed.

- To what extent do the civil society networks created by the project have the capacity to continue to exist independently after the end of the project?
- To what extent do the civil society networks created by the project have the ability to facilitate intercultural dialogue and cooperation after the end of the project?
- How likely are the youth engaged by the project to continue to engage in cultural activities, including inter-ethnic cultural activities?
- How likely are both the primary and secondary target groups to share their skills, knowledge, and intercultural experience with members of their own community after the project?
- To what extent have the primary, secondary, and tertiary target groups taken steps to continue the youth drama programs on their own?

Evaluation Criteria	Lines of Inquiry	Questions for Data Collection	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Source	Sampling	Means of Analysis
<b>Effectiveness</b>	To what extent did the project contribute to a change in awareness of and participation in cultural activities and exchanges among youth?	Before the program, what kind of cultural activities were you involved in?	Interview	Youth		
	How successfully did the project create new networks of cultural civil	Please describe your previous network activities and	Interview	CSO representatives		

	<p>society organizations? Where the networks exist, how successfully do they intercultural dialogue a) within the region and b) between the region and the EU?</p>	<p>connections. What is your involvement like with the BTN? Who do you network with and what do you do together? How often do you communicate?</p>		
	<p>To what extent has youth engagement in cultural activities, particularly those that increase awareness of different national cultures, changed? Have youth attitudes, behaviors, or skills changed as a result of their participation in the project?</p>	<p>What did you learn from being involved in the play? Can you describe a new artistic skill or talent you learned? Have you learned anything new about your own culture or about another Balkan culture?</p>	<p>Interview, survey</p>	<p>Youth, Parents, Teachers</p>
	<p>To what extent has the project contributed to inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation within the region?</p>	<p>Did you make any new friends in the program? Did you learn anything about how to get along well with youth/people of a different ethnic background?</p>	<p>Interview, survey</p>	<p>Youth, youth leaders, CSO representatives</p>
<p><b>Sustainability</b></p>	<p>To what extent do the civil society networks created by the project have the capacity to continue to exist independently after the end of the project?</p>	<p>Will the BTN network continue after this project is over? Why or why not?</p>	<p>Interview</p>	<p>CSO representatives</p>
	<p>To what extent do the civil society networks created by the project have the</p>	<p>Will the BTN network continue after this project is over? Why or</p>	<p>Interview</p>	<p>CSO representatives</p>

<p>ability to facilitate intercultural dialogue and cooperation after the end of the project?</p>	<p>why not?</p>	<p>How likely are the youth engaged by the project to continue to engage in cultural activities, including inter-ethnic cultural activities?</p>	<p>Are you planning to participate in cultural activities like this again? Why or why not?</p>	<p>Interview, survey</p>	<p>Youth</p>
<p>To what extent have the primary, secondary, and tertiary target groups taken steps to continue the youth drama programs on their own?</p>	<p>Are you planning to participate in cultural activities again? Why or why not? Are you doing anything new on your own as a result of the project? Why or why not?</p>	<p>Interview</p>	<p>Youth, youth leaders, CSO representatives</p>		