



A Report from the

Balkan Children and Youth Foundation

to the

Stiftelsen Konung Gustaf V:s 90-ersfond

on

**Strengthening the Capacity of
Youth NGOs in the Balkans**

August 2006

Programmatic and Financial Report to the Stiftelsen Konung Gustaf V:s 90-årsfond

Grant Period: July 1, 2005 to 30 June 2006

The purpose of the grant was to strengthen the capacity of leaders of children and youth serving NGOs in Macedonia by giving their leaders the opportunity to share information and best practices related to youth development issues with their peers in similar NGOs in Sweden via exchange visits.

The report focuses on the implementation of the following elements:

- ✓ *“Leadership Training through Exchange” Program,*
- ✓ *Training Seminars,*
- ✓ *Evaluation Workshop,*
- ✓ *Learnings,*

1. “Leadership Training through Exchange” Program

By engaging leaders of children and youth-serving NGOs in Macedonia in exchange visits with similar NGOs in Sweden, the purpose was to enhance the capacity of Macedonian Youth NGO leaders to meet the needs of young people in their country and contribute to facilitating the integration of their country in the European Union.

Ultimately, the project concentrated on activities undertaken by five Macedonian and five Swedish NGO leaders. Not all of the NGOs participating in the program were equally engaged, due to the different level of internal capacities.

Below is a short description of the activities undertaken by four Macedonian-Swedish partnering Youth NGOs:

1.1 Vodno Suns – Malbas Basketball Exchange

The exchange of basketball clubs leaders was facilitated by Basketball Federation of Skania District, represented by Mr. Pelle Erickstam and Mr. Emil Sjorup. Through the partnership established between the “Vodno Suns” basketball club of Skopje, Macedonia, and the Malbas Basket club of Malmö, Sweden, during the observed period, leaders from Macedonia participated in summer camp held in Sweden. Also leaders from Sweden participated in Basketball camp in Ohrid, Macedonia organized in July 2005 by Vodno Suns. Two seminars were held in Macedonia, 28-30 October 2005 in Skopje and 5-7 May

2006 in Ohrid with participation of Vodno Suns. Unfortunately, Malbas dropped out of the exchange program and currently, Skania Basketball Federation is looking for a replacement.

1.2 Skupi Basket 2020 – Helsingborgs Basket Pearls Basketball Exchange

From August 01-07 August 2005, Ilir Novobrdalli and Akifter Trolli from Skupi Basket 2020 participated in the Basketball Summer Camp “Hope and Hoops” Skill Camp in Sweden. The camp was organized by Malbas Basketball Club and was mainly focused on developing technical skills of the leaders. It also had multicultural dimension, since the leaders came from USA. Special emphasis was put on the different age group of the participants which contributed to the sense of diversity but also helped in developing solidarity among the participants.

1.3 Group Felix – Unga Ornar

Group Felix was among the most active participants in the exchange program. Two of their representatives went on a study visit in Sweden, namely Stockholm in the period September 14-21, 2005. Also, they organized leadership training in Bitola November 25-27, 2005 with participation of Unga Ornar from Sweden. Democratization training was held in April 1-2, 2006, while Unga Ornar was especially helpful to Group Felix in developing and implementing program with Roma community in Bitola. The later was financed by European Agency for Reconstruction.

1.4 Dojran Youth Firefighters – Swedish Youth Fire Brigade

In December 2005 two leaders and two volunteers from Dojran, visited Sweden, whereas they visited the city of Lund, followed with practical on-site exercises. Then, they visited Helsingborg, where they were trained in fundraising and again, had some practical exercises (first aid) Last on the list was Revienge, small town near by Helsingborg. Unfortunately, Helsingborg Youth Fire Brigade dropped out from the exchange program and it was replaced by Rimbo Youth Fire Brigade.

“It is good to let the young people make decisions, but involvement of adults is needed to equip them with leadership skills”

- *Tanja Bosnakova, Dojran Youth Fire Brigade*

2. Training Seminars

2.1 Basketball Club’s Seminar – Skopje

The seminar was held on the premises of the Faculty of Physical Education of Skopje, Macedonia, over the weekend October 28-30, 2005. This was the third seminar within the framework of cooperation between Scania Basketball District Federation, Sweden, their basketball clubs Malbas Basket, Malmö and Helsingborg Basket Pearls and the two partner clubs in Skopje – Vodno Suns and Skupi Basket 2020. Skupi Basket 2020 was responsible for organizing the seminar while the trainers were provided by Scania

Basketball District Federation. There were 22 participants who came mainly from Vodno Suns and Skupi Basket, but also from the Faculty of Sports and other basketball clubs. The seminar mainly focused with developing leadership and organizational skills of the participants, having in mind that it was a follow up seminar on the one held in April 2005 on institutional development of the clubs.

2.2 Basketball Club's Seminar – Ohrid

This seminar was held one week prior to the evaluation conference, in the period May 5-7, 2006. This was the fifth seminar organized in cooperation with basketball clubs Skupi Basket 2220 and Vodno Suns Basket, Skopje that was carried out. Organization of the seminar was mainly responsibility of Vodno Suns. It took place in hotel Millennium in Ohrid. The focus of the seminar was on institutional development. As a result, both clubs made SWOT analysis and plans for future actions were developed. The seminar was professionally led by Christer Karlsson, – experienced educator from Scania Sport District Association, assisted by Pelle Ericstam. The evaluation made by the participants as well as the leaders at the end of the seminar was very positive.

2.3 Leadership Training – Bitola

During the period of November 25-27,2005 a training workshop on leadership was held in Bitola, Macedonia. The purpose of the workshop was to transfer to to Macedonian NGOs knowledge on leadership and educational methods for working with youth leaders. Trainers were from Unga Ornar and participants came from Felix and other NGOs from Bitola.

2.4 Democracy Training – Bitola

On 01-02 April,2006, a training workshop on democracy was held in Bitola, Macedonia. The purpose of the workshop was to transfer knowledge on democracy, gender issues, and capacity building on educational methods to Macedonian NGOs. Trainers were from Unga Ornar and participants were from Felix and other NGOs from Bitola.

3. Evaluation Seminar – Ohrid

From May 15-17, 2006, the Final Evaluation Seminar was held in Ohrid, Macedonia. The seminar was facilitated by Mr. Bengt Sevelius, Board Member of the King Gustaf V:s 90th Anniversary Fund. The program of the seminar included:

- Introduction to the seminar
- Exchange by exchange overview (presentations from leaders involved) what were the expectations, how did the planning go, challenges of implementation and reporting
- Exchange of experiences among cooperation groups
- Report from the small groups in plenary

- Introduction to and organization of planning session
- Planning sessions in cooperation and cross-organization groups
- Report from the small groups in plenum
- Summary and closing

All Macedonian and Swedish leaders involved in the project including representatives from the Balkan Children and Youth Foundation and King Gustaf V:s 90th Anniversary Fund participated in the seminar.

The table below gives a full list of the seminar participants:

1	Lenart Elbe	Gustaf V
2	Marianne Elbe	private
3	Bengt Sevelius	Gustaf V
4	Pelle Ericstam	Scane Basketball
5	Emil Sjorup	Scane Basketball
6	Annika Sinclair	Helsingborg Perls
7	Lars Persson	Helsingborg Perls
8	Owe Eriksson	Youth Fire Brigades
9	Johan Hallin	Youth Fire Brigades
10	Tobial Erstam	Youth Fire Brigades
11	Kristina Emback	Young Falcons*
12	Emelie Jonsson	Young Falcons*
13	Goran Andreevski	Vodno Suns
14	Marko	Vodno Suns
15	Bedri Sali	Skupi Football club
16	Urim Sali	Skupi Football club
17	Muzafer Beluli	Skupi 2020
18	Nazir Asani	Skupi 2020
19	Deljo Toncev	Dojran Fire Brigades
20	Ana Tonceva	Dojran Fire Brigades
21	Tanja Bosnakova	Dojran Fire Brigades
22	Predrag Sozovski	Junior Club Bitola
23	Dijana Georgiveska	Felix - Bitola
24	Tatijana Projcevska	Felix - Bitola
25	Biljana Ginovska	Felix - Bitola
26	Mihajlo Stojanovski	Felix - Bitola
27	Agon Demjaha	BCYF
28	Maja Ashkapova Angelova	BCYF
29	Kristjan Sambar	BCYF

In the introduction, BCYF gave overview of the Sweden-Macedonian exchange. Lenart Elbe, Secretary General of King Gustaf V 90th Anniversary Foundation opened the seminar, and then Agon Demjaha, BCYF former Executive Director provided BCYF input on the project in the context of the overall BCYF operations. Maja Askapova Angelova, BCYF Acting

Director spoke briefly on the practical issues related to the seminar and then Begt Sevelius facilitated core of the seminar. Furthermore, each leader involved in the leadership program presented their initial expectations of the project, followed by presentation of the work done to date. Afterwards, SWOT analyses of the project, again NGO by NGO were presented and plans for the future were developed.

3.1 Reports with reference to the planned activities

Youth Fire Brigades, represented by Mr. Owe Eriksson Dojran Fire Brigades, represented by Tanja Bosnakova

- The Helsingborg fire brigade was replaced with Rimbo fire brigade in the partnership
- In December 2005, two leaders and two volunteers from Dojran visited the city of Lund in Sweden, followed with practical on-site exercises. Then, they visited Helsingborg, where they were trained in fundraising and again, had some practical exercises (first aid) Last on the list was Revienge
- It is good to let the young people to make decision, but involvement of adults is needed to equip them with necessary leadership skills
- Promotion of youth exchange

Group Felix, represented by Ms. Biljana Ginova

- Study visit in Stockholm, 14-21 September, 2005
- Leadership training 25-27 November, 2005
- Democratization training, 1-2 April, 2006
- Roma project implemented with mentorship of Unga Ornar

Basketball Federation, represented by Mr. Pelle Erickstam

- Malbas dropped out of the exchange program, replacement needed
- Seminar III Ohrid 22-24 April 2005
- Evaluation seminar Ohrid 22-24 April 2005
- Summer 2005. Visits to basketcamps in Sweden (arranged by Malbas and Pearls) by leaders from Skupi Basket 2020 and Vodno Suns
- July visit to Vodno Suns basketcamp in Ohrid by leaders from Malbas Basket
- Seminar Skopje 28-30 Oct 2005
- Seminar Ohrid 5-7 May 2006

3.2 Experiences and action plans referring to them

In the introduction, before small groups were formed, Mr. Sevelius emphasized that the most positive experiences should be listed first, then main problems encountered. Also, participants were requested to take these elements into consideration while planning the activities 2006-2007. The goal of this exercise was to find what can be done to help developing leadership skills among all participants.

Unga Ornar (Young Falcons) - Group Felix

Ms Biljan Ginova, from Group Felix, presented the results of the work of the above group. They emphasize importance of experiences gained through various trips, confirmed that study visit was extremely useful for them in order to build leadership skills. Main learning is the use of Swedish experiences in their own way in Macedonia (adapting to local realities) and for Unga Ornar using Macedonian experiences in working in multiethnic reality. They also observed that good leaders listen to the other party in order to gain understanding. A main problem in the previous period was development of specific activities with the view of insufficient financial resources. Also language barrier is an obstacle and there had not been enough coordination between organizations in Macedonia.

Basketball exchange – Scane basketball federation – VodnoSuns, Skupi 2020

Mr. Pelle Erickstam presented the results of the work of their basketball group. Most positive experiences are listed as follows:

- expanded crossborder cooperation and improved environment with different ethnic groups together
- inspiration and progress generated through the cooperation in day-to-day activities
- successful seminars leading to development

While the main problems read as follows:

- Not enough communication discipline
- Not enough dialogue (parents ambitions, recruiting voluntary leaders, performance pressure in the games, fairplay/ethics)
- Opponents on court vs. partners outside court
- Visa issues
- Partner issues

Youth Fire Brigades

During this session, new partner was introduced. An issue of donation equipment from Sweden to Macedonia was discussed and perspectives on leadership training were discussed. As a conclusion, both sides consider this exchange not only on technical level, but also as a cultural exchange,

Dalaroe - Skupi Football Club

Exchange of football clubs was recently introduced. Year 2005-2006 was spent in needs assessment and initial contacts. Dalaroe FC statement “We know now that we have a lot to give to FC Skupi, but also we discover that we can learn a bit”

As a conclusion of the experiences session, but also as an introduction to the next phase of the seminar – action planning, following issues were discussed on a panel:

- Why did some projects/ parts of the projects fail to be realized?
- How can this be avoided?
- Further development (methodical recruitment of leaders, leadership training, gender balanced projects, youth participation – youngsters in decision making process)

3.3 Conclusion and recommendations and future steps

Mr Elbe in his closing remarks pointed out to the good atmosphere that prevailed throughout the seminar. He feels that this is a good model of cooperation, despite some communication problems. Once again, he stressed the importance of well written and timely submitted written reports of all activities conducted. Of course, a need of further leadership training is evident and BCYF/King Gustaf V 90th Anniversary Foundation aims to further address this issue. Pelle, from Basketball federation volunteered to prepare joint contact list for all of the participants involved in the evaluation seminar. Maja Ashkapova Angelova, from BCYF was in charge for preparation of comprehensive report from the evaluation seminar; if in due time provided with all necessary details. Beside the already mentioned activities, a summer camp was proposed to take place in summer 2007, representing a big challenge for all parties involved.

4. Additional Information and Learnings

As presented throughout evaluation seminar and elsewhere participants are very happy with the way program was developed and implemented. They appreciate strong emphasis on building leadership skills, as they believe it is essential for further development of Macedonian society on the way to European Union. Intercultural learning as working methodology on leadership seminars proved to be very successful. Regarding the visa issue, which repeatedly is presented as an obstacle, it was very important to underline the relationship with Swedish Embassy in Skopje. In this direction, some contacts were already made, but it is necessary to organize full scale presentation of the project to the Embassy personnel.

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