

## ACTIVITY REPORT- August 2009 – July 2010

At CFOR we believe in the capacity of individuals, organizations and communities to resolve and transform conflict, prevent cycles of violence, and build thriving multicultural societies. Our motto is 'A facilitator at every table, from the negotiating to the kitchen table' – that is what we strive for in our trainings and forums.

2009-2010 has been an inspiring year for us. This year saw the birth of new projects and the evolution and growth of long-standing work. We saw the successful completion of our first Facilitation for Leaders four module annual training in London, with an extraordinary group, all making a difference to their communities. In Croatia, we have been very active in two fantastic programmes together with our partner Udruga Mi, with support from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the European Union. One programme involves large interactive Forums for participants from all of the communities throughout Croatia that were devastated by war – we combine our work facilitating and transforming tensions and polarisations in these communities with technical support and projects for economic recovery. The other programme in Croatia is an intensive three modular Leadership Training for people from civil society organisations and government in these regions. The level of commitment and joy we have seen in the forums and training modules is very moving to us. Another new programme that we have been very excited about is called From Seed to Fulfilment, a workshop that focuses on project development and how to bring your dreams into action. The first course was such a success, that we developed it with generous support from the EU, including participants from 20 countries and many more cultures, and focusing on how as individuals and communities we can transform the violent history of Europe and build our future. We are delighted to see the many individual projects, big and small, that 'Seeds' participants are bringing into the world, making a difference, along with the relationships and networks formed.

We are also happy to announce the publication of 'Back to Our Future: A Handbook for working with Post-War Recovery and Violence Prevention', a joint production of CFOR and Udruga Mi, for the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. It is being published currently in Croatian and in English. We have also published our handbook 'Deeper Dialogue: A Handbook for Multicultural Societies', with practical methods for facilitating dialogue. And we have created a documentary 'Europe Matters' about our Europe Matters forum working to transform our violent history into a creative and multicultural future. The handbook and film were supported by our grant from the EU Europe for Citizens Programme.

We are deeply grateful for the support of our board of directors, partner organisations, donors, and the many participants, volunteers, and CFOR staff who have supported us and worked together with us and we look forward to continuing our work together.

Arlene Audergon and Jean-Claude Audergon, Directors CFOR



Group process in Sljeme, Croatia



Jean-Claude and Arlene with Bobo Škopelja and Nives Ivelja in Sljeme

## Post War reconciliation and community development

A big part of our work in 2009-2010 has been focused on post-conflict reconstruction and community development. In continuation from our post-war work in Croatia since 1996, we are involved with two projects in the region.

The first programme focuses on post-conflict issues, conflict resolution, community development and economic recovery, entitled **“Building Trust: Path to Community Development in the War Affected Areas”**. CFOR has been involved with the development and delivery of the project as a partner of Udruga Mi, with a grant from EIDHR, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and also supported by UNHCR, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

### **Forum Sljeme, Zagreb, Croatia April 21 - 24, 2010**

This four-day forum, the second of this project, took place in Sljeme, following on from a very successful forum in June 2009 (see Activity Report 2008-2009). It took place high above Zagreb in a beautiful forest, in a large round and acoustic room of a fantastic conference centre. The forum was attended by people concerned about their communities in the 'Areas of state concern', areas that were devastated by the war. 70 participants from NGOs and local authorities worked intensively over four days. Participants all had their own war experiences, from different sides of the war. Participants present all take active part in the rebuilding – they are educators or town mayors, managing social services, in

local business or agriculture, or supporting minority groups or youth services.

It was an extraordinary forum, with transformative interactions around specific issues facing each region. We worked with ethnic-national and political tensions, issues facing minorities and experiences and contributions of war veterans. What emerged was a sense that it is possible to work together on the most impossible issues, while simultaneously focusing on building community together, celebrating milestones, successes and new initiatives. In these areas, there is grave concern about youth leaving their communities, which also represents the spiritual and economic depression in the region. The forum ended with a very moving and joyous 'fishbowl' of young people taking leadership in their communities.



## Handbook for post-conflict societies

Together with Udruga Mi, and as part of our programme with EIDHR and UNHCR, we wrote a Handbook entitled “Back to our future: A Handbook for working with Post-War Recovery” based on our experiences over the past 15 years in Croatia. It describes our work as a model that we hope will be useful for other post-war societies internationally. We are writing as a team: Nives Ivelja, Milan Bijelic, and Slobodan Škopelja from Udruga-Mi, and Jean-Claude and Arlene Audergon from CFOR, with Lane Arye.



## Leadership Training

2010-2011 – CFOR is undertaking Leadership training with NGOs and local authorities for community development, together with Udruga Mi and UNHCR, and with support from the Spanish government through the Millennium Development Goals Fund. This is a follow on from projects supported by UNHCR in 2006 (undertaken with the Dutch embassy) and 2008 (undertaken with the Belgium embassy). This project will continue the following year.

### Leadership 1, Solin Croatia, April 14-15-16

This was the first of three modules on Leadership Training for people in positions of leadership, who care for the wellbeing of their whole communities in the regions working hard to recover from the war.

Solin is a village outside Split, the site of an ancient city. There was a spark, a spirit of joy in the seminar, a sense of possibility. A participant who worked with people traumatised from war said “I arrived burned out, and leave feeling full of life and commitment to my work”. Participants grappled with issues of trauma and open questions of accountability and were able to talk about their deepest feelings and work with the difficulties they meet in their projects and communities, with a strong learning spirit. One of the outcomes was a powerful recognition and acknowledgement that by coming through the most difficult experiences, and facilitating yourself and others, you are not only in a position of need, but of making a vital contribution to the region and world.

### Leadership 2 Croatia June 23-25

The second Leadership module met on the island of Brac. Again, it was an extraordinary meeting. This time our focus was on the link between personal development and personal awareness and caring for community. One of the greatest learning for participants was around 'burning wood', learning to fully support and have compassion for one's own emotions and story, and so to then be able to facilitate all sides, and the whole interaction.

The third module (in October), will include participants from both the first and second modules.

With the support of UNHCR in the region, we will be undertaking further development in the region dealing with post-war issues, economic development, sustainability and prevention.



## From Seed to Fulfilment

**SEED** is a programme to support people's dreams and initiative. One of our motivations behind this is that people often say how they long to feel that sense of contact with their deepest self, while actively making a contribution in the world. Over many years we have facilitated interactions among people from many different countries and cultures to transform our history and in doing so we discovered how we individually and collectively shape the future. This is another motivation behind Seeds. We have been positively overwhelmed by the success of this programme and we are continuing to develop this work.

**From Seed to Fulfilment- From dream to project development** was held October 6-9 2009 in London. 26 people from 11 countries got together to spend four days devoted to getting in touch with one's dreams and turning them into reality. We took a hands-on look at how to stay near the original impulse and dream behind one's project, while processing the limits and troubles that come up in bringing it to fruition.

**From Seed to Fulfilment - Creating our Future** was held May 10-14 2010 in London, fully supported by an EU grant from Grundtvig. An important part of the SEED programme involved getting in touch with interested people across Europe and beyond. We received phenomenal feedback and more than 200 people from across Europe expressed their interest in attending From Seed to Fulfilment and we regretted having to turn away so many people. We had to limit participation due to the regulations of the grant. Each applicant was asked to describe a project they wanted to work on. Selected participants had a wide range of experiences and interests, and were a very diverse group in respect to ethnicity, country of origin and residence, religion, gender, sexual orientation, health and disability, age, health, and more.

40 people from 20 countries and more cultures met for five full days in Central London. Each day we focused on the link between following one's dreaming and project fulfilment. Participants explored inner and outer oppression, 'gatekeepers', inner mentors, and their drive and direction. We had intensive interactions around the complexity of dynamics of privilege, power and rank, exploring new patterns of emerging leadership and teamwork.

We also focused on regional issues, for example a subgroup from the Balkans (Southeast Europe) met in the centre, witnessed by the rest of the group. It was very moving interaction, as participants explored their sense of common identity based both on their history of conflict and

hope for the future. In the large group, we looked at issues facing Roma minorities in Europe, and at discrimination based on race and religion. We also looked at attitudes that perpetuate tension between Western and Eastern European countries, Northern and Southern European countries, and EU and non-EU countries. One important outcome is the experience that we need models to include the richness of our diversity, experiences of minority groups and the vital lessons learned from history in different regions. In addition to the workshops, participants attended networking sessions in the mornings to gather and discuss similar projects and ideas. The SEED programme also included evening gatherings, dinners and excursions, focusing on networking, socialising and exploring London.

All of the participants felt that this workshop had touched and changed their lives in profound ways. Close relationships were formed, and some participants continue to be in touch and are cooperating on further projects among themselves. The success of this workshop has inspired, motivated and encouraged all of us at CFOR, recognising the workshop was itself a 'seed', that is growing into what we believe will be a long-lasting and fruitful programme within CFOR. CFOR remains in touch with the participants and we are gathering feedback and tracking the success of the projects that have been born or strengthened during our week together. We hope to make similar workshops accessible to more people across Europe and internationally. We are also currently in discussions about how we might run a similar programme in war-torn communities in Croatia, in connection with our current projects there. We are exploring the possibility of developing a project that would combine the "SEED" workshop with micro-financing of projects in areas of need of community development. We also intend to write up SEED training materials.



## Facilitation for Leaders Annual Training Programme

The Facilitation for Leaders Training is a core programme and part of implementing CFOR's vision of having a "facilitator at every table". The course, divided in four modules over the period of one year, offers a focused, hands-on experiential training in facilitation. The facilitation skills taught are from Process Oriented Psychology and its application to organisational development and conflict facilitation. Each module of the training is an interplay between theory and practice, offering intensive study and hands on application of process-oriented leadership and conflict facilitation skills. The purpose of the course is to support creativity and fluidity when leading in difficult situations. This includes the capacity to facilitate conflict, discover the creativity within diversity and to facilitate 'hot spots'. In addition to the modules, each participant conducts a project within their field, or in a new field, applying their learning, while receiving support from the facilitators, Arlene and Jean-Claude Audergon and the group.

We completed Module 2 (October 12-15), Module 3 (March 15-18) and Module 4 (May 17-20), of our annual Facilitation for Leaders course, 2009-2010. Module 2 focused on conflict facilitation within organizations, teams and communities, module 3 was devoted to facilitating the richness in diversity within our communities and the fourth and final module of the training focused on project development.

It was an extraordinary and talented group. We will not forget the warmth, generosity, love, and immense learning spirit we shared during this first annual four modular training. Everyone felt that the course had impacted their lives and work in very powerful ways and in respect to each person's specific project. There were also long-lasting relationships formed. The next course will begin March 2011.



## Lectures and Media

Slobodna Dalmatia, a daily mainstream newspaper in Croatia, has recently published an article about CFOR's post-war reconciliation work in Croatia.

**'Arlene Audergon: Zbližavam Hrvate i Srbe na forumima povjerenja'** Slobodna Dalmacija (Croatia Saturday Dalmatian papers) published July 24 2010.

<http://www.slobodnadalmacija.hr/Spektar/tabid/94/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/110430/Default.aspx>, available online and as PDF

In November we attended the annual national Psychology conference in Croatia, with several hundred professionals gathered. Arlene gave a plenary session address entitled **'What is possible? Transforming cycles of violence. Can the psychology profession make a difference in preventing violent conflict?'** Jean-Claude and Arlene also ran a workshop entitled 'The soup: The psychologist's role is to facilitate the soup without falling in' which focused on conflict facilitation.

## CFOR Consulting, training and advising

CFOR works with a range of Civil Society Organisations and international organisations, including the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, offering consultation and training on conflict resolution, mediation, negotiation and organisational development. We have particularly enjoyed giving training seminars for the Staff Welfare Section of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who are responsible to support UNHCR staff internationally in dealing with conflicts they face in their work.

## Upcoming CFOR projects

### October 2010: Leadership Training Module 3 Croatia

All participants from Modules 1 and 2 will attend Module 3. This programme is supported by the UNHCR, Millenium Fund.

### Local Communities Forum Kukuruzari, Sisak region, Croatia

We are very much looking forward to a special forum that we have been invited to facilitate in Kukuruzari, for young people. At our last forum in Sljeme, a deeply moving process among the attending youth inspired the head teacher and mayor in the region to invite us to work with the local community, to access direction and emerging leadership within youth, who are currently very inactive in the community. The age group will be from 18-30. A group of several young people from our recent forums who had important and life-changing experiences in the forums, are committed and enthusiastic to join us, to assist, and meet with the young people in Donji Kukuruzari.

## **Post-conflict and community development in Post-Soviet States in Europe and Central Asia**

During Europe Matters in Slovakia, 2009, we witnessed deeply transformative processes concerning issues facing post-soviet societies, and individuals and communities who suffered terror. CFOR has been invited to facilitate people from NGOs working with the wide range of post-conflict issues, and current conflicts in the region. We are developing a programme based on the model we developed over many years in Croatia. A forum is being coordinated in the Ukraine. The forum will include people from Civil Society Organizations, local government services and those living in the Ukraine who have escaped violent conflicts in their home countries.

## **May 2012 Vukovar International Forum**

We are currently in discussion with colleagues, Europe House Vukovar and Udruga Mi to begin planning this special event. It will be a five-day event that focuses on local issues of Vukovar; issues of Croatia; relationships among organizations and individuals from different countries of the former Yugoslavia; the wider Balkan region, Europe and global matters. The hope is that this event will both support Vukovar, a town that has been so devastated by war, and at the same time value the learning and experiences in Vukovar as vital for Croatia, the Balkans, Europe and the world.

## **Board members and staff supporting CFOR**

Thank you to our board members for their continued support and commitment, Manisha Dahad, David Clark, and Nick Totton, as well as our company secretary, Sharon Kennet. Thank you to Eva Karia for help with programme coordination and administration and to all who have offered CFOR their support and support services.

## **Funding**

We thank our funders for their support and look forward to on-going and future relationships.

Our post-war reconciliation and community development work in Croatia has been funded with a grant from EIDHR, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and UNHCR, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. The Leadership Training in Croatia has been funded by the UNHCR and the Millennium Development Goals Fund. The 'SEEDS' programme was funded by an EU Grundtvig grant. CFOR seminars are listed with the Grundtvig-Comenius database, so participants living in Europe can apply for financial support.

## **Partners**

We also thank our partner organisations.

Udruga Mi, Croatia, • IPP Poland • Annwin, Slovakia • European Multicultural Foundation EMF, UK • Diversity Matters, Scotland

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