



## ACTIVITY REPORT- August 2010– July 2011

At CFOR, we believe that individuals, organisations and communities have what it takes to meet our shared challenges ahead in Europe and globally. People do ‘give a damn’ and need outlook, initiative, experience and skills to recognise how they are a part and how they can make an active difference. CFOR facilitates debate and intercultural dialogue about issues that easily polarize and create breakdown in our relationships in society. Facilitating interactions may touch on the hot spots of history, and this brings with it the possibility to transform conflict, prevent cycles of conflict and build new relationships in multicultural societies. Our motto is ‘A facilitator at every table, from the negotiating to the kitchen table.’

CFOR programmes work with people living in 30 countries and more cultures of Europe, supporting individuals and civil society projects and new initiatives. We debate and process issues concerning multicultural society, especially issues on the forefront of the European agenda that need input from diverse citizens. These include human rights, migration, discrimination and xenophobia, and a range of diversity issues in relation to ethnicity, race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, education and economy. We also interact around attitudes and relationships between ‘east’ and ‘west’ in Europe, or between countries that joined the EU earlier, later or potentially, as well as our global relationships. CFOR programmes aim to bring awareness to the collective histories that underlie our interactions, and to build relationships, cooperation, networking and vision among individuals, organizations and sectors, that we might shape our future together.

Together with our partners, Udruga Mi, we are continuing our work in Croatia, linking post-conflict reconstruction and community building in the ‘Areas of Special State Concern’ impacted by war. This year we completed an exciting project, that supported dialogue around community polarizations, blocks and tensions, resulting in regeneration of community spirit so needed for new initiatives, cooperation and economic recovery. We also completed a handbook for this project, ‘Back to our Future: A handbook for post-war recovery and violence prevention’ summarizing our approach and work in the region since 1996.

This activity report describes some of our key activities and publications in our Europe Matters, Beyond Conflict, and Facilitation and Training Programmes.

Again and again we have been inspired by people who take part in our projects, their thirst for learning, their feelings, enthusiasm, insight or recognition that they can be part of perpetuating polarizations and tensions in community, or that their active citizenship truly makes a difference. We are thrilled each time when the learning from CFOR activities is useful for people in their own projects, organizations and networks.

We are grateful for the support of our board, partner organizations, the European Union and the many participants, volunteers, and CFOR staff who have worked together with us and we look forward to continuing this work together.

Arlene Audergon and Jean-Claude Audergon, Co-Founders CFOR

**Post War reconstruction and community development in Croatia.  
Leadership Module 3, Sljeme, Croatia, October 4-5-6, 2010**

**Our programme with Udruga Mi included Forums in the areas of Special State Concern and a three modular Leadership Training**

This was our third and final module of the Leadership Training Programme in Croatia, during 2009-2010. We are grateful to our partners Udruga Mi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the support of the Spanish government through the Millennium Development Goals Fund. There was a very strong positive response from the participants, that this training was meaningful and essential for their work in dealing with the emotional and economic recovery of communities in the 'Areas of Special State Concern'.

Having a series of training modules allows participants to engage in actual, ongoing learning, and to experiment with applying new skills and experiences in their communities. All of the participants are dealing with complex, difficult situations

in their communities, forging new pathways and possibilities. The bonds and relationships that grew from working closely together in these modules not only created a good learning environment, but also strengthen the networking and community relationships needed for post-war economic reconstruction and for communities to build their future together.

A strong focus is on learning to facilitate tensions and cooperation between civil society and local government, as well as grappling with issues of European identity. We recognise that people living in 'Areas of Special State Concern' in Croatia, areas most impacted by war, are not only in special need of support (which they are), but also have an experience, tenacity, and resourcefulness that comes from having worked through the most difficult times, and have a special contribution to make to Croatia, the Balkan region and Europe, for our future. In addition to working with polarizations among Serbs and Croats, and issues between sectors (civil society and government), we worked with a range of other diversity issues, including issues facing Roma and other ethnic-national minority groups, and issues of age, disability and gender.



**Publications: Back to our Future: A Handbook for Post-war Recovery and Violence Prevention (ISBN NUMBER: 978-1-4467-5883-0)**

As part of our programme with the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), we completed and published a small Handbook, together with Udruga-Mi, based on our experiences over the past 15 years in Croatia. It describes and summarises many years of our experiences, as a partial model that we hope will be of use in other post-conflict zones internationally. Authors: Audergon, A, Audergon JC, (CFOR), with Arye L. and Ivelja N, Bijelic M, Skopelja, S.(Udruga Mi).

“Following violent conflicts communities want and need to return to real, normal life as soon as possible. The primary focus is usually to protect lives, then to repair houses and infrastructure, and then the economy... The model we are presenting is part of a sea change that is underway and terribly needed. One could say that building an emotional or relational infrastructure is key to all aspects of post-conflict recovery, community development, and violence prevention. Without it, communities suffer from emotional and economic depression, young people leaving their communities, lack of initiative and hopelessness. When there are facilitated interactions that address and transform heated issues, we have seen that there is a profound level of hope, possibility, energy, creativity and leadership released into the community.”

Writing the handbook required teamwork across time zones and languages. It was a great experience working with Udruga Mi, reflecting on and formulating our experiences in a way that we hope will be useful to others. We also loved working with our colleague Lane Arye, who co-facilitated the forums in Croatia from 1996-2001.

### **Presentation: Back to our Future: Building Sustainable Community, Zagreb, December 7 2010**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) hosted a full day presentation to celebrate and honour the achievements and challenges in implementation of our current project. The programme was conducted in cooperation with the Office of High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and with financial support from international donors. Programme Cycle 2009 - 2010 has been funded through the Millennium Development Goals Fund of the Kingdom of Spain (MDGF) under the programme carried out by UN agencies in Croatia. The Reconciliation component of the programme was supported by the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).

Nives from Udruga Mi and Jean-Claude and Arlene from CFOR presented the unique nature of our programme that links facilitated community interactions around conflict and polarities in community with economic recovery, and presented the handbook: Back to our Future, A Handbook for Post-War recovery. This was a chance to inform the general public about the needs and problems of development in the 'Areas of Special State Concern', regions that had been most affected by the war. And it was also an opportunity for participants to present their extraordinary initiatives, and describe the implementation

of 20 community building projects in towns and municipalities in the 'Areas of Special State Concern'. It gave us the chance to hear experiences and achievements of local civil society organisations and institutions in their efforts to improve living conditions in their communities, and to contribute insight to all of us.

We were delighted and honoured that several dignitaries attended and spoke eloquently about the significance and outlook of this work, including Deputy Prime Minister Uzelac, Ambassador Manuel Salazar and the Head of the UNHCR in Croatia, Wilfried Buchhorn. Mirjana Mladineo, Deputy Foreign Policy Advisor to the President also attended and was very eager and animated about our plans for a Europe Matters conference in Croatia.



The hospitality and formality was remarkable. More than this was the genuine buzz, charge and excitement about a new outlook and new methods for community recovery and to prevent future violence. The dignitaries present began with formal introductions and then jumped in enthusiastically. There was a sense of a shared joy and outlook among people in the highest positions of influence in the country, side by side with people who are active with grassroots initiatives in shaping their communities.

**Kistanje Community Forum, Kistanje, Croatia, December 8, 2010**

In Kistanje, we had a day-long forum among the local community leadership to discuss community issues, serious tensions and entrenched polarisations between the Kosovar Croat community who arrived there as refugees and the Serb community who had fled during and returned after the war.

### **Facilitation for Leaders 1, London, UK, March 14 -17, 2011**

We began our second annual Facilitation for Leaders training with a great group of people from Poland, Croatia, Estonia, Ireland, Spain, and the UK, interested in learning facilitation skills to apply within their projects and organizations. The training consists of four modules; 'The Serving Leader', 'Facilitating Conflict Transformation', 'Facilitating Diversity Awareness' and 'From Dream to Completion'.

This course supports leadership and facilitation skills in making a contribution to community. It focuses on facilitation of issues that arise in teams, organizations, or as you go to fulfill your vision or project. When things get a little tense, or even in the most difficult and seemingly chaotic situations, you learn how to perceive the inherent order and direction, and pathways forward for you, your team, organisation and community. The course is oriented to people from civil society organizations, and other sectors making a difference to communities and to our relationships in Europe and globally.

### **Facilitation for Leaders Module 2, London, UK, June 6 – 9, 2011**

Our second module focused on recognising conflict dynamics within different levels of a system, inside oneself, in relationship, in a team, organisation, or in society, and how to intervene at these different levels. The focus of this module is on the potential creative direction within conflict. This is a skilled and wonderful group, very eager to learn and committed to the four modular training.

### **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR Training, Geneva June 27 – July 1, 2011**

Facilitation, Team and Conflict resolution Training:

CFOR returned to UNHCR Geneva, to continue providing training in conflict facilitation skills, and team dynamics, for UN

staff, particularly the Staff Welfare Section of UNHCR.

UNHCR Team-Building: We also worked with the UNHCR Staff Welfare Section of UNHCR, to facilitate team building, despite geographic distance. The Staff Welfare Section is responsible to support UNHCR staff located throughout the world, to further the aims of UNHCR in supporting refugees, displaced people and supporting sustainable solutions for post-conflict regions.

## **Europe Matters**

**Our Europe Matters programme** focuses on bringing together people from 30 countries and more cultures to grapple with the issues we face together in diverse societies. We facilitate at those points where communication usually breaks down, that easily result in isolation or eruption of violence. When facilitated, people shift in their understanding, feeling, and relationships, to grow beyond locked polarizations and find creative solutions to pressing social issues.

Following our Europe Matters 6- day forums in Slovakia (2007 and 2009) and our “Seeds” programme (2009 and May 2010) we are developing three new projects.

**Migration Matters:** together with the European Multicultural Foundation and 8 partner organizations throughout Europe, our focus is on the need for education, intercultural dialogue, and to grapple with issues related to policy at a transnational European level.

**You Matter: Living Diversity and your dreams** is a new project motivated by the belief that each person’s voice is needed. It’s a workshop focusing on issues of identity, diversity and active citizenship. We received an EU Grundtvig grant for a workshop, inviting people who are national, residing or registered as a refugee or asylum seeker in the 27 EU member countries, and Turkey, Croatia, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. The dynamic workshop will include inner work, facilitation skills training, panel discussions and intercultural interactions concerning the issues we face together in multicultural Europe, our history and future

## **Europe Matters Conference, Vukovar**

Together with Europe House, Vukovar and Udruga Mi, Split, we have decided to hold a 6 day Europe-wide forum/conference in Vukovar with 200+ participants. Participants from 30 countries will focus on local, national and transnational

issues. We are excited by the way this programme will link our work in Croatia over the years with our Europe Matters programme. Our work in Croatia increasingly moves from post-war reconstruction and polarizations between ethnic-national groups, to dealing with issues of identity in relation to integration in the EU, and including relationships within the Balkan region. Before and after the conference, we will coordinate round tables in 15+ participating countries, (Bulgaria, Slovakia, Czech, Germany, Spain, Holland, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Croatia, Macedonia, Greece, Ireland and the UK) to discuss local, national, regional and transnational issues concerning the European agenda.

### **CFOR Staff, Fellowships and Assistants**

Eva Karia has made a great contribution to CFOR over the past 3 years, helping with many aspects of programme development and administration. She will be leaving CFOR this Autumn to continue her studies, her practice as a facilitator with individuals and organisations, and she is very happily expecting a baby!!! From our hearts we say thank you and wish Eva all good luck for the future. We know we'll be seeing you around!

Kara Allen has been working with CFOR this year through a fellowship in public interest work awarded to her by her alma mater, upon completing her law degree at the University of Virginia. She is completing her fellowship with us in June this year. We've been enriched by her enthusiasm and contribution and are grateful for her support in CFOR projects. Through her involvement with us, she has become keenly interested in developing skills as a facilitator, to combine facilitation and law. She is currently taking part in our Facilitation for Leaders programme.

Tim Spalding is from Ireland and has received an Assistantship grant from Grundtvig to support him to work with CFOR in London. Tim has a MA in Conflict Facilitation and Organisational Change and is a qualified mediator and conflict coach. Tim has a wealth of experience of working with conflicts in the community and in the workplace. His work has included working with people who have been involved in and affected by the conflict in Northern Ireland. We are happy to have Tim join us at CFOR.

## Contact and company details

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