



**Consult for Management,
Training and Technologies**

Programme Resocialisation of Ex-Combatants (RPB)

Final Evaluation Report

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Glossary

ADM	Association of Defenders of Macedonia
FOSIM	Foundation Open Society Institute Macedonia
MCIC	Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation
MEDF	Macedonian Enterprise Development Foundation
NLA	National Liberation Army
PCM	Project Cycle Management
RPB	Resocialization Programme for Ex-Combatants

0. Summary

The Project Plan

The 'Resocialization Programme for Ex-Combatants' (RPB) was carried out by MCIC between January 2005 and September 2006. It aimed at the resocialization of ex-combatants from both sides of the armed conflicts that affected Macedonia in 2001. Beneficiaries of the project should be mainly the ex-combatants themselves, but also their family members, family members of combatants killed in the action and persons living in areas specifically affected by the conflict.

It was planned to implement training activities (English language, PC literacy, business skills, vocational training, on the job training, skills for self-employment), institutional capacity building for the associations of the ex-combatants and psycho-social counselling.

Funds for the project (total 250.000 €) were applied for at the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands (40%), the Foundation Open Society Institute Macedonia (FOSIM, 40%) and at the Macedonian Enterprise Development Foundation (MEDF, 8%). At the beginning of the project for 12% of the budget the potential sources were not yet defined.

The Evaluation

The evaluation was carried out in December 2006 as a regular component of the project plan. Its aim was to assess the activities of the project and their results, relevance, effectiveness and sustainability and to give recommendations for further activities. It covers only the part of activities under the responsibility of MCIC, not those implemented by FOSIM (see below). Interviews with all relevant stakeholders of the project were held; although on the Albanian side only two beneficiaries could be met. The preliminary findings and recommendations were discussed with the responsible MCIC programme officer.

The Implementation of the Project

The project implementation started after an initial delay of several months caused by internal problems of the associations of the ex-combatants (Association of the Defenders of Macedonia - ADM and National Liberation Front Veterans -NLA-Veterans). Based on needs assessments carried out by the associations, English and PC literacy courses and 'On the Job Trainings' in companies were carried out. The associations received funds for the salaries of one project officer each, for rents for office premises and computers and Project Cycle Management trainings were given for their staff.

MCIC was responsible for the overall management and monitoring of the project, the selection and commissioning of the schools for training and the transfer of funds for the 'On the Job Trainees' to the companies. The implementation of the surveys, the selection of beneficiaries and the identification of companies for the 'On the Job Trainings' were carried out and monitored by the associations. Their reports to MCIC included only the numbers of beneficiaries and information on expenditures. As agreed upon between the associations and MCIC, more detailed information was not documented by MCIC.

In October 2005 FOSIM decided to implement part of the project activities by themselves, instead of funding the activities carried out by MCIC and the associations.

Therefore MCIC had only around 139.000 € at their disposal for the implementation of the project, i.e. 56% of the planned budget. The participation in training courses in English language and PC literacy achieved 55% and 57% of the planned data. For the 'On the Job Training' 46% of the plan were reached. In total, 22% of the number of originally planned beneficiaries was supported.

Including the data provided by FOSIM on their part of the project, the total budget was around 195.000 € (78%), English and PC courses (163%). FOSIM did not implement the 'On the Job Training'.

Conclusions and Recommendations

MCIC counterparts in the project, i.e. the associations of ex-combatants were as challenging in their way of cooperation as MCIC had expected it. Already in its beginning, the project suffered from their internal problems.

The English and PC literacy courses were commented by all stakeholders as very positive. They are considered as positive contributions to future employment chances of the beneficiaries.

Reports on assessments of the courses by the participants were not available for the evaluators because the school commissioned by MCIC informed that they forgot to ask the 197 beneficiaries for them. It is recommended to include an obligation for written assessments and reports on them in the contracts with future training providers.

The internal problems of the associations contributed to communication gaps which produced misunderstandings mainly the 'On the Job Training'. The concept of the training was partly misunderstood and higher numbers of participants and salaries were expected.

The NLA-Veterans associations achieved in discussions with MCIC that the salaries for the participants were increased by 50 % to 150 € per month and, consequently, the number of participants had to be reduced to 50. The association informs that although increasing the salary mainly singles with low financial obligation could participate, because for the others the salary would not have been high enough. The members of the association seem not to be unemployed. The project officers informed that their activities are focused in the informal sector.

The satisfaction with the 'On the Job Training' was much higher on the side of the Association of the Defenders of Macedonia. Although they also asked for higher salaries, in the end they accepted the lower amount proposed by MCIC and a higher number of participants (88).

Although the interviewed participants from both sides are very satisfied with the results of the 'On the Job Training', the impact seems to have been higher on the ADM side. For the socio-economic context of the NLA-Veterans perhaps support regarding self-employment would have been more useful.

The initially planned vocational training activities were skipped because no appropriate training providers could be identified. Training in skills for successful applications (CV writing, behaviour in job interviews, etc.) had low scores in the needs assessments and were not carried out.

Information meetings on investment possibilities and access to credit schemes not implemented because of the delays in the project implementation. They would have been useful at nearly any moment of the project. Therefore it is recommended to give them high priority in future activities.

The psycho-social counselling was implemented only by ADM and not in the project context. It seems that the issue was too sensitive for being tackled within a project which already had a very high level of complexity.

No system for the assessment of quality of the training and the systematic monitoring of the short-term, mid-term and long-term impacts and sustainability of the activities has been implemented. Therefore the evaluation can not give information on these issues.

Taking into consideration the organizational weakness of the associations, MCIC most probably should have tried to accompany and support them closer and to implement a management and monitoring system that would have allowed a systematic follow-up of the impact of the activities.

In general, the project addressed relevant target groups. It was effective in the sense of addressing the needs stated by the beneficiaries. The project had positive short-term results which allow saying that the probability for positive long-term impacts is high.

Taking into consideration the current discussion on resolving the ex-combatants issues at Government level through advocacy, MCIC should focus their future activities more on supporting the ex-combatants in integrating into their social context via participation in regular training activities with mixed groups.

1. Background

1.1 The RPB Project

Based on the analysis of the current situation in Macedonia and on the results of an 'Assessment of the Reintegration of Displaced People and Revitalization of Conflict Affected Areas in Macedonia'¹ at the end of the year 2004 MCIC decided to implement a project for the resocialization of former participants of both sides in the military activities (ex-combatants) in the Macedonian conflict of 2001.

¹ Assessment of the Reintegration of Displaced People and Revitalization of Conflict Affected Areas in Macedonia, FAKT, 2003, commissioned by MCIC and initiated and funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Skopje

Objectives of the project

The goal of the project was to resocialise former participants in the military activities (ex-combatants) in the Macedonian conflict of 2001, on both sides of the conflict - Government security forces (Police and the Army) and National Liberation Army (NLA) members...².

The project objectives were:

- to prevent social exclusion of ex-combatants, as well as their asocial and potentially dangerous behaviour;
- to improve their skills for access to the labour market, through vocational and on-job training which will also serve as occupational therapy;
- to provide psycho-social assistance for the persons in need for that;
- to increase capacities of the associations of ex-combatants to maintain contacts, inform their members about opportunities, cooperate with local self-government and businesses and advocate for their members rights with the State institutions.

Beneficiaries

The following preliminary list of criteria was proposed for the selection of beneficiaries

- unemployed (as main activities are aiming at their productive engagement);
- vulnerable cases (persons with families, with more children, without regular income);
- young people;
- persons that have reported psycho-traumatic problems for that type of activities;
- targeting areas with concentration of ex-combatants;
- persons registered in organised groups or associations of ex-combatants.

Activities

MCIC considered the following activities as appropriate for the accomplishment of the objectives. The final decision on the activities to be implemented was to be decided after a needs assessment among the member of the partner organizations.

- English language courses and PC literacy courses
- Business skills training
- Vocational training and 'On the Job Training'
- Psycho-social support
- Provision or information on investment possibilities and credit schemes
- Capacity building for the organizations of the ex-combatants

Finances

For the total budget of the project 250.000 € were planned, i.e. 170.000 € (68%) direct costs and 80.000 € (32%) operational and indirect cost.

For the funding, at the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands 100.000 € (40%) were applied for, at the Foundation Open Society Institute Macedonia (FOSIM) the same amount was applied for, 20.000 € (8%) were planned to be provided by the Macedonian Enterprise Development Foundation³ (MEDF) and for the remaining amount of 30.000 € sources still had to be found.

² See also: Resocialisation of Ex-Combatants in Macedonia, Programme Document, MCIC, 2004

³ The funds invested by MEDF into the project originate from a programme funded by the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands.

1.2 Objectives and Terms of Reference of the Evaluation

The evaluation of the project is a part of the original project design. Its objective is to review the programme achievements, assessing to what extent the originally set goals have been fulfilled⁴.

The evaluation should focus on programme results and report on the programme outputs and their impact, methodologies used, capacity of partners and sustainability of activities. It should also give recommendations for the further activities to build on the strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned from this programme. Main evaluation criteria should be relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and impact.

1.3. The Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation covers only the part of the project that has been implemented by MCIC and funded by the Foreign Ministry of the Netherlands and MEDF. The responsible project officer of FOSIM was interviewed as resource person but the activities of FOSIM were not evaluated.

1.4 The Methodology of the Evaluation

For the evaluation, MCIC contracted FAKT to provide an evaluation team composed of an international team leader (Thomas Rebohle) and a national expert (Monika Poposka). The team was provided by MCIC with documents (see Annex 3: List of Documents) and held interviews with all relevant stakeholders of the project (see Annex 2: List of Interviewed Persons) between 11.12.06 and 15.12.06.

From the ADM side of the project, 7 beneficiaries were interviewed. Some of them had participated in the English and computer courses, other in the 'On the Job Training' and one or two also in all three activities. On the NLA-Veterans side only two beneficiaries could be interviewed. They had participated in the 'On the Job Training'. More beneficiaries and particularly participants of the English and PC courses were not available for interviews.

Preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations were presented with the MCIC programme coordinator. Based on the discussions on them the final report was compiled.

The evaluation report includes detailed descriptions of the implementation of the project only of those aspects that are relevant for conclusions and recommendations. More descriptive details can be found in the final report by MCIC⁵.

⁴ See also annex 1: Mission for External Evaluation of the Programme Resocialisation of Ex-Combatants (RPB), Terms Of References, MCIC, Skopje, November 2006

⁵ Programme Resocialization of Ex-Combatants in Macedonia (RPB) 2005 - 2006, Draft Final Report, MCIC, Skopje, December 2006

2. The Planning of the Project

Findings

- The associations of ex-combatants (NLA-Veterans and ADM) seem not to have been involved into the planning right from the very beginning. It seems that they were involved only when the outlines were already agreed upon with the funding organisations.
- The budget had a calculation error for the 'On the Job Training' which created expectations among the associations and problems in the implementation (mainly NLA-Veterans).

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Most probably, an earlier involvement of the associations in the planning would have helped limiting their expectations to a viable level.
- Making understand the associations at a very early stage of the project the view of MCIC regarding the definition of selection criteria for beneficiaries could have helped reducing internal conflicts.
- On the other hand, the NLA-Veterans association did not yet exist when the project was created. This is a possible - but surely not the only - explanation for the fact, that the cooperation in the project was smoother with ADM than with NLA-Veterans.

3. The Implementation of the Project

3.1 General aspects

Findings

- The project suffered from delays at its beginning because of internal management problems of both partner organisations and because of resistance on both sides of target groups for being involved in the same project and be treated the same way.
- In the beginning of the project it was difficult for MCIC to establish trustful relations with associations. Today MCIC is considered as an independent and trustful institution.
- There seem to have been misunderstandings regarding the numbers of beneficiaries and the salaries for trainees.
- As mentioned later, FOSIM implemented part of the activities directly instead of co-funding as it was originally planned. Therefore, the funds that were available for an implementation of the project by MCIC were reduced from 250.000 € to around 139.000 € (56%). Adding MCIC's and FOSIM's funds, around 195.000 € (77%) were available.
- The Number of the association's member is higher than assumed.
- In total, the MCIC part of the project reached 359 beneficiaries with training activities, which represent 24% of the planned number of 1.500.
- Together with the FOSIM part 707 persons were trained through the project (49%)
- The project plan was designed for 170 € expenditures per beneficiary. The actual amount was 414 € considering only the MCIC part. Including FOSIM's contribution, 264 € per beneficiary were spent⁶.

⁶ FOSIM only provided data on their expenditures for training courses. Data on their operational and indirect cost were not available for the evaluators and therefore they are not included into the calculation.

- The decision on the selection of the activities was made in coordination between MCIC and the associations. It was based on the results of needs assessments that had been carried out by the associations using questionnaires for the members and the companies (more used by NLA-Veterans) and having direct interviews in office of the associations or visiting the most sensible members at their home (ADM used both tools).
- Main counterparts of MCIC for the implementation of the project were the NLA-Veterans organization in Tetovo and the Association "Defenders of Macedonia" (ADM) in Skopje. Both partners involved other organizations in other parts of the countries into the project implementation. The other organizations were either more comparable to sister organizations (ADM) or more like subsidiaries (NLA-Veterans).
- Due to the above mentioned delays, an extension of the project period until September 2006 was proposed and agreed upon by the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands.
- In the course of the project MCIC received observations with critical remarks from the Royal Embassy. They were based on communication gaps and misunderstanding and could be clarified.
- Reconciliation was not part of the project design and accordingly direct contacts between the associations neither were planned nor carried out.

Conclusions

- It is quite probable, that the internal problems of the associations at the beginning had a negative impact on the communication between them and MCIC. Therefore information that was relevant for the perception of the scope of the project possibly could not be transmitted properly to the associations and their members. The communication gap contributed to misunderstandings and conflicts.
- The project received less funding and reached less beneficiaries than stated in the plan. In the MCIC part, the expenditures per capita were several times higher than originally estimated; adding both project parts, the costs per beneficiary exceeded the plans by 157%.
- These numbers should not be considered as indicators for a failure of the project. In the opinion of the evaluators they should be seen as indicators for the fact, that MCIC entered a new field of work for themselves and for Macedonia with a complex background and occasionally conflictive partners. Planning had to be made on the basis of very rough estimations and the cancelling of the FOSIM co-funding made the original numbers obsolete.

3.2 English and Computer Courses

Findings

- All stakeholders gave a positive feedback on:
 - the performance of the schools and teachers and their adaptation to the sensitivity of the participants
 - the results of the courses
- An entry test on the knowledge of the participants has been carried out and they were grouped in classes with different levels according to the results.
- The courses were perceived as useful and positive contributions to the participant's chances for finding a job.
- NLA-Veterans mention that they were especially useful for students and recently graduated persons.

- 82 beneficiaries participated in the English courses (55 % of the planned 150) and 115 in the PC courses (57% of the planned 200).
- Including the data provided by FOSIM, 242 beneficiaries (161%) were trained in English language and 327 (163%) in PC literacy.
- The decision for dividing the Schools between MCIC and FOSIM was according to a geographical principle (MCIC: Skopje and Tetovo, FOSIM: rest of the county).
- NLA - Veterans preferred Albanian teachers.
- The courses lasted four months each and included 3 lessons per week with 90 minutes each. For special purposes additional free of charged classes were organised.
- Some participants had long distances from their homes (village) to the schools (city), some even walked for more than an hour.
- The scheduling of the lessons was agreed upon between beneficiaries and schools.
- The beneficiaries could not participate in the schools' regular classes because the final decision on their participation was made around one month after the start of the regular semester of the courses.
- On both sides the selection was made by the associations. MCIC proposed criteria but the decisions were made exclusively by NLA-Veterans and ADM. Vulnerability was the most relevant category of selection criteria.
- ADM informed that the selection was made by the board of the associations, from NLA-Veterans no clear answer could be received on that topic.
- MCIC was not informed on the names of the participants, because there seem to have been fear at least on the NLA-Veterans side that a revelation of the names could have negative impacts on the beneficiaries.
- There was a multiplying effect because advanced participants trained youngsters in PC literacy.
- Additional courses on differentiated levels and for more participants would be appreciated by beneficiaries and associations.
- NLA-Veterans would appreciate if special courses could be organised for youngsters that remained half-orphan due to the conflict.
- ADM did not participate in the selection and commissioning of the training providers. NLA Veterans recommended a language and PC school which was commissioned by MCIC.
- The tendering and selection process for schools for English and PC courses is documented and in the case of the PC courses it is transparent and traceable.
- MCIC had only one eligible offer for English courses and the scoring for the selection of the school for the English course is difficult to understand.
- MCIC paid 73 € per participant for the English courses and 109 € per participant for the PC courses. FOSIM had costs of 115 € for English (57% more than MCIC) and 106 € for the PC training (2,5% less than MCIC).
- One school (Aurora) informed that evaluations of the courses by the participants were made, the other school (EKSIKO) mentioned that they forgot it.
- FOSIM was only involved in training courses on English language and PC literacy (and the donation of PCs). The responsible project officer mentions, that she is not very satisfied with the implementation and the results of the project because the cooperation with the associations was very difficult. Nevertheless FOSIM is interested for further cooperation with them and is looking for proposals from their side.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Check if it really makes sense to organize additional separate courses exclusively for ex-combatants or if it would be better to facilitate them the access to existing programmes for unemployed with the additional effect of helping them to socialize with the rest of the society. Due to the sensitivity of the target groups, a careful selection would be recommended.
- If not enough eligible offers for training activities are provided, ask additional providers for offers instead of commissioning without a chance for comparing.
- Ensure that the selection and scoring procedures for training institutions are always as transparent and traceable as they are for the PC courses.
- EKSICO carried out all courses for English language and PC under the responsibility of MCIC, i.e. for a total of 197 participants. Their statement that they forgot to ask them for assessments of the courses does not seem very credible. MCIC is recommended to include and file written assessments of the participants and reports on them in future contracts with training providers.

3.3 On the Job Training

General aspects - Findings

- The performance of 'On the Job Training' had some different features on the both sides of the target groups (see below).
- In both cases, the selection of companies and beneficiaries and the allocation of the beneficiaries were carried out by the associations. Selection criteria and selection process for the 'On the Job Training' were the same as for the training courses.
- The funds for the salaries of the trainees were provided directly by MCIC for the companies. The trainees received the whole amount or only part of the subsidy depending if the company had to pay taxes or not.
- A total of 138 beneficiaries participated in the 'On the Job Training', i.e. 46% of the planned 300 participants.
- According to the final report, almost 30% of the trainees retained their position.
- There seems to have been much interest in trainings regarding work in security companies. MCIC preferred other type of training and limited the share of trainees in security companies to 30%.

General Aspects - Conclusions and Recommendations

- Due to the difference in the performance, the 'On the Job Training' has different results on the two sides of the project.
- Feedbacks from trainees were not provided in a systematic and documented way.
- It is difficult to assess if the share of 30% of participants retaining their job can be considered as success, because of the following reasons:
 - the date on which the data were collected is unknown,
 - many of the retained trainees are contracted (instead of employed), and
 - it does not indicate how much more time they will be retained.

NLA-Veterans - Findings

- The 'On the Job Training' caused the most dissatisfaction in the project.
- The NLA-Veterans thought that they can engage 300 persons with 160 €/month for three months and had problems when the numbers changed.
- MCIC proposed to pay 100 € per month for 3 months for 75 beneficiaries but agreed to pay 150 € per month during 3 months for 50 beneficiaries, because the MCIC staff had the impression that otherwise NLA-Veterans would abandon the on the job training component.
- Most Albanian participants were singles because for persons with family the salary was not enough.
- It seems that most Albanian veterans have income from a more informal type of occupation, because when the reduction of the salaries was communicated to the candidates, NLA-Veterans had problems finding enough of them for the 'On the Job Training'.
- In addition to that employment for ethnical Albanians in public administration was an issues solved due to the quota for them foreseen in the Ohrid framework contract.
- The Albanian side succeeded to supply very positive feed-backs from the companies when they were asking for training opportunities.
- The (two) interviewed participants appreciate the on the job training and consider it as door opener for their professional career.

NLA-Veterans - Conclusions and Recommendations

- Check if an improvement in the communication could have avoided such big misunderstandings regarding the budget.
- Check if a subsidized ' On the Job Training ' is appropriate for people who seem to live mainly in an informal sector of the economy or if training regarding self-employment and the facilitation of access to start-up credit would have been more efficient.

Defenders of Macedonia - Findings

- The (four) interviewed participants appreciate the 'On the Job Training' and consider it as door opener for their professional career and motivating factor for socialising.
- The (three) interviewed managers of companies appreciate the cooperation of the trainees.
- The association misunderstood the concept of the 'On the Job Training' and sent around 40% of the participants to companies which did not match with their qualifications and several participants did not take the training seriously.
- The association had a problem with the low salary, but in the end they accepted the proposal of MCIC (proposal: 100 €/month for 3 months and 75 beneficiaries).
- 88 beneficiaries participated in the 'On the Job Training'. Currency exchange rate differences allowed increasing the number.
- The participants spent a considerable part of the salary in transport and food (which in the public sector are paid by the employer).
- Part of the participants used part of their salaries for a joint investment in equipment for a security company and a brick production company.

Defenders of Macedonia - Conclusions and Recommendations

- The 'on the job training' concept of the project seems to have been more successful in the socio-economic context of the 'Defenders of Macedonia' than in the context of the NLA-Veterans.
- In the case of ADM too, an improved communication could have helped to avoid misunderstandings and problems.

3.4 Institutional Strengthening

Findings

- Salaries for the project responsables, rent for the offices and Project Cycle Management trainings (one for each side) have been financed with project funds.
- Both partners appreciate the PCM training and consider it as a useful tool for their organizational development.
- For both organizations the financial support was essential regarding their capacity for implementing the project.
- The project was a kind of pre-requisite for the establishment of the NLA-Veterans association.
- During the time of the project implementation the NLA - Veterans association was highly hierarchical and had members within the Government. Today they are planning a reorganisation of the Association with more independence from political parties.
- Both associations presented new ideas for activities that they would like to undertake.
- The 'Defenders of Macedonia' perceive the PCs from MCIC as property of the Dutch Embassy which still has to be transferred to them depending on the decision of the Embassy. The NLA-Veterans perceive them as a grant that they already have received
- The donated computers will be used by the organizations for internal purposes and for further training. ADM decided to distribute most of them to sister organizations in order to improve their network and communication.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- The institutional strengthening of the associations seems to be a very successful component of the project. Most probably the NLA-Veterans organization would not exist without the project and its support.
- Further support for the associations is recommended in the sense of including them in more general support activities for civil society organization carried out by MCIC. Specific activities for them should not be planned before a more general decision on the ex-combatants attention is made at Government level.

4. Not Implemented Project Components

4.1 Training in Business Skills

Findings

- In the terminology of the project 'business skills' means skills for applying successfully for an employment, i.e. training in writing an attractive CV, in appropriate behaviour in a job interview, etc.

- The training was not implemented because according to information provided by MCIC, there was no significant demand for it and interested beneficiaries were living so scattered to the country that organising such an activity was not assumed to be cost effective.

Conclusion

- Evaluations of the needs assessments regarding this aspect were not available for the evaluators and most probably also not for MCIC staff. Therefore the decision could not be reproduced for the purpose of the evaluation⁷.

4.2 Vocational Training

Findings

- A stronger focus was given to practical training ('On the Job Training') than to theoretical vocational training ('Workers Universities').
- In the time between the preparation of the project proposal and the implementation of the project, in another project MCIC could verify the negative experiences described in the proposal. The vocational training component was abandoned completely, because no other provider than the 'Workers Universities' is available and the needs assessments showed priority for more practically focussed training activities, i.e. the 'On the Job Training'.

4.3 Information on Investment Possibilities

Findings

- MCIC informs that the meetings that were planned for informing the participants on investment opportunities, business plans and credit schemes could not be carried out because of the delays in the implementation of the project.
- Representatives of the associations seem to have the impression that MEDF credit schemes are only available for women.
- One of the reasons for MEDF's co-funding of the project was the perspective of finding new partners for their credit schemes among the beneficiaries.

Conclusion and Recommendation

- It is most probable that information on credit schemes offered by MEDF and other organizations would have been very interesting for the participants at any time in the year 2006 because it can contribute to a decrease of unemployment through self-employment. Therefore, if future activities with ex-combatants are planned, it is recommended to give them a high priority.

⁷ The document 'Results of the initial survey of the ex-combatants needs...' on the ADM members does not include a section on 'Business Skills'. Therefore the evaluators don't know whether the aspect was included into the survey but not positive answers were given, or whether it was not included. As the document was provided by MCIC only 2 weeks after the end of the evaluation mission, the issue could not be clarified.

- MEDF seems not to have had substantial contacts with the beneficiaries (exception: monitoring visits of a MEDF officer) and no further cooperation with one of them was reported. Nevertheless MEDF states to be highly satisfied with the project results.

4.4 Psycho-Social Support

Findings

- During the evaluation the following information have been received regarding psycho-social support for the participants:
 - Progress Report and Final Report by MCIC: MCIC contacted Trauma Centre in Novi Sad (Serbia) which had funds for such activities in Macedonia, forwarded this information to the associations but was not informed on the further contacts.
 - FOSIM informs that they did not manage to design viable procedures on how to implement it. The only option that they found by themselves was a contact with South African specialists. Another option presented by ADM was not substantial enough for being supported by FOSIM.
 - NLA-Veterans inform that they did not find professionals for the task.
 - ADM informs that they were implementing counselling activities on traumata and other conflict related issues in cooperation with specialists from the University and a hospital. The specialists' work is voluntary, i.e. they do not receive remuneration. The service was stopped because of lack of funds in 2006 because they want to pay for the service.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- From four parties involved in the project four different versions are reported regarding psycho-social support. It seems that only ADM gave priority to the issue and that either for the others it had a low priority or that the issue was too complicated for being tackled within the existing management structure of the project.
- If psycho-social service is considered as important, either it should be carried out or a clear decision with transparent reasons should be made not to carry it out.

5. The Funding of the Project

Findings

- Originally it was planned to finance the project with equal shares from the Dutch Embassy and FOSIM (40% respectively) and minor contributions from MEDF (8%) and other sources which still had to be found (12%).
- In the course of the project, FOSIM stepped out of the financing and implemented a part of the project activities by themselves because they wanted to get into contact with the associations for preparing additional joint activities with them in the future.
- The cooperation between FOSIM and MCIC in the implementation seems to have been consisting in defining and dividing the respective areas of action and of mutual information on activities. Cooperation in the sense of joint planning and coordinated implementation seems not to have existed.
- The associations inform that they did not have enough information on division of tasks between MCIC and FOSIM.

- The Royal Embassy of the Netherlands approved a grant of 100.000 € and MEDF contributed 48.780 € out of another cooperation with the Netherlands. Additional funding was not made available for MCIC.
- MEDF funds were earmarked for the 'On the Job Training' and not available for other activities of operational and indirect costs.
- The funds did not proceed from a portfolio directly managed by the Royal Embassy, but from funds handled by the Foreign Ministry in The Hague. The Foreign Ministry assigned the Royal Embassy in Skopje the role of a liaison body and the monitoring of the project⁸
- The Royal Embassy preferred cooperation with MCIC selected because of their previous experience with sensitive target groups within and outside the country.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- The changing of mind of FOSIM (switch from funding to implementation) did not contribute to the manageability of a project which already had a complex design.
- If a similar situation occurs in the future it should be checked if a complete separation of the activities contributes better to the manageability of the project. Mutual information should be assured in any case.

6. The Monitoring and Management of the Project

Findings

- MCIC seems to have delegated part of the management and nearly all of the implementation and monitoring of the project to NLA Veterans and ADM.
- MCIC implemented its part of monitoring through regular visits at the training locations (schools, companies) and meetings with the associations.
- MEDF sometimes accompanied MCIC staff and staff of the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands.
- Reports have been provided by the associations regarding the numbers of the participants in the respective activities and by the companies and schools with the same and not well organised data.
- Other reports and data which would allow an assessment of the qualitative aspects of the results of the project have not been produced.
- Due to agreements with the associations, no systematic reporting on the background of the participants, the selection criteria and the selection process was documented by MCIC.
- The three monthly reports which were foreseen in the project plan were not part of the project documentation forwarded to the evaluators.
- No systematic feed-back was recorded regarding the assessment of the activities and their impact (long-term results and sustainability) by the participants at different periods of time, e.g. during, at the end, at 3 months and at 6 months of time after the activities).

⁸ For simplification, in the report no distinction is made between the Foreign Ministry and the Embassy of the Netherlands and both are addressed as 'Royal Embassy'.

- The conditions for the grant of the Royal Embassy do not include any other monitoring and reporting obligation than a final report and the obligation to document agreements with third parties in writing.
- The project officer assigned by MCIC with the implementation (full time) of the project had longstanding experience with challenging logistical tasks in complex relief projects, but not in the implementation of training activities in cooperation with inexperienced partner organizations.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- The associations had no or very limited experiences with the type of project that was implemented. Therefore, most probably a more intensive and close support and accompanying by MCIC would have made the implementation of the project smoother, easier and more efficient.
- The evaluators can not assess, if the political conditions and context during the implementation of the project would have allowed a closer accompanying.
- A monitoring system regarding the qualitative outputs and impact (in the sense of mid-term and long-term results) was not implemented. In future projects, funds and staff capacity should be provided for the design and implementation of a data collection and data evaluation system. This monitoring system could have tracer study characteristics (i.e. questionnaires and/or interviews at different moments during and after the project with the participants and possibly also with representatives of employers).
- The Royal Embassy and MEDF could take into consideration the application of stricter monitoring rules and procedures (including impact related aspects) for grants for complex projects.
- The assignment of staff with more experience in the specific field of the project and/or the supply of specific support for the project officer could have contributed to a smoother implementation.

7. The Results of the Project

7.1 Relevance

Findings

- The project addressed a relevant target group for the future of the Macedonian society because stable and positive conditions regarding the ex-combatants are an important contribution to social peace and
- because the beneficiaries express that they feel that specific attention has to be given to their needs even if as a “small drop in the sea”

7.2 Effectiveness

Findings

- The MCIC officers in charge of the project had no easy job tackling with difficult situations during the project implementation.

- The project addressed relevant issues, because the beneficiaries expressed their needs for the training courses in English language and computer literacy and support regarding their integration into professional life.
- Other demands, such as for training for work as security guards, were not addressed.
- The capacity building for the associations was relevant too, because they needed institutional strengthening.
- The 'On the Job Training' with subsidized salaries most probably addressed a relevant issue the participating ADM members.
- For the participating NLA-Veterans members, it is probable that the 'On the Job Training' was not so much relevant, because mostly young persons were involved while the older ones, who were affected stronger by the conflict, had other options for income generation.
- For more entrepreneurial members of both associations other activities, such as support for self-employment, could have been quite relevant.

7.3 Sustainability and Impact

Findings

- All interviewed persons agree, that the training activities and the institutional capacity building had a positive impact even its difficult to measure it.
- The interviews were held two months after the end of the project and covered a very low percentage of the participants of the trainings and the involved companies.
- A monitoring scheme for systematic collection and evaluation of the mid-term and long-term results (=impact) of the project is not installed.
- The management and monitoring system of the project and the scheduling of the evaluation do not allow giving firm assertions regarding the mid-term and long-term results of the project.
- Based on the information received from the interviewed stakeholders of the project, it can be said that the probability that the project has a positive impact is very high.

8. Final Remarks

Findings

- All interview stakeholders agree that the project had a positive impact on beneficiaries, because they learnt something new which can contribute to their chances for future income generation.
- The associations of the ex-combatants were strengthened.
- The management structure of the project was very complex and the challenge for the associations very high. Probably they would have needed a closer and stronger accompanying.
- The potentials for complications in the project seem to have been underestimated in the beginning.
- MCIC's appraisal that ex-combatants are a challenging target group is confirmed.
- The associations on both sides are lobbying for support to be given by the Government.

- They seem to consider the Government and not the NGOs as 'duty-bearer'⁹ regarding their needs and addressee of their claims.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- It is recommended to check, if it is useful for the reintegration of ex-combatants, to continue offering them specific activities for them alone, or if it would be a better contribution to reintegration, if MCIC supports them in getting access to training and qualification activities, which enable them to get exposure and exchange with the rest of the society.
- If specific activities on the background of the conflict in 2001 and the development of the civil society in Macedonia are aimed at, depending on the stability and security in the regions, perhaps reconciliation activities could be envisaged.

⁹ The concept of the 'Rights-Based Approach' (RBA) considers as 'duty-bearers' those organizations and persons who have the obligation to provide the 'rights-holders' with the rights that latter are entitled to.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference



Macedonian Center for International Cooperation

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MISSION FOR EXTERNAL EVALUATION of the Programme Resocialisation of Ex-Combatants (RPB)

TERMS OF REFERENCES

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) is non-governmental, non-profit organisation, active in sustainable development, awareness building and social-humanitarian aid. It was established in 1993.

MCIC general objective is support and development of local and national initiatives for the sustainable development of human resources in Macedonia and abroad. MCIC strategic goals are: peace promotion, development of civil society, assistance to those in need.

MCIC operates in the following sectors: civil society and democratisation; rural development; water supply and sanitation; education; employment and income generation; emergency aid. MCIC accomplishes the activities by: projects financial support (grants); training and advices; information; advocacy.

MCIC mobilises and organises financial means, services and human resources in the country and abroad to accomplish its objectives. MCIC provides funds for its activities from numerous agencies related to the World Council and Churches (structured as a Consortium for Macedonia) and other governmental and non-governmental organizations.

In its efforts to contribute to promotion of peace and reduce the conflict potential in the country, MCIC developed and implemented programme Resocialisation of the ex-combatants in Macedonia (RPB) 2005-2006.

The goal of the programme was to resocialise former participants in the military activities (ex-combatants) in the Macedonian conflict of 2001, on both sides of the conflict - Government security forces (Police and the Army) and National Liberation Army (NLA) members.

The programme design envisaged three types of activities: basic skills trainings (computers, English language, business skills and vocational training); improvement of their potential to access labour market (on-job training, information on available credit mechanisms) and capacity building of their associations (technical, programme and operational support, as well as PCM training for their active members).

Planned period for implementation of the programme was January 2005 - June 2006 and was extended to September 2006. Activities were carried out by the partners in the programme - associations of ex-combatants. Total planned budget was 250,000 Euro.

1.2. Background of the evaluation

Resocialisation of ex-combatants in Macedonia programme was completed with implementation at the end of September 2006. MCIC planned final evaluation that will bring objective view of experiences and achievements encountered in this pilot-programme. Netherlands Government suggested the evaluation to be performed by external evaluators. Lessons learned from this programme will be used for planning, designing and implementation of the future programmes.

2. GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION

General objective of the evaluation is to contribute towards peaceful transformation of the conflict in Macedonia.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION

Objective of the evaluation is to review the programme achievements, assessing to what extent the originally set goals have been fulfilled.

4. RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation will first and foremost focus on programme result. It will end with delivering of a report which will review the programme outputs and their impact, methodologies used, capacity of partners and sustainability of activities.

The evaluation should also give recommendations for the further activities to build on the strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned from this programme.

4.1. Main issues and points

The evaluation should be focused on the following main issues and points:

- Programme outputs: palette of products (quantity and quality);
- Methodologies used: both in activities and management & coordination of the programme
- Programme results (direct effects, developed capacities and sustainability of partners and programme activities, impact of those activities).

4.2. Main evaluation criteria

Main evaluation criteria are: relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and impact.

Relevance will be considered to examine whether the programme were seen as a useful and valuable contribution, from a beneficiaries' point of view.

Effectiveness will be considered to examine achievements compared to planned results.

Impact assessment will further check what effect they've brought in relation to programme goal.

Sustainability should examine whether the intervention positive effects will continue after the completion of the programme and what should be the follow-up activities.

4.3. Reporting

The evaluators will provide following reports:

Description	When
Evaluation memo	Before completing the field trip
Draft evaluation report	Two weeks after the completion of the mission
Final report	One week after remarks on the draft report have been submitted

The report will be prepared in five copies in English and also in an electronic format.

The report will contain 15 pages maximum, not including the annexes, but including 2 pages of excerpt from the main conclusions and recommendations, which will be placed at the beginning of the report. The main part of the report should be prepared according to the objectives and issues of special interest. The recommendations should be detailed whenever possible.

5. APPROACH

The evaluator should make use of the following instruments:

- analysis of the context, documentation, quantitative and qualitative information;
- interview with the programme team within and out of MCIC (partners associations);
- interviews with other relevant organisations and persons:
 - representatives of the Netherlands Embassy in Skopje (RNE);
 - representatives of Open Society Institute - Macedonia (FOSIM);

- OSCE, EUMM, UNDP, Government of Macedonia
- beneficiaries of the programme;

6. ORGANISATION

6.1. Evaluation team

The mission will be carried out by a two team members: one expatriate external evaluator (team leader) and one local expert. The team leader should have longer expertise in the field and carried out missions in Eastern Europe. Several consultancy companies will be invited to bid for this evaluation. They should also provide the local expert (who should not be in relation with MCIC or FOSIM). MCIC will determine the company to perform the evaluation, based on the previous experience and related missions, stated in the bidders profiles and CV's.

6.2. Time period (days)

Phase	Team Leader	Local expert	Total
Preparation	2	1	3
Field visit	5	5	10
Reporting	3	1	4
Total	10	7	17

Realisation period for the mission is December 2006. Field visit should take place in the first half of December.

7. SERVICES WHICH WILL BE PROVIDED BY MCIC

MCIC will provide the following conditions and human resources:

a) human resources

- programme coordinator - available during the entire mission
- responsible project officer - available upon evaluator request
- other staff involved in the programme – part time, as needed

b) Logistics

- translation (Macedonian – English and vice versa);
- office premises, computers (Word, Excel), printers, copy machines, DTP;
- transport – vehicle from MCIC if needed

c) finance

- accommodation and food – provided by MCIC during the entire stay; air ticket
- payment: 50% within 15 days after the contract will be concluded, and 50% within 15 days after the evaluation report will be submitted.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND DOCUMENTATION

All documents from the archive will be available for the mission including:

- programme document
- contracts with the Netherlands Government and MEDF
- communication related to the programme (e-mail, letters, etc. between MCIC , RNE,...)
- progress and final reports - narrative and financial
- monitoring and reports from partners activities (in Macedonian, to be translated if needed)
- survey data collected by partners to be provided upon request.

AKr/AKr

No. 13-254/7-2006

Skopje, 23.11.2006

Saso Klekovski

ExecutiveDirector

Annex 2: List of Interview Partners

Date ¹	Name	Organisation	Position
10.12.2006	Aleksandar Krzalovski	MCIC	Programme Manager
11.12.2006	Aco Stojanovski	ADM	President
12.12.2006	Elizabeta Bakovska	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands	Advisor Development Cooperation
12.12.2006	Maaïke Fekkes	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands	Second Secretary
12.12.2006	Prof. Zoran Kostov	NGO	Consultant
12.12.2006	Tetjana Lazarevska	MEDF	Head of Department
12.12.2006	Lirim Hajredini	MEDF	Junior Project Assistant
12.12.2006	Suncica Kostovska – Petrovska	FOSIM	Programme Manager
13.12.2006	Hisan Dzmaili	NLA – Veterans	Project Manager
13.12.2006	Gzim Sulemani	“Aurora” – School, 071231222 Tetovo	Director
13.12.2006	Dzelan Lika	“Hellga” Furniture Company	Beneficiary – employee
13.12.2006	Abdurahman Dzelal	“Hellga” Furniture Company	Beneficiary – employee
11.12.2006	Anica Stojanovska	ADM	Member / beneficiary
11.12.2006	Dragi Misevski	ADM	Member / beneficiary
11.12.2006	Robert Blazevski	ADM	Member / beneficiary
11.12.2006	Zoran Lalevski	ADM	Member / beneficiary
14.12.2006	Slavica Zivkovska	“Seki” Construction and bookstore company	General Manager
14.12.2006	Zibosovski Aco	“Seki” Construction and bookstore company	Beneficiary
14.12.2006	Blagoe Georgievski	“Seki” Construction and bookstore company	Beneficiary
14.12.2006	Kire Matevski	Security Company “IST Defenders”	Director
14.12.2006	Ivan Sidorenko	GTIS Company	Manager
14.12.2006	Ivanco Siderenko	GTIS Company	Beneficiary – part – time employee
15.12.2006	Aleksandar Stevanovski	MCIC	Former MCIC project officer for the RPP programme
15.12.2006	Ruzica Panova – Pandilovska	“Eksiko” Computer and Languages School	Director

¹ Several interview partners have been consulted more than once. Only the date of the first meeting is mentioned.

Annex 3: List of Documents

- FAKT: Assessment of the Reintegration of Displaced People and Revitalization of Conflict Affected Areas in Macedonia', Stuttgart, October 2003, commissioned by MCIC and supported by the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Skopje
- MCIC: Resocialisation of Ex-Combatants in Macedonia, Programme Document, Skopje, November 2004
- MCIC: Annual Report 2005, Skopje, May 2006
- MCIC: Programme Resocialisation of Ex-combatants in Macedonia, Progress Report for the period 01.01.2005 - 31.03.2006, Skopje, 15.06.2006
- Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Security Policy Department: Letter with comments on the progress report and approval of the extensions of project period, The Hague, 10.08.2006
- MCIC: Letter answering the comments of the Netherlands Foreign Ministry, Skopje, 12.09.2006
- MCIC: Semi-Annual Report 2006, Skopje, September 2006
- MCIC: Mission for External Evaluation of the Programme Resocialisation of Ex-Combatants (RPB), Terms of References , Skopje, November 2006
- MCIC: Programme Resocialization of Ex-Combatants in Macedonia (RPB) 2005 - 2006, Draft Final Report, Skopje, December 2006
- MCIC: Results of the initial survey of the ex-combatants needs, Overview of survey results from interviewed members of the Association Defenders of Macedonia (ADM), Skopje, date not available
- MCIC: ADM Administration Folder
- MCIC: NLA – Veterans Administration Folder
- MCIC: English Language Courses Folder
- MCIC: Computer Literacy Courses Folder
- MCIC: PCM Courses Folder
- MCIC: On The Job Training Folder
- MCIC: Technical Assistance to Associations Folder
- MCIC: Other Administration Folder (communication with FOSIM, Embassy)