SOUTHEAST EUROPE: DIVERSITY AND DEMOCRACY PROGRAMME

Minority Rights Group International

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

A Report to DFID – Eastern Europe and Central Asia Department

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1. Executive Summary

1.1   This Project Completion Report of the Diversity and Democracy Programme, is based on evaluation activities carried out between March and May 2003.

1.2   This has been an innovatory and ambitious project that has been conducted efficiently and effectively. The underpinning development strategy has been a partnership between an international NGO (Minority Rights Group International), and a number of local non-government organisations in seven countries of Southeast Europe.

1.3   Using a variety of evaluation techniques, and drawing from the assessments of different key stakeholders (MRG staff, the partner organisations, funders, and relevant international bodies), the main conclusions have been that the Programme :-
  * has used its resources well to deliver the eight activity components, and that
  * all four of the planned outputs have been largely achieved, as has the overall project purpose.

1.4   Numerous examples and case studies show how the local partners, and other participating individuals and organisations, have used the knowledge, skills and support acquired during the Programme to bring about change, or prepare the ground for change. With some degree of confidence, the review has assessed that the project is likely to be an important contributor to achieving the longer-term development goal of providing minority rights, and inter-community cooperation, to enable sustainable conflict prevention and resolution in the region.

1.5   A second three-year phase of the Programme is being planned. If it goes ahead then this evaluation has identified two main issues that need to be addressed. First, that though the Programme has shown a commitment to monitoring and evaluation, it does not have adequate mechanisms for systematic learning, and the identification of what strategies are most effective in bringing about change. The Consultative Group has not fulfilled this role, and a smaller Advisory Group with a mandate to facilitate learning, should be established in any next phase. Second, is the issue of partner effectiveness. The organisational weaknesses of partners is a constraint to their ability to act as agents of change. Any subsequent phase needs to find ways to help partners identify what things are holding back their work, and provide practical support.

1.6   The Project Completion Review confirms that the Programme has done what it said it would do; it is having a positive impact on the critical processes affecting minority people, and it is following a methodology which stakeholders assess as valid and relevant. In the language of the logframe the overall project assessment as to outputs and purpose is that they 'have been largely achieved', and there is good evidence that these achievements have set in motion a process that over the longer-term will deliver the goal of the project. Given this analysis the main recommendation to DFID is that they should provide funding for a second phase subject to changes being implemented as described in the recommendations

2. PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

2.1   The purpose of the consultancy was to conduct an evaluation of the MRG Programme and to submit a Project Completion Report (PCR). The Minority Rights Group's Diversity and Democracy Programme was a three- year set of activities to promote human rights. It evolved from a series of planning initiatives developed by MRG and supported by DFID culminating in the production of the report: ' Minorities in South Eastern Europe: Inclusion and Exclusion'. The Programme started in June 1999 and an Output to Purpose (OPR) was conducted in March to June 2001. This concluded that the Programme was going well. DFID continued funding and the Programme was completed in March 2003.

2.2   The Terms of Reference are shown in Appendix A but in summary the objectives are: to draw out lessons; identify what has worked and why, and assess whether the programme purpose was achieved. The PCR also needs to take into account that DFID has agreed to make a contribution in-principle to an ongoing Phase II of the Programme subject to confirmation that achievements to date have been satisfactory. The review of the first phase (henceforth known as 'Phase I') is also an opportunity for the review to consider whether the proposed Phase II objectives are appropriate to ensure maximum impact.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1   DFID appointed an INTRAC consultant, Max Peberdy, to conduct the evaluation (this consultant had previously carried out the mid-term review). The approach taken during the data collection and analysis process was that the primary role of the consultant was to be that of a facilitator. As a facilitator, through questions and other participatory processes, the reviewer enabled the MRG team, its partners, and other key stakeholders, to assess the impact of the Programme and to identify those things that have gone well, and those things that had constrained the achievements of the purpose and objectives. The consultant made the assumption that the reason for producing a PCR is twofold:

1) to inform DFID, as a primary funder, whether the Programme has achieved its purpose, and to provide information that can be used to make decisions about future funding of a second phase, and
2) to be a source of learning for MRG, partners and other stakeholders, as to the effectiveness of the methodology.

3.2   Thus the consultancy process needed to provide DFID with an objective, outsider's view, but also to be conducted in a participatory and consultative way that enabled the implementors to 'own' the learning, conclusions and recommendations in order that they are motivated to implement change.

3.3   The data collection activities are outlined in Appendix B. In summary the process took place during March to early May 2003, and involved reviewing programme reports and documents; in-depth interviews with MRG staff; e- mail interviews with key interlocutors; attendance at some of the workshops; a facilitated evaluation meeting In

Budapest with a sample of the Programmes partners; and a feedback session to the MRG team as to the main findings and conclusions prior to writing up the Report.

3.4 Measuring impact is a challenge; measuring the impact of democracy and governance projects is a big challenge! The primary focus of this evaluation has been the Programme's logframe, but given the complex nature of the political, social, economic and cultural factors operating in SEE, and that even over the relatively short life of this Programme, the unexpected always happens (e.g. Macedonia in 2001), the consultant has used a combination of methods to assess whether the internal logic of the Programme can be validated, and whether the Programme has been able to respond to the threats and opportunities in the external environment.

3.5 At its simplest the evaluation can be viewed as asking just three questions:-

1) Did the Programme do what it said it would do?   **(internal validity)**
2) Has it made any difference?   **(impact assessment)**
3) Were these the right things to do?   **(external validity)**

3.5 Assessing the internal validity focuses on the logframe, and the 8 component activities undertaken to achieve the four programme outputs (objectives) and the overall Programme purpose. Impact assessment has both the logframe's purpose OVIs to assess, but also used participatory techniques with the MRG team and partners to enable them to reflect on the consequences of their strategies, and to identify case studies and examples to illustrate the pathway from activities to results to outcomes. Given the limited resources available to any evaluation, the last question (external validity) is often very difficult to assess. The issue is - were the Programme's strategies and methods the ones most likely to achieve the desired change for minorities in the SEE? In part this has been done by trying to assess the 'plausible linkages'(to use Gordon Crawford's phrase in 'Evaluating Democracy and Governance Assistance'; University of Leeds, Feb 2003); and partly by seeking the views of key actors such as the CoE, OSCE, EU, UN bodies, major funders; the views of partners; and the Programme's own Consultative Group.

3.6 The Report presents the results around these three questions.

4. RESULTS

4.1   An assessment of how well the Programme has met the logframe's goal, purpose and outputs, is presented in the DFID table format in Appendix C (attached to this Report). The 'Results' in this section will refer to this Project Completion document, but will also provide additional illustrations and comment. This section is structured around the three evaluation questions described in the 'Methodology'.

Did the Programme do what it said it would do?

4.2   In the original Programme plan seven major activities were to be conducted. In practice there has been eight, because it has been beneficial for the Diversity and Democracy Programme to integrate with other aspects of MRG's lobbying work. Thus the Programme is now viewed as having eight component activities. Appendix F shows the MRG team's summary of what has been done.

4.3   The amount of work conducted is impressive. Virtually all the planned activities have been implemented, and in many of the components more events, workshops and follow-ups have taken place. In summary:-

1. Advocacy and Rights Training	- 5 ARTS workshops have been run - 19 Follow-up activities
2. Interactive Workshops	- 4 Workshops run- Croatia, Greece, Bulgaria and FRY. - and more than 11 follow-up activities.
3. Communication+ Publications	- Nearly 30 translations made by partners of MRG reports, and other manuals and guides.
4. Specialist Meetings	- 3 held; Sarajevo, Mostar, and Tetevo.
5. Consultancies	- This has taken more time than any other component, and provides capacity building and advocacy support to partners and other actors.
6. Country/Community Specific	- Regional meetings that combine MRG Roma project issues with this Programme . It resulted in 5 follow-up activities. - 2 in country follow-ups to ARTS
7. Ad hoc and Urgent Activities	- 12 projects supported. Each of these related to at least one of the Programme's objectives. It includes the production of Shadow Reports, training, seminars and establishing a website.
8. International Advocacy	- Direct advocacy by MRG to raise issues with International bodies e.g. CoE, OSCE, EU, and UN Working Group on Racism. - Work with international NGOs e.g. King Bouduain Foundation. - Support to partners to enable them to advocate With IGOs and INGOs.

4.4   The quality of the delivery of the 8 components is of a high standard. Evidence for this comes from the activities evaluation reports; from the opinions of the international bodies such as OSCE, CoE and UN Working Group on Racism, whose staff were

involved in the activities; from the partner who take part; and from the consultant's own observations from attending some of the specialist and interactive workshops. This commitment to quality is founded on the consultative needs analysis process undertaken prior to the design of the Programme, and which has been built upon over the life of the Programme through regular reviews and planning meetings with partners, and inputs from the Programmes Consultative Group.

4.5   This commitment to quality can be illustrated by the first of the eight components, namely the ARTS workshops. Selection criteria ensure that the right people attend (there is often 50 applicants for 24 places). Participants are chosen on the basis of written applications and organisational criteria; the sending agency must have the capacity and strategies to promote minority rights using international instruments. This ensures that the attenders will be able to put their learning into practice. The trainers and resource people are MRG staff with experience of minority rights advocacy in Central and SEE; human rights experts, and members of international organisations. Towards the end of the training time is devoted to developing advocacy campaign strategies, and frequently this results in participants agreeing to work together on common issues (e.g. Framework Convention work in Bosnia Herzegovina; and communities working together in Macedonia). Key indicators have been identified to measure the immediate and longer term outcomes of the workshops; these include the participant's own evaluation of the event (target is 80% or above report increased knowledge, and 80% a strengthened ability to apply the strategies to lobbying); at least 5 successful follow-up activities by the participants; and evidence that attenders have subsequently used the knowledge and skills in advocacy activities. The Programme's narrative Progress Reports refer to these indicators and report on how far they are being met. The MRG team is not uncritical of its delivery of these activities. In their own assessment (see Appendix F), they highlight the need for more systematic evaluation of the follow-up activities, and the need to distribute the post-workshop reports sooner.

4.6   These eight components are the core activities through which the partner organisations gain the capacity to bring about change. Appendix H shows an analysis of the partners' involvement in the Programme. By the end of the Programme there were 26 organisations, at least two from each of the target countries. As well as the eight component activities many also take part in the planning meetings; are on the Consultative Group; involved in other MRG projects (the Roma Programme); and are working on Shadow Reports. As the Programme has developed the partners have increasingly taken responsibility for the implementation of the activities. For example there are now in-country ARTs, and the organisation of specialist meetings is in the hands of a host country partner. It is one of the proposed strategies of a Phase II that this localisation of responsibility will continue, and a training of trainers activity will be one of the main new activities to achieve this.

Has the Programme made any difference?

4.7   The starting point for assessing impact is to look at the Programme's logframe Goal (the longer term development objective), the Programme Purpose (the overall objective to be achieved by the Programme), the Outputs (the tangible things that the programme will deliver- referred to as ' the four objectives' in the Programme's logframe), and the Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVIs). Given that the evaluation is taking place at the immediate end of the Programme, it is not realistic to expect that the

Goal will be achieved i.e. the effects of this Programme with the work of other actors, over a number of subsequent years, will deliver the long term impacts. But it should be possible to see that the outputs and the Programme's purpose has been achieved, and that within the time period of the work the achievement of these outputs and purpose has made a difference to the lives of minorities in the region.

4.8 The Programme was designed to deliver four major **OUTPUTS/RESULTS**. First, **'That partner organisations (and other participants) raise public awareness of minorities and minority rights in Southeast Europe'.** There were four OVIs related to this output. The first related to the prioritisation of public awareness activities within the partner organisations, and that they had the knowledge and skills to take them forward. Partners raised the importance of this issue and the need for them to be able to educate public officials about minority protection. Partners knowledge and skills have been enhanced by extensive training, and there is evidence that partners are being increasingly viewed as experts by government and international bodies in-country delegations. This has allowed them to take on the role of advisers. Another indicator of the importance of this awareness raising ability is that the proposed second phase will provide for the publication of publicity materials for use in-country. The second indicator refers to opportunities to gain media attention and the interest of key stakeholders such as local politicians, academics and business organisation. Partners give many examples of how association with MRG gives them a legitimacy that enables them to influence the media. Support for doing this comes via the Programme funding grants to translate materials and advice as to how to interest the media. The specialist meetings have also been a strategy for engaging decision-makers and other NGOs in dialogue, and considerable media interest comes from the attendance of representatives from international organisations. The third indicator is evidence from case studies of raised awareness at the local and national levels. Generally most partners appreciate the value of good media relationships. Recent examples are the Education and Minority Rights Workshop that was covered by regional television in Vojovodin, and the Power-Sharing Workshop in Tetevo that led to three interviews on national television for the Director of the Programme's local partner (ADI). Many illustrations can be given as to how the research on shadow reports raises awareness of minorities across a spectrum of local actors. For example, during the implementation of the FCNM in Vojvodin province of Serbia and Montenegro, the director of the local partner (VCHR) was invited to give a lecture at the prestigious law faculty at the University of Novi Sad, and to participate as a representative of Serbia and Montenegro in international educational forums. The fourth OVI refers to evidence at the regional and international levels as to how the Programme has increased knowledge of minorities. At the regional level the large number of submitted shadow reports suggest that there is an increased regional awareness of the importance of FCNM. The issue of double standards is now prominent (that while all the States of SEE have ratified the Convention, three EU members have not). At the international level following the workshop in Sofia on Minorities and Development, MRG submitted a Working Paper to the UNWGM. This paper has significantly contributed to a deepening understanding of the issue, and has resulted in regional and global advocacy strategies targeting developmental organisations. Another example has been 'recognition'. Following a regional meeting on these issues and its importance to minorities, an intervention was delivered in the UNWGM by one of MRG's local partners and in the Working Group the issues was recognised as an issues of special importance.

4.9 The second output was **'To ensure co-operation between representatives of different communities throughout the region to practically address the problems**

in implementing minority rights standards'. There are two OVIs for this output. The first indicator is that MRG provides forums at which people from different communities and countries can work together, and that good practice and strategies are shared. As the first part of this section showed, the Programme has delivered the activities as planned: in the context of this output it ran 4 Regional ARTS which have brought together activists from across the region; three thematic workshops, and two specialist meetings. In all these events the evaluations show that the majority of participants made a large number of contacts. Sharing of good practice is built into the methodology of the events. The second indicator is evidence that shows links have developed among different communities, and that some of these have resulted in working relationships. Partners now co-organise events and communicate with other partners independently of MRG. For example, networks have been established by NGOs in Montenegro (12 local organisations), and in Macedonia (ROMASEE). Cooperation at the regional level in SEE is still limited however, largely as an effect of recent conflicts. MRG's activities have brought together activists from across the region, though, this is mainly at planning and evaluation meetings and regional events.

4.10   The third output is **'That the capacity of the partner organisations and other participating individuals (and organisations) to promote effective implementation of domestic and international minority right standards through advocacy and rights training and consultancy, is strengthened.'** There are two logframe indicators. First, that the knowledge, skills and motivation of partners is of sufficient level that they can promote minority rights, and that the Programme has significantly contributed to this capacity. Increasingly over the period of the Programme partners have taken on responsibility for the events. For example, ADI organised the Tetevo Workshop on Power Sharing; ASK trains government officials, ADI monitors the implementation of the FCNM in Macedonia; five representatives of partner organisations have made interventions at international forums following training by MRG. Partners themselves have recognised their increased capacity at the planning meetings in September 2002 when it was decided that in Phase II they would organise more events with only limited support from MRG. The second indicator is evidence of how Programme consultancy has resulted in specific outcomes. The submissions of high quality shadow reports is one type of example.. In Albania the Helsinki Committee produced a report that to a large extent was incorporated into the State report. MRG advised IEI (Bulgaria) on planning a shadow report and also advised the Government Office for National Minorities on the process of preparing the State Report and how to involve minorities. Other examples are: n Croatia MRG's consultant was invited to lead the CoE's Delegation and to make a public speech with the deputy primeminister; and in Bulgaria MRG supported another of its local partners, DROM, in Vidin and Gova Delchev, to work to desegregate Roma only schools.

4.11   The fourth output is **'That partner organisation, and MRG itself, will bring local problems to domestic policy and international forums, and vice versa'.** There are four indicators. First, that activists will use the networks and skills they develop to bring local problems to domestic forums. At least 10 partners have acted as advisers to their own government, and the influence of shadow reports on state reports, is clear. In Croatia, for example, working with other actors, MRG and its partners influenced the highly regarded new Constitutional Law on Minorities. The second indicator is the participation of members of minorities at international forums. Evidence here is that 8 representatives of partners attended advocacy training and then engaged in advocacy at the CoE and UNWGM; some of those trained on the FCNM have gone onto senior

positions of influence in government including Branislaw Milinkov, who is the Serbia/Montenegro Ambassador to the OSCE. The third indicator is that MRG will advocate for minorities in SEE and international forums. This is an on-going strategy for MRG who target all relevant bodies: in particular OSCE, EU, Council of Europe, and the UN. The most recent success is the precedent-setting commitment by UNMIX to submit a State Report on implementation of the FCNM in Kosova, and its request for consultancy support from MRG in order to do this. The fourth indicator is that awareness has been raised of the importance of taking work done at the international level back to the domestic level. This is a basic link that is built into the multi-level advocacy training. A specific example is ADI in Macedonia where the Shadow Report on implementation of the FCNM influenced the agenda for the Ohrid Agreement.

4.12 The above has shown that there is good evidence that each of the four outputs have, to a large extent, been achieved. In other words the 8 component activities have enabled the 4 Programme objectives to be reached. The next 'test' of impact is to assess whether the achievement of these outputs has led to the fulfillment of the Programme Purpose **.** This **PURPOSE** (i.e. the overall Programme Objective) was **'To strengthen human right and minority organisations in SE Europe in order that through actions at the local, national and international levels, and through inter-community cooperation, they can promote minority rights in the region'.**

4.13 This evaluation has tried to assess the overall impact by using two perspectives. First, by taking the 'logic' of the logframe and seeing if it has fulfilled the 4 outcomes and achieved the overall purpose. Second, by working with partner organisations and helping them to analyse 'what difference' the programme has made. The value of this second perspective is that it enables partners to draw their assessments from **their logic**, and to illustrate where the unexpected opportunities (and threats), that were not envisaged in the logframe plan, have been of importance.

4.14 First, taking the logframe there were three indicators(OVIs) as to whether the Programme has achieved its overall **PURPOSE.** A key success indicator was the creation of a 'critical mass' of organisations in SEE who have the skills, motivation and resources to take forward minority rights issues. Many of the partners are relatively small in staffing and budgets, and this obviously is a potential constraint. However, the actual number of active partners has grown from the original 20 to 26, and the output indicators showed that they are increasingly taking responsibility for the organisation and implementation of activities. This has involved partners learning how to prepare funding applications and financial reports (which enhances their ability to relate to international bodies). They have also strengthened their organisational skills in long-term planning; coordination of local and regional events with other NGOs and INGOs; in the design and conceptualising of agenda on local, regional and international actions; recruiting participants on the basis of equitable representation of all relevant ethnic groups; conducting the follow-up activities and maintaining networks. Sustainability is now much more likely as partners are in a position to carry out many of the functions previously done by MRG staff. So in terms of 'has the Programme made a difference ' to the capacity of partner organisations, the assessment is positive. It has had a major effect on creating a body of organisations that can take forward the overall goal of promoting minority rights and enabling sustainable conflict resolution.

4.15 The second indicator is evidence of inter-community cooperation, and inter-agency networking and support, which results in positive achievements of the partners

own organisational goals. The examination of the outputs shows that this has taken place. During the evaluation by MRG of the activities, partners often cite inter-community cooperation as the most useful aspect. MRG tries to ensure equitable representation of minorities, and partners attitudes demonstrate the success of this approach. Cooperation is seen especially in the production of the shadow reports. The third indicator is evidence of partners using international forums and instruments. Again, the examination of the outputs has shown that at least 6 major strategies have had an effect:-

- Interventions at the UN Working Group on Minorities and CHR
- Production of Shadow reports on State compliance with international mechanisms
- Lobbying international organisation's delegations
- Putting pressure on national governments by revealing lack of compliance with international standards in awareness- raising campaigns
- Training government officials on international instruments
- Training other actors e.g. NGOs, lawyers and academics on the use of the instruments.

4.16 The second perspective on impact is provided by the collection of data made directly from the partners. There were two main sources- a two- day meeting in Budapest with six partner organisations; and an in-depth interview with the Director of one of the most active partners-ADI (Association of Development Initiatives)- in Macedonia. Two techniques were used: with the group of partners they worked on building up an 'impact grid'; with ADI the evaluator facilitated the partner to describe the development of his organisation during the period of the MRG Programme.

4.17 During the mid-term review ADI was used as a case study to show how its participation in the Programme had affected its ability to bring about change. This case study has now been updated to show what happened during the period 2001 to 2003. The results are presented in Appendix D. In the first half of the Programme ADI staff attended an ARTS workshop in Budapest, and this began their understanding of the potential for using international instruments. ADI established a Shadow Report team, and a first draft was sent to the key government ministries. During this period the Director assessed that the intensive support by the MRG team was critical in helping them to plan what was needed. The Report was submitted to the Council of Europe's Secretariat of the Advisory Committee for the FCNM, and minority political representatives started to use the report in their work. Another early use came from a meeting with the Macedonian-Albanian MP in the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE. He submitted four amendments in the Assembly drawn from the Shadow Report's recommendations, and these were adopted by the Assembly (the use of the FCNM as a strategy for change is shown diagramatically in Appendix G).

4.18 Soon after the mid-term review the conflict in Macedonia began. ADI's role became especially important at this time. Both inside and outside the country the partner had become recognised for its expertise and good reputation. This enabled them to respond in a number of ways during the troubles. ADI set up an information centre, and published 10,000 copies of a daily newsheet. This helped to 'stop rumours', while the distribution points were also used by NGOs as food distribution centres. ADI became an important channel for dialogue between the communities. After the Ohrid Framework

Agreement was signed the importance of ADI's role was officially recognised in that they became responsible for the monitoring of two of the dimensions of the agreement: the involvement of the non majority community in public administration, and language usage. By January 2003 they had published three monitoring reports. The partner has also been able to bring attention to the discrimination in development. After researching the issue of returning ethnic minorities from Germany they has published a report on the issue. In the near future they are hoping to get consultative status at the UN.

4.19   The ADI case study provides a good example of how the partnership with the MRG Programme has enabled them to develop and become an effective agent of change. The conflict in Macedonia and ADI's role could not have been predicted in the original planning, but the Programme had given them the capacity to respond when dramatic events in the country occurred. Of course the Programme cannot take sole credit for ADI's ability, but as the Director said:
'In 1999 I took part in an ARTS workshop, and that was the start of my learning. Without the MRG Programme we would not know about the Framework Convention or achieving consultative status at the UN. We had hardly heard of the UN till the Programme!'
The Programme has acted as a catalyst for this quite small NGO enabling it to receive training and consultancy support. The full range of the Programme's activities and outputs can be seen at work in this one partner.

4.20   The second source of direct partner assessment was the building up of an impact grid. The method and results are shown in Appendix E. Each partner assessed the effect of the Programme on their capacity to operate as a NGO; their ability to network and relate to other actors; and their ability to bring about change. They were able to provide mini case- studies of how the Programme had strengthened their organisational competence in all three of these dimensions. Thirteen case studies are briefly described in the Appendix. These examples are important because most of the potential impact of the Programme does not come from the actions and achievements of MRG; most is intended to come through the achievements of the partners. So the critical factor (the 'hinge factor' which determines success or failure) is the partners' ability to deliver change. This ability is not dependent solely on their knowledge and skills in advocacy, international instruments or minority rights issues. It is also determined by such mundane things as money, staffing, physical resources, contacts and reputation. In the earlier part of the section it was shown that 'consultancies' (component 5), was the largest single activity for MRG staff in terms of time. The case studies show that this activity is vitally important and has had an effect in all organisational dimensions, namely 'to be', 'to do' and 'to relate'. It is interesting to note that none described any negative impacts as a consequence of their participation in the Programme.

4.21   Finally, in examining the question:' has the Programme made a difference?' an assessment needs to be made of progress towards achieving the longer-term development objective of the Programme i.e. the **GOAL.**

4.22   The MRG Programme team were asked to take a 'helicopter ride' over the region and assess to what extent minority rights and intercommunity co-operation is being promoted, and the effect this is having on sustainable conflict prevention and resolution as a pre-requisite for democratic consolidation and long- term sustainable development. In particular they were asked to look at the three OVIs that are indicators of change. Their analysis is shown in Appendix I.

4.23   The situation of minorities has improved since the start of the Programme and this is seen in the advances made in State recognition and the ratification and adoption of international standards. MRG identify 8 indicators of progress. However, there are still severe problems: large numbers of displaced persons and refugees are unable to return home; minorities in UN-administered Kosovo face violence; across the region police brutality is rife, discrimination and lack of participation of minorities in public life remains; and on-going ethnic tensions remain. Yet, the eight indicators show that there has been an improvement across the region. As one of the actors MRG and its Programme has contributed to this process but it is impossible to disentangle the impact of the Programme's work from that of the other organisations working towards the same goal. MRG has certainly raised awareness of the position of minorities and strengthened the capacity of NGOs to put pressure on their government in order to improve protection both in law and in practice. This has been combined with exerting pressure through advocacy at national and international levels. A prerequisite for change is the creation of trust and reconciliation and the Programme has helped to do this by bringing people together from different communities.

4.24   Though the implementation of standards adopted remains a problem, MRG agree with international observers that there are signs of improvement. For example there is a greater commitment by politicians to implement minority rights standards, as shown by the incorporation of international standards into national law and cooperation in international forums. This is certainly a positive change compared to the flouting of international humanitarian standards that happened in the 1990s.Another positive sign is the willingness of governments to deal with NGOs, and their recognition of the expertise that NGOS can offer. Where implementation has improved MRG assess that it is in part a result of the Programme. There are many examples of governments calling upon the Programme partners to provide expertise where they lack skills and knowledge.

4.25   Although MRG and the Programme are not primarily concerned with conflict resolution, it has always been an aspect of the work because in conflict and post conflict situations minorities are vulnerable, and because lack of respect or recognition of rights can lead to conflict. In SEE, the Programme has played a role in tempering conflict. There has been an evolution of conflict resolution mechanisms. This is shown by comparing the Dayton Agreement, Kosovo peace settlement and the Ohrid Agreement. In this area the Programme's influence can be seen. For example, the Shadow Report produced by ADI had an effect to the extent that ADI are monitoring aspects of the peace settlement. There is certainly strong evidence, which shows greater cooperation between groups than when the Programme started. The most recent workshop on Power Sharing demonstrates this. It was held in Tetevo and brought together members of the Macedonian government, important leaders of the Albanian community and NGOs. MRG highlight that a good indicator of the strength of the partner network that has been built up before, and during the life of the Programme, is that the network survived the conflict in Kosova and in Macedonia, and during each crisis regional events brought together representatives of the different communities.

Were these the right things to do?

4.26   If achieving an answer to the question: 'Has the Programme made any difference?' is difficult, then to answer the question: 'Were these the right things to do?' is an even greater challenge. It is harder to answer because it is a question about strategy and methodology, and whether the ones adopted by the Programme are the most effective in achieving the long-term goal and purpose. This is dependent on being able to assess impact, and to make judgements about potential strategies and methods that have not been adopted. In attempting to answer the question this evaluation review has drawn from a number of sources: - the views of the partner organisations; guidance from the Consultative Group; the opinions of key external actors such as the OSCE, CoE, views of academics and consultants; an assessment of the Programme's internal logic; and perhaps most important of all, the Programme's own answer to this question, drawing from its reflections and learning.

4.27   One of the core strengths of the Programme was that its conception and birth derived from the priority needs of the minority communities as articulated by a series of planning meetings in the region. This culminated in the report 'Minorities in South- East Europe: Inclusion and Exclusion'. This joint needs analysis has been a characteristic of each stage of the Programme. For example, in April 2002 a Planning Meeting was held to decide the period upto September 2005. Thus it can be argued that the strategies and methods are a result of the felt needs of the partners (and who better to know the priorities of the minority communities than them?). If this is the case than an examination of how the proposed Phase II differs from the Programme to date, will give some indication of the answer to the question: 'were these the right things to do?'. The strategy is broadly the same; the difference being primarily to enable partners to take on more responsibility for organising and running the training and workshops. So training of trainers, regional ARTs, and in-country ARTS focussing on specific participants and issues, will be important. The specialist meetings will become information seminars; workshops that answer identifiable needs such as data collection will be run; and community impact studies made at both the micro and macro levels. There will also be a greater effort to work with the EU. So the conclusion must be that the partners believe that the basic direction, and content of the Programme , is valid (this will be discussed further in the next section).

4.28   The Programme's Consultative Group's Terms of Reference is to identify areas where domestic, regional and international policies on minority rights need to be strengthened or implemented more effectively, and where regional bodies need to influence government. There have been three meetings of the Group during the life of the Programme. The last was in October 2001. This meeting, was made up of 17 stakeholders (staff of MRG, DFID, FCO, OSCE and four partners) and identified issues and ideas for action. This is a potentially very valuable forum, because it enables the Programme implementors to hear the views of people who can bring an outside perspective. At the last meeting 11 issues were raised. Some were new; many had already been recognised by the Programme but an aspect of the issues or new development was focussed upon. Unfortunately, these issues were not prioritised or discussed in operational terms. In other words, it was valuable to identify them but does not help to answer the question:-'but what strategies and methods does the Programme need to adopt to address the most critical of these issues?'. This is a lost opportunity (and will be discussed under 'Issues Arising').

4.29.   The views of the key interlocutors are also valuable here. Organisations like SIDA recognise the importance of the underpinning methodology i.e. that MRG's expertise is brought into partnership with local organisations in order to empower them to bring about change at the local, national and international levels. For SIDA, an issue is the need to develop evaluation methodologies that will help to develop a comprehensive tool for evaluating impact of human rights projects in general, and minority projects in particular. The UN Working Group on Minorities commented during the mid-term review, and again at this stage, that from their perspective the strategy of strengthening the capacity of local actors is still valid and effective. The NGO representations to the Working Group has increased in quality and they believe this is directly attributable to the Programme (or at least to this Programme and MRG's wider global work. The one change that they have consistently urged is the need for MRG to have a presence in Geneva in order to follow-up actions, and to raise awareness of minority rights issues with other Geneva based agencies. The Directorate General for Human Rights within the CoE also assess that the Programme has been a key factor in promoting the submission of shadow reports, and the NGO Guide has been a valuable tool in promoting NGO involvement in the monitoring process. The quality of the reviews has certainly been improved by the MRG training and support. They also see the importance of the Programme's ability to make links between the NGO community and the members of the FCNM Advisory Committee. Another key player- the HCNM, within the OSCE- believes that the current objectives of the Programme very much complement and support their goals and activities. With the aim of achieving on-going security and stability in SEE, they assess that the creation of ' self-sustaining local regimes for the protection of minorities and the management of inter-ethnic relations is fundamental'. To this end, the Programme can be seen as comprising a 'bottom-up' approach, while their (HCNM) work is essentially in a 'top-down' fashion. In addition, while the HCNM must maintain a strict impartiality to fulfil its role, MRG can pro-actively support advocacy with a view to assisting groups to claim and realise their rights through peaceful means. Another interesting comment from OSCE is that in transitional societies in SEE the 'nascent elements of civil society need to be nurtured over time through contacts with reliable and sometimes courageous external parties (who may also afford a kind of protection and be a beacon)'. Vital, they believe, in this respect is sustainability. This is a process: ' MRG can provide the ingredients, but they need to be supported over some time'.

4.30   The internal 'logic' of the Programme's logframe is another factor to consider. It appears valid in that the achievement of the 8 component activities will potentially achieve the 4 outputs, and that the outputs potentially can achieve the Programme's purpose. This was not the case with the Programme's initial logframe but during the mid-term review a revised logframe was agreed, and that is the one being used since. In the original logframe the purpose of the Programme (i.e. the overall objective) had not been made explicit. This was a serious omission because it is the 'purpose' which is the logical link between what the Programme will do, and achieve in terms of results, and how these things deliver a benefit which overtime, and with other actors, will achieve the longer term impact. The missing link here is the underpinning strategy of the Programme: that this is primarily a capacity building project aimed at supporting local partners so that they, in partnership with MRG, can bring about change. This strategy is based on a 'conceptual framework' (an explanation for why minorities do not have full and recognised rights). This conceptual framework has not been made explicit in any of the formal Programme documents, and so has to be discerned from the strategies and

methods. At its simplest, the explanation suggested by the content of the Programme is that the rights of minorities are not adequately on the agenda of the majority communities; and that though these rights may exist in law, governments (and other powerful groups) need to be made aware of the issues and to have pressure placed on them. This can partly be done at the international level using international instruments, but it needs effective NGOs to be the catalyst for this change, both by working within their own country and by working in collaboration with others. If this interpretation of the Programme's conceptual framework is correct then the fundamental aspect of the question: 'Were these the right things to have done?', can only be answered by going back one stage in the analysis and asking: 'but is this explanation correct?' In other words is the strengthening of human rights organisations in SEE the critical methodology in promoting minority rights?

4.31   It is very difficult for this evaluation to answer that question, and the reasons for this will be discussed in the next section. But the most important assessment should rest with those who **'own'** the Programme, because it is the owners who are the most important stakeholders in defining 'success'. The owners are the 26 partner organisations and MRG (and ultimately the minority people themselves). Given that a core value of the Programme is partner participation, and given that the proposed Phase II is similar to Phase I, it can be inferred that the owners do assess that the Programme is 'doing the right things'. But there is something missing here. For the staff and partners to be confident (and for an outside observer to be confident), that the strategies and methodology have an external validity, it needs the Programme to have applied the learning from the evaluation processes to refining the conceptual framework, and made explicit how the experience over the last three years confirms or modifies the original explanation of why minorities have a problem. Of course for the staff and partners who eat, sleep, and live the Programme's activities, they experience at gut level what things are working and which are not. But if the lessons are to be shared and open to being 'tested', then the learning needs to be accessible to others. It needs to be written down.

5. ISSUES ARISING

5.1   A number of issues have emerged during this evaluation. These have been grouped under four headings.Throughout this section reference will be made to the issues identified in the mid-term review to see what changes have happened in the subsequent two years.

Programme Effectiveness

5.2   This has been an ambitious Programme, working in a complex region, and with a challenging Programme purpose and overall development goal. What has been achieved is impressive. With all projects, but especially such an innovative one as this, it is essential that those involved build in processes of time to regularly review, reflect and learn. It is only by doing this that the question can be answered:
                    'Has the Programme made a difference?'

5.3   The mid –term review commented that within the Programme team there existed a 'culture of intense activity' but too little time for monitoring, evaluation, learning and sharing this learning. The consequence was that the underlying conceptual framework (i.e. the analysis and explanation for why minorities are discriminated against, and what can be done about it), has not been **explicitly** recorded or communicated to those outside the Programme. It is important to do this because such an analysis identifies what methodologies are being used by the partners, and which are having the greatest effect. This in turn can be used to systematically build up a body of understanding about effective interventions.

5.4   More still needs to be done to consolidate learning, but the Programme, and MRG as an organisation, have achieved a significant strengthening of their ability to assess impact. As an organisation there is now a commitment to report on outcomes rather than just outputs ('on the actual impact of our work rather than the immediate product'- MRG, Annual Report on Activities January to December, 2002. P5). So there is now an organisational context that can support the Programme in this direction. Within the Programme itself the team report that the conceptual understanding that was developed at the time of the initial Programme proposal has been modified throughout the three years.They believe it has evolved to reflect both the changing political context, and the lessons learned from their internal evaluations. For example, as a result of greater levels of stability and institution building in the region it became possible to do more in-country work (i.e. partner-led activities such as in-country ARTS and follow-ups to all events). Stability was a pre-requisite for one of the most significant political developments in SEE: the inclusion of a number of countries in the EU Accession process. Similarly, it allowed the focus of attention on the region to start the move from conflict resolution to development. These changes were incorporated into the thinking of the Programme, which in turn, say the staff, resulted in the adaption of the activities into the proposals for a second phase.

5.5   Since the mid -term review the Programme has increased the time and opportunity available to review Programme activities. This has involved making sure all workshops and training activities, get feedback from the participants during, at the end, and after, the event, and that staff self-evaluate what happened. There are regular planning and evaluation meetings with partners, and the design of Phase II has involved

partners prioritising their felt needs. The ways that Phase II will be different also indicates where the learning has taken place. For example, that training, especially in international advocacy is judged to be the most effective strategies for addressing minority protection; an increased recognition of the importance of providing opportunities for international advocacy, and the recognition that given the changing context, the Programme needs to increase the importance it gives to development issues and socio-economic rights.

5.6   Thus there are good indications that learning, and improvements to the Programme as a consequence of this learning, have taken place over the last two years, but the changes need to continue into any subsequent phase. It is taking place but it is not easy for the outsider to know or to understand the changing conceptual framework. This learning needs to be made explicit and accessible to all, both inside and outside. To achieve this, changes to the basic understanding of the issues needs to be written down and communicated to others. This is an important strategy to improve MRG's work, but also to strengthen the Programme's multiplier effect on other development actors (especially those engaged in democracy and governance initiatives).

5.7   In order to facilitate strategy development the Programme needs an external resource. The Consultative Group is currently providing the Programme team with a list of issues that are emerging as important in the region and sector. What it is not doing is reviewing learning and effectiveness and giving guidance as to new strategies. The current group is probably not able to do this, as it is large in number; meets irregularly, and has a floating membership. An alternative to the Consultative Group could be an Advisory Group whose terms of reference would be to help the Programme review learning and identify effective methodologies. It would probably need to consist of fewer members (say less than ten), who would commit to attend the meeting for the life of the second phase, and meet twice yearly. The Group would need a well-structured agenda centred around 'learning from the last six months', and which leads to prioritised strategic advice.

Partner Effectiveness

5.8   The underpinning concept of the Programme is that the long-term development goal can be achieved by a marriage between MRG's organisational competence in international advocacy, and the ability of minority organisations to bring about change at the local, national and regional levels. In other words that the Programme works through partners. The achievement of the Programme's goal is dependent on the effectiveness of these partner organisations, and how well they are able to achieve **their organisational goals.** If they are weak the Programme's ability to support change is severely constrained. For the sake of a nail a horseshoe was lost, and eventually the kingdom. For the sake of funding, strategy development, management skills and staffing, the partner organisations may not be able to exploit opportunities irrespective of whether they have the advocacy skills, networks, publications and good reputation. Critical mass and organisational capacity are two key success factors in this Programme.

5.9   The number of active partners has grown over the last two years to 26; this is at least two per target country. Some of these organisations are very small, while the forces at work influencing minority rights are complex and powerful. The partners can be seen as catalysts within minority communities, and as influencing other actors such as government, INGOs and NGOs. Many of the Programme components are aimed at

encouraging the multiplier effect to take place (e.g. training of trainers, the in-country ARTS, the publication of materials etc). But it is likely that the Programme will need to engage yet more organisations to take part (or grow the capacity of the current ones) to establish a powerful force for change.

5.10 After the mid-term review the issue of organsiational development support was discussed at the MRG Council. It was decided that MRG should not expand its activities to cover areas where it does not have expertise since there are other INGOs better qualified to provide certain types of capacity building support. This judgement may be right, but it does not alter the fact that if the partners are weak they will not be effective agents of change, and probably not sustainable organisations. A solution needs to be found. The Programme could conduct, or commission, work with the partners to audit their capacity and identify their organisational constraints. It would then be possible to see how the consultancy component of the proposed second phase could best use the resources available to meet these needs, and how other regional organisation-development agencies can be enabled to work with partners. Helping partners to raise diverse sources of funding is likely to be one need, but strengthening skills in strategy development, management of people and money, are also likely to emerge from this capacity audit.

Staff Resourcing of the Programme

5.11 A concern during the mid-term review was the insufficient MRG staffing level for the Programme, and the danger of 'burn-out' among the team. Staffing has increased since 2001. There is now an equivalent of two programme co-ordinators,one full-time and one working four days a week; one full-time programme officer and two days of additional administrative assistance, divided between the Budapest and London offices. Staffing is planned to remain more or less at this level in any subsequent phase, although it will be possible to co-opt more administrative staff as needed. An increasing amount of responsibility for on-going events has been delegated to partners, and this therefore, should allow for a prioritisation of time among the staff team on certain of the key activity components. MRG senior management have taken seriously the issue of over work. In addition to the extra people, they have supported two of the team members to take sabbaticals during this last year.

Sustainability

5.12 Sustainability in this context is not whether the Diversity and Democracy Programme as a project is sustainable; every project has a finite life. The issue is whether the strategies to achieve the longer-term development impact of the Programme are sustainable. This is dependent on the partner organisations.

5.13 As one of the staff at an international agency commented during the evaluation: 'the nascent elements of civil society need to be nurtured through contacts with reliable and sometimes courageous external partners…MRG can provide the ingredients, but they need to be supported over some time.'(OSCE). One three-year project is not a long time to establish a critical mass of local activists. The results of the evaluation have shown that the strategies are achieving the intended results, and that there are already many examples of positive outcomes. A second three-year phase will enable the partners, networks and other participating actors, to increase their capacity. Two main

issues emerged during the mid-term review, and again during this Project Completion report. First, the need to develop systematic processes of learning and strategy development (and the sharing of this with partners and external people). Second, support to strengthen the organisational capacity of partners. If these two things can be achieved there can be confidence that at the end of a second phase there will be a sustainable change processes at work that will achieve the Programme's development goal.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1   This has been an innovatory, and ambitious project. The underpinning development strategy has been that of a 'marriage' between an international NGO with a strong expertise in minority rights and advocacy, and the use of international instruments; and a number of local NGOs whose primary core competence is their knowledge of minority issues within their home country. This strategy is built on an understanding of why minorities face discrimination. Expressed as its simplest this conceptual analysis is ' that the lack of rights, in law or in implementation, is critical in explaining the problems faced by minorities in SE Europe, and that strengthening human and minority rights organisations is the most important strategy in promoting these rights'.

6.2   From this understanding, and through an extensive consultation process the design of the Programme evolved. It has consisted of eight major activity components, working towards the achievement of four outputs, which together will achieve the purpose (of 'strengthening human rights and minority rights organisations…in order that they…can promote minority rights in the region'). The achievement of this purpose, with other actors, and over a period of time, will establish sustainable conflict prevention and resolution, which is a prerequisite for democratic consolidation and sustainable development.

6.3   Did the Programme do what it said it would do? Yes. It has delivered the eight activity components, and the quality of these activities has been high. There has been a commitment to monitoring, and to participatory evaluation, at every stage. The Programme has broadly kept to the original design and logframe, but it has adapted, when appropriate, to changes in the external context. Willingness by DFID to be flexible has meant that any changes have been agreed with MRG. For example the extension of the period to March 2003.

6.4   Assessing impact is a challenge, but by drawing upon the assessments of a range of stakeholders (the MRG team, partners, consultants, and key international actors), it has been possible to show that the four Programme outputs (the four 'objectives') have largely been achieved, as has the overall purpose. Many examples and case studies can illustrate how the local partners, and the other participating individuals and organisations, have used the knowledge, skills and support, acquired during the Programme to bring about change, or prepare the ground for change. One of the Programme's partners in Macedonia (ADI), shows this organisational growth very well. It has worked with others to produce a Shadow Report; translated materials and publications; organised workshops that have brought together politicians and leaders from both the majority and minority communities; researched issues such as access to micro-credit for returning ethnic minorities, and been able, during the period of tension and conflict, to be a communication channel. Its competence and good reputation is recognised by others and it now has an important monitoring role of aspects of the Ohrid peace settlement. The Director of this organisation is clear that much of this could not have happened without the existence of the Programme.

6.5   Therefore, it can be assessed, with some degree of confidence, that the Programme is likely to be a major contributor to achieving the longer-term development goal of providing minority rights and inter-community cooperation to enable sustainable

conflict prevention and resolution. The situation of minorities has improved since the start of the Programme and this is seen in the advances made in State recognition, and the ratification and adoption of international standards. As part of this evaluation MRG identified eight indicators where progress has been made. The Programme is only one 'catalyst for change', and it is difficult to disentangle the impact of the Programme's work from those of others working towards the same goal, but there is enough evidence to say that the Programme 'has made a difference'.

6.6 Were these the right things to do? The position of minorities in SEE has a long history; the processes at work are many, inter-related, and complex. Every project has limited resources and takes place over a finite time. Therefore, an important but extremely difficult question to answer is, whether the strategies of the Programme have been valid, and whether the activities have been the most effective to achieve the purpose. It is only the stakeholders, who can answer this question, because it is they who are the definers of 'programme success'.

6.7 The Programme's design was based on an extensive consultation with a range of activists in the region. Some of those consulted formed the basis of the partner group. Since then, there has been regular planning and evaluation meetings, and this indicates that from the partner's perspective the Programme is reflecting their identified needs (and derives from their analysis of the 'problem' and its solutions). The Programme's Consultative Group is another stakeholder. There is no evidence that they have ever challenged the underpinning methodology.Their contributions relate to the changing external environment and issues that are emerging. The assessment of the key interlocutors is important here, as it is this group who stand outside the Programme, and are able to offer an independent view. All of the representatives of the bodies who responded to the evaluation believed that the underpinning methodology was right. They referred to the strength of the approach as it brought together the organisational competence and reputation of MRG with local actors. Many also said that this complemented their own organisational strategy.

6.8 The internal 'logic' of the logframe is another indicator that can be assessed to answer this question. The logic does appear to be valid. The achievement of the eight activities will potentially achieve the four outputs; and the outputs will achieve the purpose. This was not the case with the Programme's initial logframe but during the mid-term review a revised logframe was agreed. In the original plan the purpose (i.e. overall Programme objective) had not been stated. This was a serious omission because it is the purpose which is the logical link between what the Programme will do, and achieve in terms of tangible results, and how these things deliver, overtime, and with other actors, the long-term and sustainable impact. The missing link had been the core strategy: that is the capacity building of partners, and other actors, in order to enable them to be catalysts of change. Since the mid-term review, the Programme has this project clarity, and it has been possible to assess the validity of the approach. As shown above the stakeholders of this Programme, and its own internal logic, does lead to an assessment that the underpinning methodology and activities, are the right ones.

6.9 However, this does not mean that the Programme, and any subsequent phase, could not been made even more effective. Two main weaknesses were identified in the mid-term review, and again during this Project Completion Report. The first of these is learning. For a project (or organisation) to grow in effectiveness, it needs the underlying theoretical understanding to be made explicit, and therefore, open to discussion and

challenge. This analysis needs to evolve as the strategies are implemented and evaluated. But this type of learning does not just 'happen'. It needs to be part of the project's culture and prioritised. There is a commitment to monitoring and evaluation, but not adequate mechanisms for systematically identifying what things are having the greatest effect, and how changes in the external environment are leading to an alteration in the original conceptual analysis. The Consultative Group could potentially contribute to this process, but its membership is large, and not consistent. Therefore, a smaller Advisory Group, that meets six -monthly, and has a mandate to facilitate learning, and to help the team identify priority strategies, is being recommended.

6.10   A positive development since the mid-term review, is the commitment by MRG, as an organisation, to measure impact. The 'Annual Report on Activities for 2002 'is a major step in trying to assess what the MRG programme's are achieving in terms of 'outcomes'. So there is now a supportive organisational context which can encourage any second phase to be more impact and learning oriented.

6.11   An indicator of whether the changes are taking place in any continuation of the work, will be that the learning will be made explicit in reports and documents, and that these are distributed among other interested organisations and activists.

6.12   The second Programme concern relates to partner effectiveness. Because the achievements of the development goal are dependent on the effectiveness of partners, and how well they are able to achieve their own organisational strategies, their weaknesses will constrain what can be done. Even if there is an agreement with DFID to support a second phase, with finite resources of money and time, the continuation will primarily need to be about achieving a 'critical capacity' of activists who can work with minorities and other actors to achieve change. The outputs delivered by the eight activity components are a major contribution to this capacity, but they are not sufficient. As one partner said during the review 'I attended a workshop and came away with 14 important things that my organisation should do, but we don't have the resources to do any of them'. MRG is not a donor agency; its organisational competence is not in organisational development, but to ignore the problem will not make it go away. The lack of partner capacity is the weak link in the achievement of the Programme goal.

6.13   One practical improvement that could be made in a second phase is to allocate more of the Programme's budget to the consultancy component. Any subsequent phase should start with an organisational 'capacity audit'. The Programme could fund a regional consultant to work with the partners to help them identify what things are constraining their work, and identify practical areas of support (e.g.OD advice, strategic planning training, networking, introductions to funders etc), that can, in part, be supported by the Programme over the next few years.

6.14   Finally, is the assessment of sustainability. As discussed in the 'Issues Arising', this is not whether a second phase of the 'Diversity and Democracy Programme' will be sustainable as a project, but whether the change -processes supported will continue after the Programme ends. A second phase needs a shift of emphasis- a shift from establishing a 'critical mass of partners', to a critical mass of capacity' among partners, other local NGOs, minority communities, international organisations etc, to act as catalysts of change with those who have the power to take or effect decisions. As the representative of OSCE commented, the elements of civil society need to be 'nurtured' and supported over some time. This requires a continuation of the types of capacity

building that has already been given but done in different ways. For example, already proposed in the second phase is the delegation of responsibility for some of the existing activities to local partners. This will encourage the multiplication of the strategies within the region but with the minimal of direct help from the MRG team. It also requires the team to more proactively address the two weaknesses, namely being systematic in evaluation and learning; and finding new ways of helping partners to increase their organisational capacity.

6.15 The Project Completion Review confirms that the Programme has done what it said it would do; it is having a positive impact on the critical processes affecting minority people, and it is following a methodology which stakeholders assess as valid and relevant. In the language of the logframe the overall project assessment as to outputs and purpose is that they 'have largely been achieved', and there is good evidence that these achievements have set in motion a process that over the longer-term will deliver the goal of the project. Given this analysis the main recommendation to DFID is that they should provide funding for a second phase of the Programme subject to changes being implemented as described in the recommendations.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

To DFID:

1) That DFID support a continuation of the Diversity and Democracy Programme into a second phase of three years.
2) That the Phase II logframe should show clearly how the outcomes will build on Phase I to achieve the promotion of minorities in the region.

To the Programme if a Phase II is implemented:

3) That the Consultative Group be replaced by an Advisory Group whose terms of reference will be to support the Programme to 'evaluate, draw out learning and to develop strategy'.
4) That the MRG team incorporate review activities that enable them and the partners to assess programme effectiveness, and to systematically identify the important change strategies.This learning to be made available to others via reports and publications.
5) That the organisational development support to partners be increased. A second phase should begin with an 'organistaional development audit' among the partners in order to identify the most important areas where they require support. Resources to the consultancy component of Phase II needs to be adequate to provide facilitation and advice to partners.

To MRG Senior Management:

6) That senior management must ensure that sufficient staffing and support be made available (if a second phase is implemented). This support should cover staffing but also management support to ensure that staff do not 'burnout' from the intense activity of the Programme.
7) That MRG as an organisation continues its commitment to measuring the impact of its work. Specifically, senior management need to provide the means for all their projects to measure outcomes, and to use this learning as a basis for increasing programme effectiveness (in order that it becomes 'the way we do things round here').

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Terms of Reference

Project Completion Report
SouthEast Europe:Diversity and Democracy Programme
Minority Rights Group

Background

DFID has been supporting the work of Minority Rights Group in South Eastern Europe on a three-year programme to promote human rights. DFID funding will finish on 31 March 2003. The goal of the programme has been to promote minority rights and intercommunity cooperation in South Eastern Europe. The specific programme objectives are to raise awareness of minorities and minority rights; encourage cooperation between human and minority rights activities throughout the region to address practical problems in implementing minority rights standards; build local capacity to promote effective implementation of domestic and international minority rights standards through advocacy and rights training; and bring local problems to domestic policy level and international for a.

The programme evolved from a series of planning initiatives developed by MRG and supported by DFID culminating in the production of the report entitled *Minorities in South Eastern Europe:Inclusion and Exclusion* which was published in December 1998 and a series of needs assessments and feasibility studies in Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia conducted between September and November 1998. In March 1999 a regional planning meeting was convened in Sofia, Bulgaria to analyse problems confronting minorities and lay the foundation for a joint programme of work to address them.

The subsequent three year programme developed by MRG in cooperation with DFID commenced in June 1999 and an accountable grant was approved on the basis that the programme would be subject to an Output to Purpose Review (OPR) at the mid-point. The OPR took place in June 2002 and concluded that the programme was going well and that DFID as a donor could be satisfied.

DFID's involvement with this programme is linked to the UK's policy on international development based on a commitment to an internationally agreed set of development goals and time-bound targets. DFID's Human Rights Strategy Paper is concerned with the underlying institutions, values and practices of discrimination that create inequalities of access to opportunities and resources which are one of the key causes of poverty. DFID recognises that human rights abuses are interlinked and reinforcing, and shares MRG's strategic objectives linked to social inclusion and ensuring that participation and protection are realised fully in South Eastern Europe inter alia through the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. There is a significant cross-border dimension to minority rights and the regional approach to the programme has been advanced and supported to create opportunities to widen the scope for expanding specific country level activities and to create opportunities for sharing information and knowledge beyond specific national boundaries. There are constraints on the capacity of discrete projects to influence the wider policy and practice agenda's at national and regional levels; or to engage with significant regional actors like the council of Europe (COE), the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union (EU).

The programme is managed by MRG staff based in London and Budapest. The programme incorporates a network of 20 local non-government partner organisations from across South Eastern Europe; draws together local regional specialists to act as policy and practice advisers to the 20 partner organisations; and incorporates a Consultative Group (CG) which seeks to draw together the policy and practice advisers, alongside the OSCE, COE EU and DFID. The CG held its first meeting on 17 March 2000 and the second meeting on 11 December 2000 and the third on 29 October 2001. The programme operations are designed around seven core components:

- Advocacy and Rights Training Seminars
- Interactive Workshops
- Communications
- Specialist Meetings
- Consultancy
- Country/Community Specific Projects
- Ad Hoc/Urgent Projects

Objective:

The objective will be to conduct a PCR of the programme. This will include drawing out lessons from the programme, identifying what has worked and why assessing whether the programme goal was achieved. The PCR should also take account that DFID has agreed to make a contribution in-principle to an ongoing Phase II programme currently being funded by Charles Mott subject to confirmation that Phase I is satisfactory. The review of the existing phase (to be known henceforth as 'Phase 1') could be an opportunity to consider whether phase II objectives are still appropriate valid or whether a revision is required to ensure the overall programme will achieve maximum impact.

 As one of the main strengths of the programme is that it has been planned, implemented and evaluated with partners, MRG would consult with partners on any proposed substantive changes and recommendations to the programme.

Tasks:

The PCR will review all relevant background papers on the programme, including the programme memorandum and logical framework, regular narrative reports and minutes of the CG. In addition, the reviewer will consult relevant reports on social, political and economic developments in South Eastern Europe – including EU plans for Stabilisation and Assocation Agreements (SAAs) and developments linked to the Human Right and Democratisation Table of the Stability Pact.

The team will focus on the core activities of the programme and will:

- Meet with MRG Board members in London and staff responsible for managing the programme in London and Budapest.

- Meet the key interlocutors from the CoE, OSCE, EU and other relevant regional actors (e.g. Charles Mott) with an interest in minority rights.

- Meet several programme partners in an in-regional consultation and conduct a questionnaire survey of stakeholders unable to attend the consultation.

<u>Organisational Issues and Reporting:</u>

MRG will take the lead responsibility for establishing an itinerary for the OPR which will be shared with DFID regional programme in London at least one week prior to the commencement of the OPR. MRG will also be responsible for contacting key actors and agencies who have a salient role with the programme. DFID will meet the full costs of the reviewer in respect of consultancy time, accommodation, meals and airfares.

The reviewer will submit a report to DFID and MRG within two weeks of completing all key elements of the OPR.

At the beginning and end of the OPR the reviewer will provide a briefing to DFID and MRG in London.

The reviewer will co-ordinate the preparation and submission of the report. The reviewer will be allocated three days for preparation time)including one day for meeting with DFID and MRG and 5 days for report writing.

APPENDIX B -   Notes on the Evaluation Methodology

A wide spectrum of stakeholders were consulted, and a range of evaluation techniques were used. These included face to face interviews, literature review, facilitated discussions with partners and Programme staff, participation in workshops, e mail interviews with key interlocutors, and a feedback session to the MRG team about the issues, conclusions and recommendations before the final report was produced.

The underpinning approach was concerned to identify the spectrum of stakeholder views on the achievements of the Programme, and to ensure that the implementers- the MRG team and the partner organisations, 'owned' the findings and recommendations.

Specifically, the methods involved:-

Face to face Interviews with:
- All MRG Programme team members (London and Budapest).
- MRG Director and Deputy Director
- Alan Phillips, consultant
- Director, ADI ,Macedonia.

E-mail Interviews with key Interlocutors
- Antti Aaro Korkeakivi, Council of Europe
- John Parker, Director, OSCE, HC for Minorities,The Hague.
- Catherine Magnant, EU, DEIA, Human Rights and Democratisation.
- Harriet Cross, Head of Europe Section, Human Rights Policy dept, FCO.
- Per Byman, SIDA. Programme Officer, HR Democracy, Western Balkans.
- Fiona Blyth-Kubota, and Hui Lu, UN Working Group on Minorities.
- Shannon Lawder, Regional Director, Mott Foundation

Two Day Evaluation Meeting with a sample of Partner Organisations

- Angelina Stanorva, IEF, Bulgaria.
- Ramiza Sakip, Anglunipe, Macedonia.
- Gordana Cicak, Independent Zenika, BiH.
- Nedjeljka Sindik, ASK- Podgoria, Serbia and Montenegro
- Jeleua Mirkovia, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Republika Srpska.
- Alexsandra Vajic, Voivadini Centre for Human Rights.

Participant Observation

- Power Sharing Workshop, Tetevo, Macedonia, 27-29 March 2003.
- In previous Mid Term Review attendance at the Recognition Workshop in Greece, 2001.

Review of Reports and Relevant Documents

- Programme Progress Reports
- Minutes of Consultative Meetings
- Follow-up Reports
- Evaluation of ARTS Workshops
- Phase II Plan and Logframe
- Minutes of Planning Meetings
- MRG's Annual Report on Activities 2002.
- MRG 's Programme for 2003.
- MRG's Annual Review 2001.
- Sample of manuals, guides and papers on minority right issues.

Feedback Session to MRG Programme Team

- Held on the 1st May 2003. The evaluator outlined the issues that had emerged during the data collection, and his draft conclusions and recommendations. The MRG team then discussed this feedback and gave their response to the findings. In the light of this discussion the evaluator was then able to write the final report.

APPENDIX C. Project Completion Assessment (attached to Report)

APPENDIX D :

Association for Democratic Initiatives (ADI) Macedonia

ADI is one of the partner organisations in the MRG Programme. It was established in Macedonia in 1994 as a multi-ethnic NGO devoted to building a civil society in Macedonia. By the time of the Mid term review it had a membership of 300 volunteers, and operated in 32 towns and villages. Originally it conducted voter education in conjunction with the 1994 and 1996 local elections but has now expanded its programme into civic education, inter-ethnic relations, a Resources Centre, a Local Government Programme, Youth Programme, a Human Rights Programme, monitoring of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, and the near future is likely to attain consultative status at the UN.

The Republic of Macedonia (RM) is a member of the Council of Europe. It's a country with a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional population. According to the official 1994 Census the national population structure is: 66.5% Macedonians, 22.9% Albanians, 4.0% Turkish, 2.0% Roma and 4.6% Serbs, Vlak, and others. A legal base for developing a policy for enhancing the status of the nationalities including activities aimed at knowing the needs of the national minorities, are outlined in the Declaration of Independence in the Constitution (1991) and in other legal acts adopted by the Assembly of the Republic.

The development and effectiveness of ADI during the period of Phase 1 of the MRG Programme illustrates how the strengthening capacity of an in-region NGO can lead to a range of initiatives and sustained activities, even (or especially) in a politically sensitive context such as Macedonia. The achievements of ADI are impressive. The Mid–term Review gave the example of ADI's use of the FCNM and the writing of a Shadow Report for Macedonia.

Macedonia signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in July 1996. This was ratified by the country's Assembly in April 1997, and was effective from February 1998.

Whilst it is a signatory to the Convention (and other international documents and protocols) the public policy towards nationalities is restrictive .The achievement of obligations that come from these signed documents is presented in public adversely, as obligations that are required by the International community, not as activities that will improve the living conditions to a part of the country's citizens. There are no specific activities undertaken in RM to implement the Framework Convention in the domestic legislation. Most citizens do not know about the Framework or any other international legal documents for the protection of minorities. The text about the Convention was published in the official gazette in March 1997 but the Government did not hold any promotional activity. An Albanian MP in the Macedonian Assembly raised the initiative

for ratification of the European Convention for Regional and Languages of the minorities during 2000, but the Parliamentary majority enabled the Government to reject this move. The Government then announced an initiative for adopting the domestic legislation within the FCNM and that ratification of the Convention for regional and Languages of the minorities will be next on the agenda. This was the first time that the Government had announced intentions to adopt domestic legislation arising from obligations from these Conventions.

As part of RM signing up to the FCNM they are obligated to submit a State Report within one year of ratification, and then another five years later. Todate this first State Report has not been submitted. But ADI has submitted a Shadow report in April 2001.

SHADOW REPORT (ADI-MACEDONIA)

Staff of ADI had attended a MRG Advocacy and Rights Workshop in Budapest and this gave them a good understanding of the potential of using international instruments. ADI established a Shadow Report Team to research and produce the Report. This consisted of four lawyers, including two lawyers from other NGOs, (Roma and Turkish organisations). The process of gaining the information was broad and included contacts with both local and central authorities, field visits, and meetings with community leaders.

After the first draft was produced it was sent to three central government bodies: the Foreign Ministry department dealing with the CoE; the Council for Interethnic Relations, an independent body established by Parliament; and the Parliamentary Commission for Ethnic and Religious issues. They were asked for their comments, additional information, or areas of disagreement. No comments were received. During this draft intensive consultations took place with MRG on the form of the Report as well as its content. As this was the first time ADI had undertaken anything like this, support from MRG was critical in helping them plan what was needed.

Upon completion the report was submitted to the CoE Secretariat of the Advisory Committee for the FCNM. Copies were also sent to all international representatives in Macedonia, as well as major mailing lists dealing with these issues. Minority political representatives have used the report within their work. Another early use came from a meeting with the Macedonian-Albanian MP in the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE. He submitted four amendments in the Assembly, which were very similar to ADI's recommendations, and which were adopted by the CoE Assembly in the form of a resolution for solving the existing problems in Macedonia.

The Shadow Report is a substantial document It gives the context and then examines the 21 Articles of the FCNM, where progress has taken place, and where it is lacking. Based on the information submitted ADI then suggests a number of recommendations that relate to each of the Articles.

It ends with the suggestion that the Advisory Committee visits Macedonia 'for the purpose of a closer introduction with the minority reality in Macedonia. ADI is expressing its full readiness for assisting in preparation of such a visit'.

ADI's Work since the Mid-term review

In March 2002 a training seminar on with the CoE on the FCNM resulted in the setting up of a 'Minority Rights Network' in Macedonia; half the members came from the majority community, This network has conducted one campaign aimed at persuading the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to submit their Framework Report. As yet this has not happened but it seems likely that it will be submitted soon and certainly the Advisory Committee of the CoE could examine the Shadow report if the government one is not forthcoming.

Both within the country and outside, ADI has become respected, and recognised for its expertise in minority rights. Their role became especially important during the conflict in 2001. ADI was responsible for setting up an information centre. It was difficult for the Albanian community to gain access to information. ADI published 10,000 copies of a daily newsheet. This helped to 'stop rumours' and provide some objective information as to the situation. The distribution points also became food centres used by the NGOs.

During this period ADI was an important channel for dialogue between the communities. After the Ohrid Framework Agreement was signed the importance of ADI's role has been officially recognised in that ADI are responsible for the monitoring of two dimensions of the Agreement: the involvement of the non-majority community in public administration; and language usage. By January 2003 they had produced three monitoring reports.

ADI has also been drawing attention to the problem of discrimination in development. It has researched the distribution of credits for returning ethnic minorities from Germany. As a result they have written a paper that has been published by MRG- 'Macedonia: Micro-credit, Poverty and Returning Ethnic Minorities'. Though this work lies outside the remit of the Diversity and Democracy programme it illustrates how the different strands of MRG's work adds- value to bringing about change.

ADI provides a good example how the partnership with the MRG Programme has enabled them to develop their capacity and become an effective force for change. As the current Director says:-
' In 1999 I took part in an ARTS workshop, and that was the start of my learning. Without the MRG Programme we would not know about the Framework Convention or achieving consultative status at the UN. We had hardly heard of the UN till the MRG Programme!'

As the case study above shows the Programme has the ability to be a catalyst for these quite small local organisations; enabling them to receive training and to identify strategies for change. The activities and outcomes associated with all four of the Programme's Objectives can be seen at work in this one partner.

APPENDIX E   IMPACT GRID see attached

APPENDIX F MRG Team's Own Assessment of the Programme Components see attached

APPENDIX G Use of FCNM as a Stratgey for Change see attached

APPENDIX H Partners involvement in MRG Southeast Europe Diversity & Democracy Partnership Programme

Activity / involvement Name and location of partner	Planning Meeting	Consultative Group	ARTS	ARTS follow up funding	Participaton at	Workshop follow	Benficiary of consultancy	Urgent/Ad hoc	Translations of MRG reports	Production of shadow report	Involvement Other MRG	Specialists	Advocacy at
Albania													
IRSH, Shkoder	X		X	X	X	X							
Rromani Baxt, Tirana	X				X						X		
Bosnia-Herzegovina													
Independent-Zenica	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
ZGP, Mostar	X		X		X		X	X			X		
Helsinki Committee, Bijeljina,Republika Srpska	X		X		X	X						X	X
Bulgaria													
IEI, Sofia	X		X		X	X	X		X		X		X
Center for Social Policy and SocialWork, Sofia					X	X							
Roma-Lom, Lom	X		X	X							X		
Drom, Vidin	X		X		X		X				X		
Croatia													
Centre for Peace, Legal Advice and Psychological assistance, Vukovar	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X
Community of Serbs, Rijeka	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X			

Activity / involvement / Name and location of partner NGO	Planning Meeting	Consultative Group	ARTS	ARTS follow up funding	Participation	Workshop	Beneficiary of consultancy	Urgent/Ad	Translations of MRG	Prodication of shadow report	Other MRG	Specialists	Advocacy at
Greece													
Helsinki Monitor, Kifisia	X		X		X	X	X				X		X
Rainbow Party, Florina	X		X								X		
W Thrace Minority Graduates Assoc, Komotino	X		X	X	X	X			X		X		
MRG – Greece Clyka Nera	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
Macedonia													
Civil Society Resource Center, Skopje	X	X			X	X			X				
Skopje Roma Center, Skopje	X								X		X		
ADI, Gostivar	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Anglunipe, Roma Youth Assoc, Skopje	X				X	X			X		X		X
Serbia and Montenegro													
Centre for Multiculturalism Novi Sad	X	X			X		X	X		X			X
Humanitarian Law Center Belgrade	X		X		X	X				X	X		X
LDA Subotica	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X		
Bibija Roma Women's Center, Belgrade			X	X							X		
Voivodina Center for Human Rights, Novi Sad	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X		X

	Planning Meeting, 2000/2002	Consultative Group 199/200/2001	ARTS	ARTS follow up funding	Participaton in RegionalWorkhops	Workshop follow up fudning	Benficiary of consultancy	Urgent/Ad hoc project funding	Translations of MRG reports	Prodicaton of shadow report	Other MRG programmes	Specialists meeting	Advocacy at International
ASK NGO, Podgorica	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X
Kosovo													
ADI, **Pristina**			X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X

APPENDIX I : MRG'S Assessment of Progress towards the overall Programme Goal.

Goal: To promote minority rights and intercommunity co-operation in Southeast Europe. This will enable sustainable conflict prevention and resolution and is a pre-requisite for democratic consolidation and long-term sustainable development.

(i) States recognise minorities and ratify international standards, where this is not the case already. The newly ratified standards are then successfully adopted.

The situation of minorities in Southeast Europe is less bleak than it was when MRG began its work here in 1999.

- All countries' constitutions include clauses on human rights protection.
- A number of governments have passed new laws on the protection of national minorities, most recently, Bosnia and Herzegovina (April 2003), and Croatia (December 2002).
- All states in the region, apart from one, have signed and ratified the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities. States have submitted, by and large, to the system of international reporting and monitoring.
- The institution of Ombudsman for National Minorities now exists in Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.
- Working very closely with international organisations, a number of states have prepared national strategies on Roma issues, most recently Serbia and Montenegro (April 2003) and Croatia (February 2003), to combat the level of discrimination against the Roma.
- There has been an increase in civil society activity, notably, there is a larger number of effective NGOs working at the local, national and international levels, amongst them MRG's partners.
- Advances have been made in establishing rule of law, without which minority rights standards cannot be effectively guaranteed.
- Forums for regional cooperation, crucial in an area where minority issues are trans-border due to the existence of kin states, have been put in place. The Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, although largely ineffectual up until now, contains provisions for enhancing minority protection, such as a Taskforce on Minority Rights. It should start to have an indirect effect on minority issues by enabling regional co-operation on other issues, such as cross-border crime.

There are still severe problems: large numbers of displaced persons and refugees are unable to return to their homes due to the lack of the protection of basic human rights and strategies for social and economic integration, , minorities in UN-administered Kosovo face violence and assimilation, across the region police brutality is rife, discrimination and lack of participation of minorities in public life remains to be addressed, and ongoing ethnic tensions persist. Yet, the changes listed above have led to an improvement in the position of minorities across the region. Although weak implementation of minority rights is limited, , there are now mechanisms for monitoring the situation, and some means of redress. As one of the actors working in this field, MRG has contributed to the process of enhancing minority rights protection. It is impossible, though, to disentangle the impact of MRG's work from that of other

organisations working towards the same end: our partners, local and international NGOs, International Organisations, and national governments.

MRG has raised awareness of the position of minorities and strengthened the capacity of NGOs to put pressure on their governments in order to improve protection both in law and in practice, through training, publications, consultancy, and network-building (see below for details). This has been combined with exerting pressure through advocacy at national and international levels. A prerequisite for change is the creation of trust and reconciliation in post-conflict zones, and MRG has helped generate trust by bringing together actors from different communities.

MRG has adapted its specific objectives and areas of activities to recognise major changes in the region. Primarily, we have incorporated development issues, recognising that minorities do not benefit proportionally from economic transition; we have changed the focus of international advocacy to target the European Union, increasingly an important player because regional stability means accession in on the political agenda; now that international standards have been adopted by states across the region, emphasis is on implementation, and we work to ensure that the lack of implementation capacity is tackled through partnerships between INGOs, NGOs, and IOs and governments.

ii) Improved implementation of existing minority rights standards in the region resulting from an increased commitment to the protection of minority rights at the policy level.

As noted above, implementation of standards adopted remains a problem, however, international observers have noted improvements. There is greater commitment on the part of politicians to implement minority rights standards, as demonstrated by the incorporation of international standards into national law and cooperation in international forums. Many argue that this is simply paying lip service to minority rights standards, and that its importance is limited. However, this is an improvement on the flouting of international humanitarian standards that occurred in the nineties. Willingness to submit to monitoring, inspection and the reporting mechanisms of international regime is significant, and implies that states are stable enough, and nationalism moderated enough to accept loss of sovereignty.

In our own work, we have recently noted the willingness of governments to deal with NGOs, expressed openly in calls for advice and assistance from government representatives attending MRG events. Governments recognise that they lack implementation capacity and are willing to work with NGOs and international actors.

Where implementation has improved, it is in part as a result of MRG's actions. The presence of well-trained NGO representatives is crucial, since they are required to take over the role of governments, where the latter lack capacity. For example, in the provision of legal advice, social worker and teacher training. Implementation of policy at local, in some cases, national level can also be carried out in part by NGOs. For example, local partner Drom in Bulgaria has worked closely with the Government to implement the policy of desegregation in schools, Croatian partner NGO, Center for Peace, Legal and Psychological Assistance, is one of a number of partners providing free legal advice to displaced persons to facilitate implementation of laws on returns (see below many more examples of our partners carrying out this kind of activity).

In order to build on phase I of its work, MRG and partners will increasingly target government officials and the public, with broader campaigns to train government officials and to raise awareness of minority rights amongst the public. Both are sensitive issues: government officials may not be overtly hostile to minorities, but may not recognise they need training or be willing to be trained by NGOs; malign influences on public opinion as well, obviously, as the recent conflict, mean that public opinion remains largely hostile towards minorities.

An additional problem in Southeast Europe is that of multi-level policy making, and in particular, the power of the "international community" in the region. In Kosovo, and to some degree in Bosnia and Herzegovina, implementation capacity lies chiefly with the international actors and not with local actors. However, international organisations, too, are more aware of the importance of minority rights standards following extensive lobbying by NGOs, as facilitated by MRG, and MRG's direct advocacy raising the issue of the need for international organisations to respect the standards they promote.

iii) Minority rights standards are incorporated into the conflict resolution processes in former Yugoslavia.

Although MRG is not primarily concerned with conflict resolution, it has always been an aspect of our work because frequently in conflict or post-conflict situations minorities are vulnerable, and because the lack of respect or recognition of minority rights can lead to conflict. In Southeast Europe, as elsewhere, we believe that rigorous standards of minority protection can help prevent conflict. In this region, MRG and partners have played a role in tempering conflict, promoting peace and in post-conflict reconciliation.

There has been an evolution of conflict resolution mechanisms in recognition of the need for adequate minority rights standard. This is demonstrated by comparison of the Dayton Agreement, Kosovo peace settlement and the Ohrid Agreement. In this area, MRG's influence has been significant, for example, the shadow report produced by Macedonian partner organisation, Association for Democratic Initiative (ADI) influenced the Ohrid Agreement. MRG's partners across the region work on monitoring the peace settlement.

MRG has also been quick to respond as secondary issues have arisen, such as the neglect of smaller minorities' rights because they do not have the "power" to threaten conflict, which MRG has been highlighting recently.

International organisations, which are crucial to enforcing conflict resolution increasingly recognise the need for their staff respect minority rights standards. This is an issue MRG and partners on which MRG and partners have been vocal. MRG has been asked to train the staff of international organisations and will increasingly do so.

There is now greater recognition of the complexity of the issue, that Kaplan's story of "centuries' old ethnic hatreds" is over-simplistic. Rather, it is now recognised that ethnic tension may be just one dimension of an issue, or that ethnic tensions have at their root other issues, such as economic resources. MRG's and partners' work is based on this assumption of complexity, and we have therefore consistently created forums for deconstruction of issues, and in depth analysis of the causes of inadequate protection, as well as for devising solutions. International organisations and local actors alike accept that the processes of economic development, security provision and democratisation

and the protection of rights are inter-linked - MRG and partners have actively supported this view throughout the programme.

iv) The above contribute to increased co-operation between communities in Southeast Europe.

Undoubtedly greater cooperation between groups than when MRG began its work exists, as demonstrated by recent meetings, which would have been unlikely before, such the specialists meeting on power-sharing which took place in Tetovo and brought together members of the Macedonian government, important leaders of the Albanian minority and NGOs.

As mentioned above, MRG has also contributed significantly to processes of building trust and confidence across communities, which are key to improvement in minority protection.

Testament to the strength of MRG's network of partners is the fact it survived conflict in Kosovo in 1999 and in Macedonia in 2001. During and after each crisis MRG carried on organising regional events to bring together representatives of different communities.