

Civil Peace Intervention in Kosovo

Based on the already existing project of economic cooperation, focusing on the creation of a milk-cheese sector, it is intended to begin a process of cooperation between different ethnic groups present in Kosovo to carry out an activity that encourages the initiation of a process of peace and peacekeeping among the different ethnic communities in the area. The project aims to expand on the social actions already undertaken in the area of Kosovska Mitrovica / Mitrovicë by the Province of Gorizia considering an economic prospective. The actions already undertaken, in fact, had showed as a priority of the area of northern Kosovo, to intervene in support of the milk-cheese sector creating more jobs and a degree of economic and social stability.

Along the model of "Corporate Latterie Turnarie Friulane", historic place where the farmers of the Friuli villages carried the milk to work it in turn process and sell the products directly to consumers, including through the sale of the shop in the factory, it is intended to test the feasibility for setting up a multi-ethnic cooperative of milk with the Serb and Albanian ethnics. In the case of dairies *turnarie*, work for the transformation of milk is made jointly by several farmers, who, through this method of work, testify a strong mutual trust. In order to achieve that target, we must then point to the cooperation between the parties and the inter-ethnic dialogue, building moments of confrontation and mutual cooperation. The actions taken by the project will not be education but they fall into the categories of peacebuilding and civilian peacekeeping. In the first part, it will be in the typical activities of the first phase of the peacebuilding, therefore the necessary actions of confidence building (trust with the parties, trust in the process, trust between the parties), while in the second part, having the activities a purely experimental value, we will just monitor the effect of deterrence of the international presence.

The above activities will aim to increase the perception of safety of the urban population and thus to avoid, as is made possible by the international situation, the escalation of violence before, during or after the announced unilateral proclamation of independence by the Kosovar Albanian majority.

Regarding the institutional situation, the city of Kosovska Mitrovica / Mitrovicë is characterized by the presence of a mayor elected only by the Albanian majority, while in the northern part of the city, the Serbs has created their own independent authority which, although not legally recognized, it receives funding by the government in Belgrade. This delicate situation requires the need for an active dialogue between the political parties present in the area, to create the preconditions for a joint stability for which the whole community can benefit. These activities, aimed at creating an active partnership, have as objective the achievement of stability both social and economic that cannot be achieved without the support of external actors.

The activity of mediation between the different ethnic groups in the territory will be carried out by two operators on the ground, coming from the Servizi Civili di Pace (Civil Peace Service). In these areas of action that the approach that should be used and promoted is the one shared by the "non-violent transformation of conflict". The Civil Service of Peace, though as flexible structure and specialized in the implementation of practical measures for the realization of peace such as arbitration and the restoration of trust between the parties in conflict, although in an effort of coordination with other actors present, should always be thought as part of a process of demilitarisation of the conflict tended to value more and more the civilian component, including reinforcing elements such as economic, which necessarily requires the relationship between the parties. One of two operators of the Civil Service of Peace that will go on-site, will need a young operator of regional origin, that can improve his/her experience in the field. This experience will be refunded in the manner most appropriate to the regional community.

Going to join and to complement the economy, this project intends to do situational analysis of civil society in Kosovo, to understand how they are constituted and structured formal and informal groups in the city of Kosovska Mitrovica / Mitrovicë, as a result of this analysis, it will structure activities capable to give greater breadth to the economic project in the working relationship.

The economic project, in fact, with its goal of improving the economic conditions of the population depends to an increase of the urban security, while the confidence building activities and peacekeeping will be used to help support the economic activity, which - as mentioned before - are based on multi-ethnic cooperation. Flanked at the technical table of the economic project, it must be started a training course of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, along the model of Civil Peace Services, capable of creating new relationships and new networks between the parties through the inter and intra community dialogue. The improved economic situation, which this action is to contribute, will directly affect both the quality of life of individual families, and the economic and social relations between the components of the population of Kosovska Mitrovica / Mitrovicë and Kosovo in general. This improvement will also have positive effects on the stability of the entire Balkan region and, consequently, of Europe. The Italian local institutions involved in the project will conduct two meetings with local authorities, economic and civil society in Kosovska Mitrovica / Mitrovicë, in order to substantiate the closeness and attention of local communities that have supported the project with communities in conflict. Will also be allocated a scholarship for a Kosovar student to take part in the top-level master in "International Peace Operators" organized by the ISIG in Gorizia.

Background

The project "Dialogues of Peace" is a journey that begun in 2005 and it is still in progress to encourage the initiation of a process of promoting a culture of peace and cooperation among the various ethnic groups involved in the conflict. The intent is to meet the need, felt by many within the country, to build peace from below, in which the main actors are citizens of all communities living in the area and the institutions that represent them. The activities are aimed to stimulate interest and potential of communities involved through the creation of a network and the subsequent sharing of experiences to develop and enhance the individual potential to raise awareness in those involved, to have important resources to be put to service of the entire community. For several years, in addition, the Province of Gorizia and the city of Padua have followed and supported the birth and growth of the Cooperative "Insieme" for the creation of a local economy in the town of Srebrenica (BiH) on the basis of the promotion of inter-ethnic work. This experience that has given remarkable results both economically and in terms of safety, may be in part, and having in mind the environmental differences and reference, transferred to the Kosovar context.

Also in 2008 was initiated the project "Desk Kosovo" in Friuli Venezia Giulia, which allows to implement the agreement of cooperation between the Chamber of Commerce of Kosovo (KCC), Informest and the (CCIAA) Chamber of Commerce of Trieste, Gorizia, Udine and Pordenone, signed in Prishtinë on 4 April 2006. The agreement provides different forms of promotion and support of economic relations and institutional cooperation for the benefit of the business environment in Kosovo and Friuli Venezia Giulia. The DKFVG intends to give a serious implementation to the content of the collaboration, basing its action on the will of the partners in Friuli Venezia Giulia of "doing system" in implementing the actions decided, with the overall objective of ensuring the participation of the regional economic system to the development of Kosovo in the present historical phase of its legal and economic transition. The system of information and reports to be consolidated by Informest in Kosovo, will maintain active contacts with relevant institutions in Kosovo and to bring with continuity news, events and opportunities for collaboration or investment of particular interest, giving to the interested business companies an appropriate technical assistance and services targeted to their business projects.

Objectives

Kosovo is a province of Serbia, placed temporarily with UN Resolution 1244 under international administration of the United Nations (UNMIK). Kosovo/a has a total area of 10,887 sq km, while the estimated population is around 2,000,000 inhabitants. The population of Kosovo is the youngest in Europe, with 60% below 30 years of age. Communities that still today are counted in Kosovo/a are: Albanian, numerically the majority, Serbs, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Gorani, Bosnian, Turkish and Croatian, that represent the minority communities. It is not possible to give precise data on the numerical distribution of the various communities because of difficulties in the census of the population.

Over 50% of the population lives below the poverty line, while access to primary resources such as water and electricity is unsatisfactory for the majority of the population, the situation was aggravated by the

process of privatisation of public services, which denies access to poorer of the population. The municipality of Kosovska Mitrovica / Mitrovicë, area of intervention of the project, includes the city of Kosovska Mitrovica / Mitrovicë and 49 villages. The city and two villages are the only mixed areas, while the rest of the villages is almost exclusively inhabited by Kosovo-Albanian population.

After the war in 1999 the city has been divided into a north and northwest, by a majority of Serbia, and in a southern part with Albanian majority in both areas there are significant enclaves and mixed areas, where there are different ethnic communities (Roma, Ashkali, Bosnian, Turks and Gorani). The division maintained by the intervention of the international military force NATO (K-FOR), follows the natural division drawn by the river Ibar.

In the southern part of the city the population fluctuates between 70,000 and 90,000 units, which is almost all of Albanian ethnic, while in the northern part 15,000 Serbs are living, of which about 5,000 are IDPs. Before the conflict, approximately 50% of the population of the northern part of the city was of Albanian ethnic, today, less than half is still concentrated mainly in two districts of Bosniacka Mahala and Kodra Minatore and building complex called the "Three Towers." The Bosnian population (6,000 units before the war) was significantly reduced to between 2,000 and 3,000 units in both the north and south of the river Ibar. The Roma population, first located in the district south of Roma Mahala, which was destroyed during the conflict, have been displaced in the north of the city and in Serbia. Today the majority of the Roma population remaining in Kosovo/a, are living in difficult conditions in the former military K-FOR camp of Osterode located in north Kosovska Mitrovica / Mitrovicë. There are also families of Turkish and Gorani ethnics in both areas.

Identification of needs

From a careful analysis of the intervention, it was found that there were some problematic points concatenated together and generating subsequent questions unanswered.

To the physical separation and lack of freedom of movement, in fact, are related to the difficulty of direct relationship between the community; this clearly worsens the already-known problems of discrimination and integration of different ethnic groups. Just think, for example, to the reality of the enclaves, geographically restricted areas where lives a population ethnically homogeneous, "surrounded by areas inhabited by communities that belong to the communities that are perceived as adverse. In addition, the high presence of IDPs, who under the threat of weapons they had to leave their homes, especially refugees in the city of Kosovska Mitrovica / Mitrovicë, continue to live for years "suspended."

To this scenario, there problems more closely related to the political and economic situation of the country; the high rate of unemployment, the pressing international military presence and the limited access to public services (health, education) and to the basic necessities (water and electricity) worsen the conflict situation already present in the long process of pacification and reconstruction, therefore this is a priority to create spaces of interaction and cooperation free from nationalistic speeches and claims of political and economic nature.

For this, the project intends to achieve objectives such as creating and maintaining the peace through the joint work and the creation of a local milk-cheese sector of multiethnic nature, for arriving at a dialogue, cooperation and a peaceful confrontation. The intent is to meet the need, felt by many within the country, to build a peaceful situation from below, based on concrete and visible actions, in which the main actors are the citizens of all ethnic groups present in the area, but also to create jobs and decrease the high rate of unemployment.

Thanks to the work of Civil Services of Peace it is intended to create the conditions for actions, which are in the first place of peacebuilding and to follow peacekeeping activities, intervening also to rebuild in a healthy way an economy distorted and sustained only through the support of the international community. With the establishment of a milk collection centre in the form of multi-ethnic cooperative and the processing of it, we can start a series of positive mechanisms for the entire community in Kosovska Mitrovica / Mitrovicë, and more.

Methodologies used

Identifying the concrete actions that can have a significant impact on the current social situation. The participatory cooperation with countries of South and East, creates the essential approach for a sustainable development and it is an investment in the future because it can make the actors involved therein authors of their own development, not imposed but planned from below. The Province of Gorizia has endorsed this view.

From past experience has always been clear that it is necessary for the local political actors to work for a possible dialogue in the area, because aware that this is a necessary prerequisite to the development of a social and economic welfare. Through workshops, information meetings, round tables and conferences, the players themselves have expressed an interest to develop specific actions to improve inter-ethnic relations of the groups present in the area. These moments of exchange has been important because they have allowed to involve the local authorities and the civil society in

Interest and potentiality of the involved communities

The improvement of internal dialogue and the increased of the financial and social security, leads to the creation of active partnerships between political parties and communities on the ground. This climate may therefore lead to collaborations and funding of projects even outside the country, creating economic stability and making European companies interested to invest in the region.

The creation of networks and new inter-ethnic relations may lead to collective well-being favourable to the development of economic activities such as the creation of a multi-ethnic cooperative in a sector of the milk that would increase the potentialities and resources of the territory.

The promotion of the dialogue and mutual understanding provides the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas, views and experiences as a basis for building a peaceful future and cooperation between communities. These activities will enable the initiation of discussions on issues related to social and economic development of the area and the relations between the Balkans and Europe.

The need for reconciliation and stability in this area is great. The adoption of appropriate measures to prevent the possible outbreak of new violence is crucial for the stability of the area. To this end it is essential to think about actions that encourage the different communities to act in order to build a peaceful future for themselves and future generations.

Participatory approaches and methodologies

The activities that are proposed here, deepening and consolidating the intercultural dialogue between different ethnic groups in the region, are aimed at strengthening the network of local resources, able to support and promote their own future in this field. This objective is part of an approach to the construction of peace founded on the belief that the long process of physical social and political reconstruction of society through non-violent activities should be rooted in the communities affected by the conflict and be locally sustainable.

Such an approach sees, in the people, in the social realities and in the local institutions, essential resources to the long-term solution of the conflict and sees the project of peace-building as processes in which to give power to people involved in the conflict (associations, groups and individuals, local authorities) to act in the direction of sustainable change in which the conflicts are managed in a non-violent way. In this logic becomes essential to the work of peacekeeping and peacebuilding the active involvement of local partners in all project phases, from analysis of the evaluation of the activities undertaken through a joint work of sharing, consultation and coordination. The collaboration will be a constant element also in the planning, organization and implementation of individual activities under the project, through regular consultation

between the proposing subject, local and Italian partners, beneficiaries and stakeholders, and the use of participatory methods that also aim to promote the sense of belonging and responsibility to the project itself.

The proposing subject has well-established tradition of intervention in its territory in relation to the promotion of a culture of peace and sustainable development. In the last few years it has been the promoter of several projects of decentralized cooperation in Africa and the Balkans, and since 2006 has activated a process of peacebuilding from the bottom in Kosovo in coordination with other Italian local institutions (Province of Venice and the Municipality of Padua) and "Association for Peace".

Considering that the project represent the extension of work already begun time ago, the modalities of managing the relationships are now well established procedures, and are sensitive and respectful of each other's cultural differences. The project will be an opportunity for a comparison, even at methodological level, between the different experiences, the Italian experience through the work of the local institutions network formed around the project and the experience in the area of Kosovska Mitrovica / Mitrovicë, through the work of local partners and stakeholders.

In general, the actual content of the project aims to create a process leading to the resumption of dialogue between cultures, which also extend to relationships between the proposing actors and the local partners. During the entire project management, the attention is focused on the construction of intercultural relations.

Gender mainstreaming

Considering that, according to statistics, the female gender has a greater sensitivity to the issue of peace, the activities of peacekeeping and peacekeeping, it is intended to act following an involvement of gender in relation to issues addressed by the project. The main motivation is to be found in the "rationality of care": an extreme sense of concreteness dictated by the proximity to the basic needs to those duties of care to which women are still deeply connected even where the evolution of the social context has permitted the acquisition of other roles and functions.

The difficulties concerning the development of peace in territories such as Kosovo, can be overcome if we assume fully the concept of gender approach, which must be considered true element of the system. In fact, women are active also in an autonomous way in favour to the peace by developing real business of peacebuilding and reconciliation. That is, with particular reference to rural areas of Mitrovica, from which the project starts.

Moreover, it is intended to follow this methodology of work, suggesting the possibility that one of two operators of the Civil Service of Peace who goes on site to monitor the project would be a woman.

Coordination and monitoring

The operators of Civil Peace Services will produce short weekly reports that will report timely information on the progress of actions, on their compliance or not to set timetable, on any eventual difficulties encountered or on the reasons that might be of hindrance to the implementation of activities planned by the project .

In this case, the actuator subject together with project partners will take care to identify and report possible solutions to the problems encountered.

When the coordinators consider necessary, will be use the method of the questionnaire, which is useful for immediate feedback of the implemented actions.

There will be also organized direct visits by the coordinator and members of the local institutions for a direct assessment of the climate of relations between the parties and its variation.

The project is, by type of intervention and specific objectives, in different programs of support for the dialogue promoted by various international organizations, many also present in Kosovo. Among these, we mention the programs for reconciliation and dialogue of UNMIK (United Nations Mission in Kosovo), programs for monitoring the respect for human rights and protection of cultural rights of minorities, the OSCE, the programs for the protection of the right to childhood and the access to basic education promoted by UNICEF.

Still now, the Province of Gorizia and its partners continue to cooperate with UNMIK, OSCE and UNICEF in the work of inter-community reconciliation through the existing projects. The relationship between the network of Italian local institutions involved in the project, of which the Province of Gorizia is among the sponsors, and the municipality of Kosovska Mitrovica / Mitrovicë, is also consolidating.

Crucial will be the coordination of the trial of civilian operators in Kosovo with the activities of the Network of Civil Corps of Peace and firstly the “table on the interventions of civil peace” established in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Deputy Minister Patrizia Sentinelli and chaired by Prof. Antonio Papisca. Even at the local level the activities will be shared and confronted in the process of reflection on the “Table for Peace” of FVG.

The project, in its double value, the experimental and sustainability (we remember that the project “Dialogues of Peace in Kosovo” began in 2002 by the Province and Municipality of Venice and that present project is the evolution in response to new needs of the local partnership) will be provided for reflection and analysis still now in progress of the regional draft Law on Civil Corps of Peace, and to the academic research carried out by two academic institutions in the region: the Master in International Peace Operators at the International University Institute for European Studies (based at the ISIG Gorizia) and the “Irene Centre”, activated by the University of Udine.

There will be also connections with the Regional Table on the Balkans and the “Province for the Peace” of Gorizia.