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THE DOMOVINI PROJECT

Step by Step to Minority Return and Reintegration in Bosnia and Herzegovina

15 December 1998 - 17 December 1999

**EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT ON THE DOMOVINI
PROJECT**

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1 SUMMARY

On the initiative of the Zepa-Srebrenica Prisoners of War Association, the Domovini project was started on October 1998. The project was supported by the European Union and planned by the IOM with Finnish and Bosnian partners. It

was a pilot project with the aim of supporting the voluntary return to their home country of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina. The project tested a new model and methods of supporting immigrants planning a return, and sought to gain experiences of project activity implemented by immigrants.

The stages planned for the project have been completed. They included an information campaign, a fact-finding mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina, a period of vocational training and practical training in both Finland and Bosnia. The requisite reports have been generated and plans for continued activity drafted.

The Domovini project has also attained the quantitative objectives listed in the funding application very well. Only the number of participants in the meetings within the information campaign was clearly below expectation.

The implementation of the project content gives rise to reflection. The objective of the information campaign and the fact-finding mission, the obtaining of diversified information from the Eastern Serb region of Bosnia-Herzegovina, was partly not realised, assuming that the key goal was to gain personal experience and individual knowledge. Few of those participating actively in the project actually visited the region. A multi-dimensional information model was constructed during the project, with the aim of gaining as correct and complete information as possible of problems in the home country, of the functioning of basic processes, of the stabilisation of the political situation the potential for integration. This model can also be used for the process of integration in the host country: in order to manage one's life and plan the future in a new country it is necessary to learn to know the social systems.

The theoretical and practical training stage, designed to support the return process, had extremely multi-layered, even conflicting, objectives, which makes it necessary to re-think the content of training. Preparation for the return process must be separated from the training designed to prepare students for working. The practical training must allow participants to test or update their vocational skills or learn about new occupations. Other support services and benefits should also be updated. However, the project proved an excellent learning experience for all participants.

The members of the fact-finding mission and the students were very happy for the opportunity to visit their home country and see with their own eyes the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. At the same time, the visit provided a more realistic basis for their hopes of return, so that the decision of whether or not to return was built on a multidimensional information basis made up of personal experiences and information from several sources.

According to the client's request, the evaluation concentrates on an analysis of the project content. Since the key element helping or hindering the project proved to be its potential benefit, it would have been important also to evaluate the cost efficiency factors of expenditure. One of the project objectives was to search for and test new models and plans, which is why the innovativeness and open-mindedness of the project was also crucial for the evaluation. Obviously, the evaluation results have been affected by the limited resources available: time constraints, financial factors and language difficulties.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1. STAGES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DOMOVINI PROJECT

The Domovini project was started in October 1998 on the initiative of the Zepa-Srebrenica Prisoners of War Association. The project was supported by the European Union and planned by the IOM, the Finnish Ministry of Labour and the Employment and Economic Development Centres of Uusimaa and Pirkanmaa. It was a pilot project with the aim of supporting the voluntary return to their home country of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Domovini project consisted of four stages: an information campaign, a fact-finding mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina, vocational education in Finland and practical training in Bosnia, and reporting, evaluation and planning of further projects.

At the stage when funding was being applied for, four objectives were defined for the project. The first was the gathering of concrete data on circumstances in the Eastern Serb republic, to support the decision-making of families and individuals concerning voluntary return. The second objective was to plan support measures for the return of refugees either to their home region in Eastern Bosnia or to another locality in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Co-operation during the project was envisaged with local NGOs in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The fourth objective was to create a model for a voluntary “step-by-step” return and reintegration in the home country. In the application, the four objectives were presented in quantitative form, and the attainment of these quantitative objectives may be considered as a criterion for the success of the project.

2.2. CONTEXTS LINKED TO THE PROJECT ACTIVITY

According to the realistic evaluation approach, social reality is seen as multi-layered. Thus, what need to be examined will be all the communities where activity takes place. The project was active in Finland and in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but its activity was affected by the recent crises in the Balkans, especially the Kosovo war and international activity towards attaining peace in Europe.

1. Bosnians in Finland

Refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina began to arrive to Finland in 1992. Those who had been in the prison camps of Sljivovica, Mitro Polje and Padinska Skela and had come to Finland beginning on the 6 March 1996 as quota refugees, founded the “Zepa-Srebrenica” association for formerly imprisoned Bosnians in Finland. The purpose of the association is to act as a link between its members and as a co-operative organ, helping them to adapt to an unfamiliar culture and promoting their social and psychological welfare. The association took the initiative for the Domovini project, but after the funding agreement was signed, the project was extended to cover the entire Bosnian community resident in Finland.

In 1998, during the planning stage of the project, there were 1,434 Bosnian refugees in Finland. The majority of them come from the Eastern parts of Republika Srpska, which is difficult to return to. In Finland the Bosnians have been placed widely apart

in municipalities located in the east, south, and west of the country. The students involved in the theoretical and practical training stage of the project were from the Helsinki Metropolitan area, from the Tampere and Turku regions and from Vaasa, i.e., they only represented Bosnians living in the provinces of Western Finland and Uusimaa. Among Bosnians representing skilled workers or lower-grade clerical workers, the unemployment rate is high: 68.7% (estimate on 30 Sept 1999). The labour reserve is augmented by non-skilled persons, especially students and housewives, who are not necessarily included in the statistics.

2. Social Conditions in Finland

The social conditions in the host country are not encouraging for immigrants. There are many factors present in Finnish society which create a push for immigrants, thus contributing to plans of return migration.

The unemployment rate in Finland, 14% (in 1999), also prevents immigrants from finding jobs. The unemployment rate of Bosnian refugees has been among the highest in immigrant groups. During the depression years, immigrants are regarded as a social threat, only contributing to increase in unemployment and welfare expenditure. According to the conflict theory, the experiencing of a social threat is linked to negative attitudes towards immigrants.

Studies by Magdaleena Jaakkola (1999) have established that by 1998, the Finns' attitudes towards immigrants have become more positive compared to the depression year 1993. Still, immigrants from the former Yugoslavia continue to be received somewhat coldly. Especially unemployed or retired men with little schooling and living in rural areas avoid contacts with immigrants, which however would lessen the fear for the unknown. The Moslem background of the Bosnians was also considered to increase the unwillingness to contacts in the majority of the population.

During 1999 the Act on the Integration of Immigrants was passed in Finland. According to this Act, immigrants must establish an integration plan together with the authorities. Entitlement to an integration plan was awarded to those who have entered the country within the past three years, and among Bosnians there are few such persons.

3. Bosnia-Herzegovina as a return country for refugees

Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is led by Moslems, declared its independence after a referendum in March 1992. In April the European Union, Croatia and the United States recognised its independence. Soon afterwards, violent demonstrations led to the siege of Sarajevo and ethnic cleansings in Bosnia: the war in Bosnia had begun. Autonomous Serb regions declared themselves as the Serb Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which name was changed into the Serb Republic (Republika Srpska) in August 1992. The remaining area was formed into the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The dreams of maintaining a multi-ethnic Bosnia had been dashed. The 3.5-year war finally ended with the Dayton Peace Treaty in December 1995, and the reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina could begin.

The United Nations, the European Union and international organisations have over the years granted billions of dollars for repairing the destroyed infrastructure in the country and for improving the basic functioning of society. Still, as we move in to

2000, return and reintegration in Bosnia-Herzegovina is only possible on the condition that housing, employment and livelihood, education and health care are extensively developed. The situation in the eastern Serb area requires still more effort.

According to the Finnish Ministry of Labour statistics, a total of 85 refugees have returned from Finland to Bosnia during the years 1996-1998.

4. The Balkan as part of Europe

The impact of the Balkan crisis on the project's activity cannot be overlooked, so the multiple angles also bring in the European and the international political level.

During the information campaign included in the project, violence in the Balkans increased, and at the end of March 1999, a war broke out in Kosovo which reached international dimensions. The fact-finding mission to Bosnia planned for April had to be cancelled, but in May Bosnians were already being interviewed regarding their plans of returning. Confusion reigned: will Finland now require immigrants to return to the Balkans in the middle of upheavals?

The Kosovo Peace Treaty concluded in Cologne in June was soon followed by the Sarajevo Summit on 30 July 1999, where 40 heads of state and government and representatives of over 20 international organisations agreed to support the Balkans Stability Pact initiated by the European Union. The purpose of the pact is to reach permanent peace in the Balkans by supporting co-operation for security, economic growth and democratic development in the area. If the stabilisation proceeds according to plans, the UNHCR will soon be able to pronounce Bosnia-Herzegovina, including its eastern Serb region, as a safe return country.

2. 3. OBJECTIVES AND ESSENTIAL ISSUES OF EVALUATION

The request for offer concerning the external evaluation of the Domovini project was sent to the Adult Education Centre of the University of Helsinki, the Department of Social Policy of the University of Tampere, and the private company Consulting Oy. The analytical and research-based approach suggested by the University of Tampere was felt to be the most useful for the beneficiaries, implementers and financers of the project.

The teachers and researchers of the Department of Social Policy in the University of Tampere have over the years carried out evaluation tasks, including EU projects, and the Department actually runs a Research and Evaluation Unit of its own. The evaluation of the Domovini project was allocated to Seija Miettinen, Master of Social Sciences, who has over 20 years of experience as researcher-teacher and as expert in such topics as education and practical training and evaluation. She is also well versed in the Finnish immigrant policy and refugee issues, as well as wider multicultural issues.

Issues related to cost were excluded from the evaluation by the client, and content matters were prioritised. Despite this fairly significant decrease in scope, the evaluation of the Domovini project remained a substantial and challenging one.

In the following, I have listed the objectives together with the issues studied while evaluating each objective. In my own opinion the evaluation data I have gathered is sufficiently diversified, thanks to the multiple methods used. In order to analyse the

objectives, I have combined several questions and their answers into clusters which give answers to the questions posed.

1) Gathering of concrete data on circumstances in the eastern Serb republic to support the decision-making of families and individuals concerning voluntary return

What kind of multi-dimensional information model on circumstances in the BiH is constructed through the several stages of the project? How does the model function in practice?

What return plans for individuals, families or communities have been drawn up during the project?

2) Planning of measures to support the return of refugees

a) to their home region in eastern Bosnia

b) to an alternative locality in BiH (relocation)

How successfully was the training plan monitored and developed during the project?

How were the personal needs and objectives of students considered during the training?

3) Co-operation with local NGOs in BiH

What co-operation practices with Bosnian NGOs were established during the project?

What other co-operation partners would have been needed?

4) Creation of a model for a voluntary “step-by-step” return and reintegration in the home country (for the minority) (under strong support from the host society)

How functional is the model developed, from the point of view of the various parties?

What methods and plans will the model generate regarding further work?

5) Wider application of the implementation model in the Nordic and European contexts

What new aspects will the implementation model award to the return practices a) in the Nordic countries b) elsewhere in Europe?

6) The degree of Bosnian participation in the actual project activity

How actively have Bosnians participated in project activity?

Which factors have influenced the degree of Bosnian participation?

7) Awareness of the project and its impact among Bosnian communities in Finland

What is the general awareness of the project established during the year?

What impact has the project had on Bosnians? The Bosnian community in Finland?

8) Activity of the project implementers and partners

What kind of problems and snags had to be solved during the project?

In addition to the above, the project evaluation was expected to prioritise factors related to content and quality. The evaluation was also to involve persons with an immigrant background.

3. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1. BASIC EVALUATION CONCEPTS AND APPROACH

In carrying out the evaluation I have adhered to principles of research ethics. The holistic approach has enabled an evaluation of the effectiveness of activity in relation to a greater whole. The starting-point was an examination of the situation which made the project necessary, of the various levels in the system and of the significance and interrelations of the various parts, as well as an identification of different interest conflicts in a wider context. The holistic approach was also extended to include an evaluation of the degree of Bosnian participation when studying their involvement with practical project activity. Process, objective and criteria analyses have been applied creatively during the evaluation.

3.2. KEY POINTS IN EVALUATION

In practice, the evaluation process started in the beginning of April 1999, by which time the project had been running for 3.5 months and the first part of the first project stage had been implemented. After the fact, it has been difficult to establish the nature of the reality linked to the preparation stage and first stage of the project. Successive postponements of the fact-finding mission also affected the evaluation plan. The original purpose was to carry out the first half of evaluation during the summer months, but little material was available during that period. Thus, the autumn months were overloaded with the evaluation of the information campaign, the fact-finding mission and the theoretical and practical training stages. Moreover, the deadline for this final report was brought forward by two months.

According to the plans, one of the criteria for selecting persons for the training stage was to be a fair knowledge of the Finnish language (min. stage 3). Due to the shortage of applicants, all interested persons were allowed to participate, which caused a number of problems later on.

In group discussions, information was partly inaccessible to me as a result of lively discussion conducted in Bosnian. The interpreting available to me did not necessarily transmit all of my questions in the manner intended. This applies particularly to interviews conducted during my trip to Bosnia. To avoid faulty interpretations, I have included in the evaluation data only viewpoints and opinions which came up repeatedly in discussions and interviews conducted by me. This choice has diminished the diversity of viewpoints, but on the other hand it guarantees a more scholarly entity shared by more persons.

3.3. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH PROCESS

For a start, I drafted a plan for implementing the evaluation: the methods used in data collection, the methods of analysis, the theoretical angles applied in interpreting data, and an indicative time schedule. My primary guideline was the realistic evaluation model, to some extent modified by myself.

Data collection continued throughout the project, and to some extent the picture was complemented even after the project had terminated, although this stage was less extensive than planned, due to time constraints. The data consists of observations and notes on the project, the research journal kept by me, interviews with and questionnaires to participants, and documents used in and generated by the project.

The groups of students participated in evaluation discussions with me. I interviewed project personnel, members of the POW association and students during theoretical and practical training. Project partners and co-ordinators were interviewed in Finland and Bosnia. In addition, I conducted telephone interviews with Bosnians who did not participate in the project. To support the discussions and interviews I had drawn up lists of topics containing key questions, which were the same for all groups, and specific questions, related to the special interests of each group, in order to gain as wide a coverage as possible of the project and the processes within it.

To analyse the project's objectives I first carried out a quantitative analysis of the research data by comparing the objectives listed in the project application to actual outcomes, after which I examined the contents and meaning of the objectives. Since the profundity and scope to which the objectives could be attained was also under examination, I also came to carry out an analysis of the criteria.

The analysis methods are described separately in connection with each evaluation objective.

In order to study the project process and its various stages, its launching, implementation, internal activity, snags in implementation, as well as the interaction between project personnel and partners, I have studied the minutes of the steering group's meetings, memoranda, appendices, questionnaires, interviews with project workers and partners, observations on various situations, and repeated discussions with the co-ordinator, all of which have complemented the picture I have gained on the project. I have summarised the process analysis in this report by evaluating snags in the project implementation and their effect on the outcome of the project.

Awareness of the project and its impact on the Bosnian communities in Finland was to be evaluated by means of reception research, but before the decisions concerning the evaluation were made, the first part of the information campaign had been completed. Afterwards, I conducted interviews with the help of a group of students from the Department of Social Policy, and these helped to chart the degree of awareness and also generated data for the entire evaluation (see Interim evaluation report). After the project completion, I have conducted telephone interviews with Bosnians living in various parts of Finland, in order to gain an authentic picture of the degree of awareness.

Towards the end of the analysis, the evaluation took on formative aspects, as I analysed the ideas for further work and learning experiences emerging during the project.

Bosnians were involved in the evaluation discussions conducted during the project. They included members of the POW association and representatives of other Bosnian communities, as well as students during the theoretical and practical training. Moreover, during my trip to Bosnia in October I interviewed representatives of companies offering practical training, employees and counsellors of students, the

project worker in the IOM office and individuals who had either returned to Bosnia or had stayed there during the war.

4 EVALUATION RESULTS

I have divided the examination of evaluation results in two parts. In the analysis of project objectives I examine the outcome of the different project stages, using as criteria the quantitative objectives presented in the project application. The analysis of the content of the project stages is presented together with the analysis of evaluation objectives.

4.1. ANALYSIS OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES

4.1.1. INFORMATION CAMPAIGN FOR BOSNIANS LIVING IN FINLAND

Attainment of objectives

The eight information meetings during the first part of the information campaign drew a total of 193 Bosnians; compared to the target number 450, the percentage is a satisfactory 42.9%. The second part of the information campaign arranged after the fact-finding mission in September in seven localities drew 86 Bosnians (19.1%). The quantitative target set for the number of persons reached through the information campaign remained at 62% (279/450), which is a scant coverage.

The seminars and workshops arranged by the project were to reach 120 Bosnians and the general public. The combined number of Bosnian participants in the four seminars arranged was 112, which is 93.3% of the target set (112/120).

On the other hand, since a number of persons participated in several seminars and information meetings during both spring and autumn, the figures may be considered as indicative only. Assuming that none of the participants (391) came repeatedly, the percentage reached would be a cheering 86.9% of the expected population, which is a scant third (27.3%) of Bosnians living in Finland.

Information meetings or seminars targeted to the general public were not arranged during the project.

During the information campaign, the Bosnian community was to be informed of project results through seminars and the periodical Behar, as well as Finnish press and TV. Similarly, partners were to participate in publicising the project through various media. At the beginning of the project a publicity plan was to be drawn up.

The periodical Behar, published by the Finland-Bosnia-Herzegovina Association, described the project in its 1999 issues. The periodical was available at the information meetings and seminars. The periodical Monitori published by the Immigration Department of the Ministry of Labour also gave coverage to the project. The co-ordinator's appearance on morning TV and in regional press was noted with satisfaction.

A representative of the project partners, Mr. Tero Mikkola, Instructor at the Vocational Adult Education Centre of Tampere, published the article "With no housing or work it is difficult to return to Bosnia" in the daily Aamulehti on 24 November 1999, on the basis of his own fact-finding mission and information gained

from the students in practical training. The Domovini project was also covered by the Nordic press, thanks to Bosnian journalists living in Norway and Sweden who participated in the Jyväskylä seminar.

The information meetings did not draw the audiences estimated in the objectives, but the seminars gathered almost the expected number of participants. According to the objectives, the information campaign was complemented by individual information spots in various media.

Evaluation of the information campaign

The Domovini project was meant to reach the entire Bosnian community in Finland. The information campaign was concentrated on 8 localities, half of which were situated in the Province of Western Finland. Even though the largest number of immigrants, including Bosnians, live in the Province of Southern Finland, a meeting was only arranged in Helsinki. The meetings in Eastern Finland were arranged in small localities which were probably not easy to reach from other small localities.

The first part of the campaign was arranged on a hurried schedule, and advance information on the meetings was, according to my interviews, little or non-existent. The hours when meetings were arranged during the second part caused annoyance, as during the hours of 13/14 – 16 in the afternoon some of the Bosnians were working or studying and thus unable to come and listen or talk, even when they would have liked to. The speakers at the meetings were Finns and two or three Bosnians who had participated in the fact-finding mission. Of the 23 Bosnians who participated, it would have been possible to select three different people for each of the seven meetings to describe their thoughts and impressions. As it was, the knowledge and experiences gained by many participants was not utilised in the public meetings.

There was no third part to the information campaign. In my opinion, important information was 'lost' when students who were in practical training in Bosnia could not describe their experiences and fact-finding to the entire Bosnian community in Finland. As it was, their expertise only benefited the theoretical training, and even there they only spoke to their own groups.

Why was the publicity plan for the Domovini project not drawn up?

4. 1. 2. FACT-FINDING MISSION TO BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA.

Attainment of objectives

The participants of the fact-finding mission were to be 20 Bosnians representing various occupations who had left from Srebrenica and Zepa and were potential returnees, and 10 Finns representing labour administration, adult education, social work and reconstruction expertise. The Bosnian quota was completed beyond expectations (22/20). In addition, one participant from the corresponding Swedish organisation was included. The inclusion of extra Bosnians was possible since the Finnish quota was not completed. It is difficult for Finnish public-sector employees to take a longish leave of absence at short notice. Those participating did represent the fields of expertise desired, with the exception of the construction field. However, the vocational expertise of the Bosnians brought the composition up to par, for most Bosnians represented the field of constructions and transport.

The main goal of the fact-finding mission, to visit the home region of the POW association members, i.e. the Eastern Serb region, Zepa, Srebrenica, Rogatica and Bratunac, could not be realised and the mission only visited the Federation side, Sarajevo, Tuzla and Mostar. Several reasons have been put forward as to why the Serb region was not visited, ranging from the failure of Bosnian authorities to produce security guarantees to claims that the request to visit the Serb region had not even been submitted. The only person brave enough to go and see the destruction of his home region was the Bosnian resident in Sweden, acting on his own responsibility.

Evaluation of the fact-finding mission

Even though the mission did not reach the Eastern Serb region and the participants' former home, many of them met their family members, colleagues and acquaintances living in the Federation as internal refugees. For many participants, meeting those close to them was the main purpose of the trip.

However, the participants were expected to make observations and gather written information of the social situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina with a view to an eventual return; this included the employment situation, housing situation, necessity of reconstruction or new construction, health care, education, etc. Moreover, the purpose was to establish co-operation links and look for support among the local inhabitants. During the trip the representatives of labour administration and educational units actively searched for suitable practical training opportunities.

Reports on the mission remained scant. Among the Finns, four out of the eight (50%) produced a written summary, while seven out of 23 Bosnians (30%) did likewise. The reasons for the lack of reports by Finns could mostly be linked to the season, summer holidays, hot weather, etc. As regards the Bosnians, the major explanation is probably unfamiliarity with written work; most participants were skilled workers who are more used to the tools of their trade than to wielding a pen. Before the trip the plan was to conclude each day with a short meeting to discuss what had happened and to produce brief summaries, but in practice the days were much too filled for this to be realised.

4. 1. 3. VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN FINLAND AND PRACTICAL TRAINING IN BOSNIA

Attainment of objectives

For those planning to return, the asylum country must provide sufficient capabilities for returning by means of training and mental preparation. In order to attain this internationally-approved objective, the project was to include vocational training and subsequent practical training, to be implemented in two educational units. Both groups should have as students 15 potential returnees. The Vocational Institute in Helsinki, Amiedu, started its returnee programme with a full group of 15 students on 31 May 1999, but due to the lack of applicants, the Tampere Adult Education Centre TAKK started the programme with only 14 students.

According to the objectives, the practical training was planned to take place in Bosnia-Herzegovina, organised by local NGOs. On 18 August 1999, a group of 14 + 13 students left for Bosnia-Herzegovina. Due to family reasons one student in each group remained in the host country, and they received their practical training here. In

Bosnia the training placements were in different types of enterprises. A few placements were in Bosnian NGOs, such as the Women of Srebrenica. In selecting the placement hosts more weight was placed on private entrepreneurship than on civic society.

In Bosnia the 27 students had at least one 'mentor' employee in the host enterprise, which meant that the objective of engaging 15 – 20 persons in the activity in Bosnia-Herzegovina was met beyond expectation. No exact information is available as to the participation of members of the POW association, but on the basis of the interviews the students would seem to have been in contact with the federation of the POW associations or its local chapters.

The quantitative objectives set for the theoretical and practical training were almost completely attained. 28 students, or 14 in each group, completed the training. One of Amiedu's students remained in Bosnia after the practical training, so that he did not complete the returnee programme. Quantitatively, the training stage can be considered to have met its objectives.

4. 1. 4. REPORTING, EVALUATION AND FURTHER PROJECTS

Attainment of objectives

The project stayed almost on schedule. It was started on 15 December 1998, and its concluding seminar was arranged on 15 December 1999. However, the training period was only concluded on 17 December 1999. The plans stated that the project would be concluded on 14 December 1999. The few extra days meant that the final week of study would be a full five-day one.

Summary of quantitative evaluation

The quantitative analysis of the objectives replies to the question: "How well were the objectives attained during the several project stages?"

The number of participants in the information meetings arranged under the information campaign was clearly lower than the objective. Other types of meeting and other stages reached the target numbers almost completely. The co-ordinator's comment that the project was "demanding and strenuous but extremely educational" adds support to my claim that the mere completion of this project was an achievement.

In carrying out a qualitative analysis of the objectives I asked the question: "How meaningful are the outcomes expected?" The quantitative objectives were very realistic, and could therefore be attained. On the other hand, quantities do not reveal much about the content and quality of the project. For this reason I will revisit the quality issue with the analysis of evaluation objectives.

4. 2. ANALYSIS OF EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

4. 2. 1 GATHERING OF CONCRETE DATA ON CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE EASTERN SERB REPUBLIC TO SUPPORT THE DECISION-MAKING OF FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS CONCERNING VOLUNTARY RETURN

In order to study this objective I asked the following question:

1. What kind of a multidimensional information model on conditions in the Eastern Serb Republic was constructed through the different stages of the project?

A safe return requires that information on circumstances in the home country and on conditions after return is as correct and complete as possible. This is an internationally approved principle which is incorporated in all stages of the Domovini project, all of which contribute in different ways to a multidimensional information model on Bosnia-Herzegovina. Here, I will examine the information content of the various stages, and the modification of that content during the project.

Evaluation of the information campaign content

As regards its content, the first part of the information campaign was extremely topical and significant. The new property legislation of Republika Srpska required that claims for the returning of real property be registered within a certain period of time. Consequently, a separate 'property' project was established quickly using national funding. During the project (4 May to 31 August 1999) 143 Bosnians (10%) submitted their registration application. This must be included within the multiplier effects of the Domovini project.

Extensive return migration requires, among other things, that mine clearing activity has been completed. The first part of the information campaign also gave up-to-date information on land mines by showing maps of mine locations and photographs of different types of mines and by describing the minesweeping activity.

The information meetings also described work on the Returnee's Guide, which was to help the returnees themselves as well as the assisting authorities. Moreover, the February meetings described the returning practices in Nordic countries and the Domovini project.

The new content of the information campaign during the second part reflects the development which took place in project activity. Topical issues gave way to information and impressions gained during the fact-finding mission. The contents of the information meetings during the second part included information on the social situation in Bosnia and discussion on the progress of reconstruction and improvement of conditions. However, in the light of information received the conditions for return appear not to exist; the basic social functions in Bosnia-Herzegovina develop only slowly. Progress towards democracy, unemployment, housing conditions, health care, education, all of these fields require significant improvements to make returning possible.

The contents of the seminars also reflected progress in the project. The spring seminar included a film on the destruction of Srebrenica, a product of Nordic contacts. In the concluding Seminar, guest speaker Teuvo Laitila was able to analyse the conditions in Bosnian society from a research point of view.

Evaluation of the content of the fact-finding mission

19 members of the POW association took part in the mission to Bosnia, which is 25.7% of its total membership (74 in October 1999). For them the mission was the main activity in the project, as they could see with their own eyes, hear with their

own ears and feel with their hearts the current condition of their country of birth, and could meet their family, friends and acquaintances. Above all, however, the mission was for them a means of finding support for their own decisions, and diversified information on whether to return in the near future or only later.

Since the mission did not visit the Eastern Serb region, the information gained mostly concentrated on an analysis of the current socio-political situation in the Federation. The information thus received came from many different sources: official state authorities, various NGOs and experiences of private individuals, both family and friends. For many participants the main thing was to learn about the social situation in Bosnia and its effect on everyday life and life management. In this sense, personal contacts with relatives, friends and colleagues were essential.

For both Finnish authorities and Bosnians hoping for a return, the mission was significant in itself, as it gave an opportunity of visiting a country which has experienced a war, the home country of the refugees, the society of Bosnia-Herzegovina where conditions are not yet stable.

Evaluation of the content of the theoretical and practical training stage

It is difficult to form an overall picture of the information which the theoretical and practical training stage contained on the current situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as the data available to me was only limited, if only because the diaries and other notes were written in Bosnian. The heterogeneity of the student population points to the fact that the information which was received, filtered and shared is very personal, of many different levels, but rewarding because of the individual needs, expectations and levels of thinking.

The training periods made use of visiting lecturers who spoke on conditions in Bosnia. However, as far as I can tell, each student has collected in his/her portfolio material on eventual return: information on the situation in Bosnia concerning relocation, reconstruction and improvement of infrastructure, but also on matters related to reintegration, such as employment, livelihood, education and schooling conditions, health care and social work.

According to the Kitchener-King model of reflective thinking, thinking develops in stages. The move from a black-and-white, polarised thinking to a contextualising expertise takes time and requires the solving of so-called poorly articulated or structured problems. The brief training period during the project primarily gave the students an opportunity of moving one stage ahead in their thinking. According to my estimate, the participants mostly ended up in a situation where they dare not take a stand in any direction: there are too many uncertain factors, ranging from the definition of one's own identity to international politics.

When perspectives of meaning, worldviews and one's own ego are no longer self-evident, what becomes central is the emotional security of the learning situation. Students were obviously attached to their instructors in both units; observations during my trip to Bosnia prove how warm and intimate the instructor's relationship with the students had become. During the theoretical and practical training the feeling of insecurity was increased by many unresolved practical matters and financial problems. The sorting out of these issues and the continuous, even emotional exchange of opinions overshadowed the pedagogic objectives of the training.

2. How does the multidimensional information model function in practice?

The information model generated by the project does not contain all the information which most Bosnians use daily to satisfy their personal hunger for information. Interviews transmitted a diversified picture of the channels used by the Bosnians in finding out about things. Many Bosnians have a personal computer at home with access to Internet and e-mail, and libraries and schools in their vicinity allow free access to Internet. Satellite channels and practically daily contacts with Bosnians in Finland or in Bosnia offer up-to-date personal experiences and information, which assist in analysing the social situation in Bosnia and the global politics.

The education and administration system of former Yugoslavia continues undoubtedly to have an effect on the behaviour of Bosnians living in Finland: some of them are capable of autonomous information retrieval and analysis, while others expect to be given packages of information with an analysis attached.

The multidimensional model of gathering, analysing and disseminating information which was tested during the project will offer its users information which corresponds to his/her own needs and level of thinking and can thus be used by everyone. But where do we find an indicator for the correctness of information? The official opinion of the UNHCR will have an effect on whether the returnee has access to the services and benefits offered by the host country. But has the information generated by the project activity on the returnee situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina been compared to the UNHCR's opinion? And what about the RIC's bulletins? Or opinions by the authorities of the host country? These questions must remain unanswered, for the project report is not yet available.

3. What kind of return plans / integration plans for individuals, families or communities were drawn up during the project?

On the basis of the material available I conclude that only one student returned during the project; in fact, he stayed in Bosnia after his practical training, but it remains to be seen whether this is permanent.

By the end of the training stage some students (five, six in Amiedu) changed their opinion about returning to Bosnia almost daily, despite the information provided by the project, or possibly because of it. According to the view of one interviewee this type of behaviour is 'common for those who have been educated in our society, as they are used to receiving orders and not thinking for themselves'.

The situation at **Amiedu** after the training period was completed on 22 December 1999 according to the instructor: one student remained in Bosnia, one has been promised a permanent job, one has a certain opportunity of vocational further training, another a fairly certain one, 6 have submitted their applications to jobs offered, one is expecting a baby and one decided to be a housewife. Three have decided to remain in Finland, two will return to Bosnia to await the end of their days, about five, six persons are unable to decide whether to stay or to go.

According to the report given to the labour administration by the **TAKK** instructor, the opportunities of all students to return are at the moment scant, because of lack of work and housing. In most cases, stable family conditions support the decision to stay in Finland.

**4. 2. 2. DESIGNING OF MEASURES TO SUPPORT THE RETURN OF REFUGEES
a) TO THEIR HOME REGION IN EASTERN BOSNIA or
b) ALTERNATIVELY TO OTHER LOCALITIES IN THE BIH
(RELOCATION)**

Here I will examine the support measures tested during the project from two angles. First I will assess the content of the vocational training and practical training through an analysis of the pedagogical objectives. Then I will take a look at other support measures. The basic assumption is that in the current situation it is not possible to design separate support measures for return to the Eastern Serb region and for return elsewhere in Bosnia.

A. Pedagogical objectives of the theoretical and practical training stage

The content of the theoretical and practical training stage was examined in the light of three pedagogical objectives:

How successful was the monitoring and developing of the training plan during the project?

How were the personal needs and objectives of the students considered in the training?

How were quality assurance and evaluation implemented in the training?

1. How successful was the monitoring and developing of the training plan during the project?

This stage was crucial for the whole project. The theoretical and practical training had to fulfil not only the primary objectives of the project, but also the pedagogical and personal objectives, which were substantial and conflicting: vocational training, counselling, preparation for returning and integration plans, entrepreneurial studies. If all of these had pulled in the same direction and had been clearly defined from the start, the entity could have been manageable. As it was, the objectives changed mid-course: for financial reasons, the practical training was brought under the theoretical training. Therefore it also became the most problematic part of the training stage, even if simultaneously it brought in many different benefits.

The reformulation as pedagogic objectives of the overall project objectives was extremely difficult in such a short period (6.5 months). The theoretical training was meant to help the refugees in integration in Finland and/or in returning to Bosnia. In both these main directions, which are mutually exclusive in their realisation, the training content consisted of broad topics: social analysis on the employment and labour market, education, health care and housing in Finland and in Bosnia. The students' personal vocational capabilities and desires had to be tested in the labour markets of both Bosnia and Finland, and on top of that they had to draw up a follow-up plan for employment or continued study.

Thus, the initial period of training became primarily a course orienting the students for the practical training placement.

An attempt was made to implement the post-placement training as a counselling course, but time was too short for this. Neither did this stage function as vocational training, if only because the students varied greatly in their background: some were skilled workers, others experts with university degrees, while still others had no

vocational training. The variation in language skills also made it difficult to grasp what was offered: the level of Finnish skills varied from 1 to a maximum of 5. In Tampere, the curriculum had to be expanded to include Finnish as well.

2. How were the personal needs and objectives of the students considered in the training?

Individual learning plans are based on the concept of self-oriented learning. However, some of the students followed the model of externally guided learning assumed during their basic education. The drawing up of individual learning plans caused problems for most students. On the other hand, the wishes of some students could not be accommodated, because the curriculum was not flexible enough. For instance, English studies were not possible. The training improved the students' skills in Finnish, which gave them better employment prospects in Finland, but will not be of help in returning to Bosnia.

The updating of computer skills will be of help in searching for information through the Internet, for instance, but will also improve vocational capabilities.

Due to the lack of applicants, almost half of the students in the Tampere group came from the Turku region. For them part of the teaching was tailored as distance learning, to the detriment of pedagogical objectives and team spirit.

Both groups also had women members. Returnee programmes ought to pay special attention to the training and mental preparation of women in the host country. According to my information, the training could not develop women's skills and capability of providing livelihood for their families, partly because of a lack of resources. Neither could the training offer functional plans for career change or further development of occupational skills. The mental preparation for return as a special issue for women was not noted.

Practical training in Bosnia and Finland

The organisation of practical training appeared very haphazard: some placements were acquired by the students themselves with the help of family and friends, others were 'found' during the fact-finding mission.

Some of the students were able to test their occupational skills in Bosnia. Even though not everyone was able to update their working skills, the placement gave an opportunity of rechecking personal hopes for employment, running a business and return to Bosnia.

For many, the brief practical training in Finland initiated a personal analysis of skills needed in working life, which led to the drawing up of vocational follow-up plans. After the project ended, these people took up further study, either vocational education or entrepreneurship courses.

Many of the students would be willing to run a business either on their own or together with other Bosnians, carrying out bilateral trade between Finland and Bosnia. Interest was also shown towards reconstruction, renovation and new construction activity in Bosnia, but a lack of the necessary skills and basic capital made this impossible, and the project was unable to offer enough tools to improve these basic deficits.

Some of the persons I interviewed told me that during their practical training they had visited the Eastern Serb region and had seen that their home was destroyed and their family had fled or disappeared.

The information gained during the project gave the Bosnians the unambiguous picture that returning to your home country as a refugee is problematic. Finding a job is difficult because of a shortage of employers and jobs, and housing expenses (rents, electricity, gas, water) are high, even when housing is available at all. Health care is deficient: there are not enough doctors or medications, hospital equipment is outdated and in poor condition, etc.

3. How were quality assurance and evaluation implemented in the training?

My comments on the feedback arrangements and quality assurance in the training stage are based on an overview gained from interviews. In both educational units, a consistent quality assurance system was only being designed and the personnel was being trained in its use. The evaluation of training mostly took place through regular evaluation discussions in the student groups, and by means of an evaluation meeting arranged with the purchaser as the training period was completed.

The students gave the instructors excellent feedback and were satisfied with them. As regards the content of training, there was felt to be need for improvement, and the composition of the programme did not meet the expectations, needs and aims of instructors or students.

In both educational units, studies were impeded by the lack of practical organisation: financial matters, housing, travel and housing costs etc. should have been sorted out before training began. As it was, everyday problems took up a lot of students' energy and made concentration difficult.

Measures supporting the return to home country and support measures envisaged in the project are linked with the Returnee's Guide, which also describes services and benefits offered by Finland to returnees.

There was no sign of psychological, social and mental forms of support. When the content of training is redesigned, these support forms should be included as a matter of course.

4. 2. 3. CO-OPERATION WITH LOCAL NGO'S IN BIH

What co-operation practices were set up with Bosnian NGOs? What partners should have been included?

During the project the co-ordinators and instructors were in continuous contact with NGOs in Bosnia to keep information up to date. The organisation of the fact-finding mission and of the practical training also required intensive mutual contacts. Some of the students were also very active in this respect.

During their visits to Bosnia the instructors established co-operation relationships not only with organisations, but also with businesses, schools and a football club. These contacts led to practical training placements for students.

The POW association of the Federation and the organisation Women of Srebrenica, as well as the Finnish Free Foreign Mission aroused interest during the fact-finding mission.

The Women of Srebrenica provided practical training for two students, and the existing ties with the two associations were strengthened.

The significance of the organisation Women of Srebrenica increased during the project, as it became clear during the mission that one of the key conditions for a safe return is the finding, identification and appropriate burial of missing family members. The organisation devotes all its resources to the successful completion of this task. It was a point of honour for the Domovini project to support this organisation, and it assisted the organisation in acquiring a computer.

A frequently expressed opinion was that such international organisations as the IOM, the UNHCR, the RIC and the World Bank would have been good partners. They could have provided practical training and in future could support the return process in many ways as social organisations.

4. 2. 4. CREATION OF A MODEL FOR A VOLUNTARY "STEP BY STEP" RETURN (OF THE MINORITY) AND REINTEGRATION TO HOME COUNTRY (UNDER INTENSIVE SUPPORT FROM THE HOST COMMUNITY)

How functional is the model now tested from the point of view of the parties?

The model for voluntary step-by-step return consists of the following stages:

- 1) gathering and analysis of multidimensional information
- 2) personal fact-finding mission to Bosnia in order to clarify the possibility of return
- 3) strong measures supporting return, such as theoretical and practical training, benefits and services
- 4) personal decision to return or to remain

The model for a voluntary step-by step return covers the collection of information during the entire project, beginning from the first planning meeting of the Domovini project and ending with the final words of the final reports. The information includes the official promises by Bosnia-Herzegovina to guarantee the safety and reintegration of returning citizens, legislative processes and decision and statements by various authorities. The viewpoints and activities of NGOs offer information on the community level. The last, but not least level of information are the personal observations, experiences and interpretations of each potential returnee concerning the conditions for return, formed during the mission and the practical training.

In conformity with UNHCR guidelines, the collection and analysis of information is complemented by a 6.5-month period of theoretical and practical training designed to assist the return process. Due to the renewed upheaval in the Balkans in the early part of the year, the assistance to return was paralleled by assistance to integration in Finland.

The fourth step, an independent and voluntary decision on returning or staying should be the result of a long and thorough reflection. To take that decision, the information collected must be analysed and compared with statements by, e.g., UNHCR and RIC. The preparation must also bring clarity to the potential of each immigrant of adapting themselves to the society, and offer benefits and services which help construct a future, whether in Bosnia or in Finland.

How functional did the model prove?

For the various parties the crucial stage seemed to be the one in which each of them participated. The members of the fact-finding mission lost their interest towards the project after returning from the visit to Bosnia. The main objective of those participating in the theoretical and practical training stage was to visit Bosnia. Nevertheless, towards the end of the project there was enough energy for drafting individual plans for future and for planning further projects.

In my opinion the collection and analysis of multidimensional information and the construction of a synthesis rested on the individual abilities of the participants. Members of the fact-finding mission did receive tools for their analysis to the extent that they made use of the report format which was distributed. Those who participated in the theoretical and practical training could also analyse, examine and synthesise the information received, but since the training focused on the testing of working life skills and introduction to working life practices, little time or tools were available for the analysing and internalising of experiences, observations, interpretations and information.

The final project report and the internal overall project evaluation are not available to me. On the basis of my current information I consider that the project lacked a key stage: the synthesis of information, experiences and skills gained. This could have consisted of an extensive analysis seminar with workshops, which could have gathered together all the information gained over the year from various sources, and could have produced an analysis and a clear picture of the socio-political situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, against which all potential returnees could have examined their decision.

4. 2. 5 WIDER APPLICATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION MODEL IN THE NORDIC AND EUROPEAN CONTEXTS

What benefits will the implementation model bring for the return practices a) in the Nordic countries, b) elsewhere in Europe?

The Finnish model of return migration or integration in the host country was a very expensive and cumbersome operation. For this reason the model contains inherent contradictions related to the content. Expectations and objectives and the degree of their attainment have varied greatly within the target group.

The model of voluntary step-by-step return follows the UNCHR guidelines according to which the asylum country must offer sufficient capabilities and adequate training for the returnees. Since this project was a pioneering one with many growing pains and impeding factors, it must be considered only as a first step in constructing the model, to serve as a good basis for continued work. What is needed now is more detailed planning, reflection on the training stage, synthesising of information and fine-tuning of the overall entity. After all that, the streamlined model should be tested in practice before it can be recommended to others.

Finland has awarded the Bosnians refugee status with the services and benefits related to it. Other Nordic or European countries have not acted likewise. Officially, Finland is very wary in its statements concerning the possibility of returning to Bosnia. This is in contrast to, for instance, Germany, which systematically counsels

Bosnians to return, e.g. by the GARP-programme. The development of the return process model could be considered as compensation for the limited benefits which Finland currently offers to returnees.

Those interviewed tended to stress the fact that models tested in other Nordic countries and elsewhere in Europe could be modified and taken into use in Finland. They were more willing to follow these models than to commit to the Domovini project. In particular, they recommended that Finnish authorities should imitate the benefits and services offered by other countries. It was recognised that the immigration policies of different countries would take different directions, but there was no willingness to see these as constraining the provision of benefits and services.

Without a thorough examination of costs it is perhaps too bold to claim as a general impression that the model was relatively expensive and structurally cumbersome. Moreover the implementation of the model brought about much more expenditure than is visible in the overall budget. The training-oriented labour policy in Finland will probably find few applications in countries where labour policy concentrates more on work.

4. 2. 6 DEGREE OF BOSNIAN PARTICIPATION IN PRACTICAL PROJECT ACTIVITY

How actively did Bosnians participate in project activity?

In addition to the POW association there are any other associations of Bosnians in Finland. The number of Bosnians participating actively in the whole project was 49, of whom 30 were members of the POW association and 19 members of other Bosnian communities. The fact-finding mission included 19 former prisoners of war and 4 other Bosnians. The participants of theoretical and practical training were evenly divided among the POW association members (15) and other Bosnians (14).

In all, 3.4% Bosnians (1,434) participated actively in the project. This includes those who took part either in the fact-finding mission, theoretical and practical training, as well as the two co-ordinators.

What factors have influenced the degree of Bosnian participation?

The snags in the project which I have presented in my process analysis acted as factors weakening the Bosnian participation. The role of the POW association was questioned right from the start of the project, the person selected as co-ordinator quickly lost the support and respect of the community, problems with interpreting caused breakdown of information flow in meetings and seminars, financial questions took the fore in each project stage, leaving behind all other objectives, and differences in cultural interaction, were felt to be factors impeding the progress of the project. All of these are clearly linked to the willingness of Bosnians to participate in the project.

Moreover, the broader situation in the Balkans and the Kosovo situation in particular caused a change in attitudes during the past year. The project, initially offered as support for the return process, was now seen as a threat. Some of the persons I interviewed went as far as to ask whether the Finnish authorities are going to force Bosnians to return.

However, if the project had not also included strongly motivating factors, its results would have remained extremely limited or it would perhaps have been interrupted. The most important motivating factor was the tangible benefit of a trip to Bosnia. One of my interviewees put in a nutshell the situation shared by many during their practical training in Bosnia and also endorsed by members of the fact-finding mission: "Before the trip we held up hopes of returning home, perhaps in the near future even, but as you saw and felt the actual situation in Bosnia, you had to look the truth in the eye and realise that you will have to build up your future in Finland." Bosnians living in Finland keep close contact with the federation of POW associations and local associations in Bosnia in order to keep up with the situation there.

3. 2. 7. AWARENESS AND IMPACT OF PROJECT AMONG BOSNIAN COMMUNITIES IN FINLAND

How wide an awareness did the project gain during the year?

What impact has the project had on Bosnians and the Bosnian community in Finland?

As far as is known, there are currently five organised Bosnian communities in Finland. In addition to the Zepa-Srebrenica POW association there is the Finland-Bosnia-Herzegovina Association in Mikkeli, which publishes the periodical Behar. The Bosnian Cultural Association of Häme was established in Tampere, and there are Bosnian associations in Turku and in Vaasa, the latter called Lilian.

The purpose of the information campaign was to make the Domovini project known to all the Bosnians in Finland, to involve them actively in the project activity and to raise their awareness of the social situation in Bosnia.

The first part of the campaign concentrated on disseminating information on land mines, on the new property legislation in Bosnia and the measures it required, as well as on the newly launched Domovini project. The second part of the information campaign concentrated on experiences from the fact-finding mission. Since all meetings had Finnish and Bosnian speakers, it was possible to have the situation in Bosnia described by the representatives of two cultures. On the basis of my observations and interviews the Finnish angle was more prominent, but the meetings also gave space for Bosnian opinions, and demands were made to make use of Nordic and European practices. The whole project was characterised by self-interest, an attitude of 'what do I get out of this', and even though this abated slightly towards the end, it was still visible in the information meetings. The opinion was that since the benefits and services offered to returnees by other countries were better than in Finland, Finland should also improve its provision. Even though the differences between guidelines governing the immigration policies in different countries were recognised, there was a general refusal to accept that such guidelines provided constraints to benefits and services.

The Bosnian communities have informed their members of projects carried out in Finland, including the Domovini project. Judging by my interviews, the information channels have included everything available from personal dialogue to the Internet and e-mail. According to the project co-ordinator, each association has provided information which supports its own interests. According to the constructive point of view this is something that invariably happens.

In addition to the information meetings and seminars, the awareness of Bosnian communities of the project was expanded by the periodical Behar published by the Finland-Bosnia-Herzegovina Association and distributed in the various events. According to the editor, Resad Hasanovici, the Behar reaches all Bosnians in Finland, as 700 exemplars of the Domovini issue were printed. On the other hand, the interviews revealed that the periodical does not interest people to quite the degree that the editor presented.

A poll conducted rapidly after the conclusion of the project showed that the Domovini project was known by name all through Finland, but awareness of the project's contents was not very profound. Some just recognised the name, while others were able to mention one of the project stages, but more detailed descriptions were not forthcoming. However, when asked about the usefulness of the project, respondents said that Bosnians had been able to visit Bosnia on the fact-finding mission or practical training, and that there had been other training. No one was able to mention all these points, but perhaps one or two of them.

The impact of the project is examined in more detail in a later chapter 5

4. 2. 8. ACTIVITY OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTERS AND PARTNERS

Project activity can be approached from the viewpoint of process analysis. This analyses the launching of the project, its implementation, internal activity, snags in the implementation and interaction between the project personnel. Since the project steering group is currently writing an internal evaluation report which is not accessible to me, I will limit myself to looking at the snags in the project.

What kind of problems and snags had to be solved during the project?

In the following I have taken up problems which clearly impeded project activity during the year, and which came up in most interviews as obstacles. I will also briefly describe the 'swords' used to cut these knots.

1) Role of the POW association in the project

The Zepa-Srebrenica POW association in Finland was made to shoulder the role of initiator right from the planning meeting. The steering group extended the target group to consist of all Bosnians in Finland, not just the members of the association. This brought about a vigorous debate which culminated in a breakdown of trust between the Bosnian community and the co-ordinator. In May, the POW association demanded that a new co-ordinator be appointed from among its members. The Finnish partners decided to support the original co-ordinator and threatened to discontinue the project in June if the original co-ordinator was not allowed to continue and peace did not return.

2) Does the co-ordinator represent the POW association or the whole Bosnian community?

According to the criteria set, the project co-ordinator was to enjoy the confidence of the POW association and to act as the association's representative in the project. In the spring the association members demanded that the co-ordinator be fired because of a breakdown of trust. The steering group's implicit opinion was that the co-

ordinator represented the whole Bosnian community in Finland and consequently need not be a member of the POW association.

The co-ordinator is not a member of the POW association, and he has arrived from Bosnia soon after the war began. He has also publicly stated that he will remain in Finland and will thus never become a returnee. "How can a returnee project be co-ordinated by one who is not going to return himself? Why is he making others return?" were comments heard repeatedly from Bosnians in interviews conducted as late as in October.

3) Interpreting: who interprets, when, to what extent, and who pays for interpreting?

The Finnish skills of even active participants in the project were not always up to the discussion in meetings, seminars and other events. The POW association desired that one of their members could act as interpreter, but the chairman of the steering committee demanded a decision to be made according to which the financing bodies will pay for an interpreter from the Häme Interpreting Centre whenever necessary. The provision of interpreting was not always optimal: for instance, several Bosnians who participated in the follow-up seminar after the fact-finding mission never received an interpretation of the Finnish experiences.

In the Tampere group the language skills of the students were not always sufficient for following the teaching, so that one of the students acted as interpreter.

4) Financial issues: who benefits and in what way?

Financial conflicts hampered the attainment of objectives throughout the project. During the first eight months, the unspoken question was, "How am I going to benefit financially from this project?" On the basis of my analysis I doubt if I could claim even at the end of the project that the question was, "How do we as Bosnians benefit from this?"

Financial problems came up in other ways as well. The practical arrangements related to the social and economic issues for the fact-finding mission as well as for the practical and theoretical training caused more work than envisaged for the two educational units, both offices of the IOM, the Employment and Economic Development Centres, the municipal welfare offices and the local offices of the Social Insurance Institute.

5) Problems related to the flow of information and interaction?

The flow of information between different participating bodies was poorly managed. Information on the campaigns to the Bosnian communities was provided in too short a time and not systematically enough. Information on the theoretical and practical training was provided by the labour exchanges primarily through a universal channel, the computer terminal. It is true that the labour exchanges as well as other participating bodies had only a vague idea of the objectives of the project after situations had changed. They were not sufficiently well informed of the training content and the role of the practical training in the whole. Similarly, the selection criteria of students were not clear-cut. In the meetings of the steering group many members found to their surprise that they had been allocated a task list without prior consultations.

Due to the poor flow of information during the project the wildest rumours circulated among Bosnians, and all chance meetings between Bosnians or Finns led to the most varied questions being asked.

5. IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECT

In evaluating the effectiveness of the project I have started out from the multi-criteria model used by Lumijärvi, who considers that the evaluation of effect should include not only profitability, but also qualitative characteristics. Since the client excluded the cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analyses from the evaluation, I have evaluated the profitability from the viewpoint of the products generated by the project and of their goodness as compared to the needs of the Bosnians. I have combined impact together with the discussion of quality: what direct, indirect and multiplier effects and benefits have the project activities produced. I will also discuss the adequacy and targeting of the product and service provision.

Personal decision of returning or integration in Finland

If the only acceptable measure of the success of a returnee project is the number of those who have returned or will return in the near future, the result is lean. From the active participants only one has returned to Bosnia during the year. Correspondingly, four (22 December 1999) felt strongly that their future lies in Finland. The opinions of the rest of the subjects range between these two ends, depending on their family situation, employment prospects and housing conditions.

Since the project participants share the opinion that returning to the home country is a long and arduous process, we should probably consider this project as a launching pad for plans which will be implemented after years, possibly dozens of years.

In addition to looking at how many people had made their decisions, there were other products from the project during the year.

Returnee's Guide: Information concerning the return process has been very fragmented in Finland. Those needing information on benefits, practices, legislation and co-operating organisations have been forced to look it up at several different sources. The new guide now contains everything necessary. Moreover, it contains a list of questions which help focus the plans of returning and solve practical problems. It can clearly be predicted that the guide will help authorities who work with immigrants. The first edition of 120 exemplars is probably sufficient if the guide is only distributed to workers in units dealing with immigration.

Practices in Finnish municipalities have varied. Even services and benefits available to returnees have varied between localities. It is to be hoped and expected that the new guide would lead to uniform practices.

Bosnians will benefit from the guide only after it is translated into Bosnian. After that it can help in planning a return, whether of individuals or whole families.

An English version of the guide would be of benefit to all English-speaking potential returnees in Finland. It could also be used to inform other Nordic and European countries of Finnish practices concerning returnees. Many of my interviewees noted that financial support to returnees is smaller in Finland than in other Nordic countries or Germany and Holland, so the guide would not provide a model for countries wishing to improve their services.

Information on land mines

It is not enough to show maps and pictures of land mines. For the information to be meaningful and effective, it must be augmented with instructions on what should or should not be done when mines are encountered. Information should also be provided on minesweeping, sweeping equipment and the costs involved. The land mine information could be elaborated further with the help of Sukrija Numanovic, who is an acclaimed land mine expert.

The basic questions of realistic evaluation are: What functioned, for whom and in what circumstances? The effects of the project are the changes which certain mechanisms have brought about in certain circumstances. These mechanisms are the project activities which in various contexts have caused changes. In the following I will briefly review the effects noted for various participating bodies. In evaluating the quality of services I will examine the degree of fit of the products and services to the clients' needs. Thus, this will be a brief overview of how the products and services generated during the project correspond to the needs and expectations of the implementing bodies and the partners.

1) For the Zepa-Srebrenica POW association the project allowed a unique opportunity of seeing the implementation of a project started on their initiative. For them, it became a 'golden project' which it was a matter of honour to see through. During the project the members of the association generated many interesting ideas of developing the association's activity. Future will tell which of them will become reality, and very soon.

2) The needs of **the Bosnian community in Finland** vary according to local conditions and individual expectations, as do the effects. For the Bosnian community as a whole, an indirect result of the project was the recovery of property project, during which 10% of the community submitted a registration application.

The information on the land mine situation in Bosnia must be kept up to date as regards maps etc., to make it useful in the future. Such information could be used not only by returnees, but also by those travelling to Bosnia on vacation, on business or for a visit.

The Returnee's Guide must be translated into Bosnian in order to be of use to Bosnians.

The participants to the information campaign and the fact-finding mission as well as those participating in theoretical or practical training have received multiple benefits, and the effect should be visible in future.

3) Workers with immigrant background: Bosnians who worked in the project to implement it have gained a unique learning experience in project work. At the same time, they gained facts and everyday experiences on working life in Finland, culture of interaction and requirements of bureaucracy.

For Finnish authorities the project provided important experiences on all the cultural, information-related, or interactive angles, not to mention theoretical questions of utility and necessity, which must be taken into account when a project is implemented by immigrants.

4) The Bosnian community in Bosnia: During the fact-finding mission both the Bosnian members and representatives of Finnish authorities made clear their

willingness to co-operation and exchange of information and experiences, each in their own sphere of interest.

Those in practical training in Bosnia described Finnish know-how, innovations, culture and social conditions to their colleagues.

Friends, relatives and acquaintances in the home country could after many years meet the refugees, exchange news, share grief over those lost and construct a shared future.

5) The Bosnian partners gained during the two-month practical training free employees, information on Finnish labour practices, know-how and innovations. The employers I interviewed were very satisfied with the students' input and expressed their deep gratitude to both the Republic of Finland and the European Union. The project had sufficient funds for supporting financially the organisations offering practical training. The students had an opportunity of taking tools and materials with them, but in the excitement of leaving for the trip the paints, hammers and small machines were forgotten. Only a few workplaces received a new computer on funding from the project.

6) For the project steering group and Finnish partners the project constituted an excellent learning experience. During the interview some of them were able to reflect upon their own activity, to analyse it and the strengths and weaknesses of project implementation. I also believe they are able to learn from their experiences.

6 FORMATIVE ANALYSIS

How can the results and experiences of the project be applied in future?

The project objectives were challenging also as regards the future plans: new projects, new activities, methods, models and plans.

The activity of the project participants produced plenty of proposals, ideas for new projects and suggestions for instruments to use in active labour policy.

The multidimensional information model is a new type of model for searching for information and for preparing immigrants for returning to their home country. Despite its heaviness, the project can in its entirety be considered as ground-breaking..

Development ideas and further projects

The internal evaluation of the information campaign mentioned the interesting idea of *counselling on return*, which should be included in future projects.

The development ideas emerging in group discussions and individual interviews with students after the fact-finding mission included various alternative plans: depending on the situation, fact-finding missions ranging from 1-2 weeks to 6 months or a year.

The evaluation of the training stage produced the suggestion that a fact-finding mission could be undertaken by a special group. The representative of Finn Church Aid felt that the best option would be low-profile activity, a few persons visiting the local inhabitants and associations, making interviews and observations and collecting information.

Each member of the mission should have a say in what kind of mission would best serve him/her. This sounds idealistic, but is in fact practicable.

Vocational training

Training should focus on one large entity

- 1) Preparation for return, including plans for further action and support measures, or
- 2) Entrepreneurial training, or
- 3) Training in support of integration in Finland

Practical training

The practical training should build on the immigrant's real need to test his/her vocational skills, verify the degree of realism of vocational plans, and develop capabilities needed for working.

Permanent contacts should also be established with Bosnian bodies offering practical training placements.

Further projects

The project did not quash the Bosnians' willingness of establishing businesses of their own. The most popular follow-up projects included various import and export businesses, reconstruction projects and aid projects.

Small-scale projects were also appreciated. Among them, those living in Helsinki are planning a Bosnian evening in the multicultural centre Caisa in January.

The development ideas proposed are very realistic and pragmatic, and in particular, they are based on the Bosnians' own needs and wishes. It is to be hoped that they can be realised.

LESSONS LEARNED

The project's internal monitoring reports contain excellent reflection on the project's implementation and on elements helping or hindering its implementation, and also on the learning experiences it has offered. An opinion shared by all is that for each participant the project offered an excellent learning experience, which will be of benefit to all future projects, starting from the funding applications and planning stages through to the final reports.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the model of realistic evaluation, the project products must be evaluated critically to determine whether they really were generated by the project or not.

The Domovini project was implemented in its entirety and attained almost all of its quantitative objectives. As a learning project for all parties concerned, it was an unrivalled entity, but its lessons must be remembered when implementing subsequent projects. Starting from the planning phase up to the final meeting, the project's objectives were on a scale that made it very difficult to maintain consistent high quality.

During the year, the project sought to find a general guideline for a step-by-step construction of solid information basis for the return process and the acquisition of sufficient mental and vocational capital for return. The model is made up of four stages, all containing the collection, analysis and dissemination of information. The final stage was to form an informative overall picture of the current socio-political situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which can be compared with information available through international channels and which individual Bosnians planning their return

could use as a yardstick. At the time of writing the final project report and the internal overall evaluation planned by the steering group are not available, so an overall evaluation of the information cannot be presented.

The information campaign sought to collect, analyse and disseminate optimally correct and complete information of problems and functioning of the infrastructure in the home country, of the stabilisation of the political conditions and the potential of returning. The model thus established can equally well be used as a pattern for integrating in the host country: in order to manage one's life and plant the future in the new country, learning about social systems is necessary. The information campaign arranged within the project was not the only source of information; rather, all channels from the more traditional ones to electronic means were used.

The theoretical and practical training stage, designed to support the return process, had extremely multi-layered, even conflicting, objectives, which makes it necessary to re-think the content of training. Preparation for the return process must be separated from the training designed to prepare students for working. The practical training must allow participants to test or update their vocational skills or learn about new occupations. The training should improve life management by offering relevant information on the practices and cultures of working and by supporting independent study and education. Other support services and benefits should also be updated. However, the project proved an excellent learning experience for all participants.

The members of the fact-finding mission and the students were very happy for the opportunity to visit their home country and see with their own eyes the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. At the same time, the visit provided a more realistic basis for their hopes of return, so that the decision of whether or not to return was built on a multidimensional information basis made up of personal experiences and information from several sources.

An excellent example of the development which took place during the project is the change in attitudes which occurred in the participating Bosnian community. The project underwent all normal stages of a group process, from forming through storming and norming to performing and stable activity. This was particularly visible in the attitudes towards the co-ordinator. In the early stages the Bosnians attempted to use discussions and negotiations to make their needs and wishes heard, but when they were not listened to or their opinions and proposals appreciated, the project went through a stormy period during which even aggressive opinions were heard. As a result of the stern stand adopted by the steering group the conflicts could be addressed, and space for co-operation was formed. Towards the end of the project it began to be possible to speak of future plans and setting up new projects in a good team spirit. The attitude towards the co-ordinator had also become a defensive and even explanatory one: "the co-ordinator did what he could".

The situation in Bosnia has been unstable throughout the project. Progress towards democracy has been hoped and prayed for, in order that plans for return could receive a realistic basis. The socio-political conditions have not improved to an extent which would make a return to Bosnia topical; dreams of returning have had to be put on the back burner. It would seem that the possibilities for decent housing, permanent jobs,

sufficient and accessible health care and proper schooling are still limited in Bosnia-Herzegovina, not to speak of the Eastern Serb region.

People who have regained security after prison camps and who have lost their families, property and home region, are not willing to start from scratch for a third time. They have by now built themselves a life in Finland, some have set up families, their children may have started school and found permanent friends. Parents may have found jobs and brushed up their vocational skills. In Bosnia-Herzegovina there are almost half a million internal refugees on refugee camps or temporarily billeted in the small houses of friends or relatives. They are unemployed and have little to look forward, but look forward to the beginning of a new, stable life. No one wants to join that group. Bosnians are now building their future in Finland, and they might return home in ten years or perhaps in their old age – to die.

Without exception, my interviewees said that they do not want to sit around at home enjoying gratuitous social benefits. They want to earn their livelihood through their own work, they want to support their families and educate their children. The Finnish labour policy primarily offers the unemployed education or theoretical and practical training, but it is unable to arrange permanent jobs.

The return process is long and cannot be implemented at once. One must first of all collect information, train oneself, solve numerous questions and discuss options individually and with the family. The decision to return should always be independent and voluntary.

The model of voluntary step-by-step return as it was implemented here is a first step in the development of Finnish returnee programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) This being the first project led by an immigrant, the leader should have been assisted by an experienced Finnish project worker, who could have taken care of financial matters, benefits, and other practical arrangements which now took up a lot of time and resources.

2) It is an experience gained through many projects that the success of the project depends on the unwavering support and appreciation of the target group for the coordinator. This is a basic condition which cannot be reneged on without impairing the results.

3) Principles of equality must be a self-evident part of the value basis. For instance, all those participating in practical training etc. must have the same rights and entitlements. As particularly vulnerable groups, women, children, the aged and the disabled require returnee programmes particularly tailored to them.

4) During the planning stage, those implementing the project and the key partners must be involved. This will also help to determine whether the partners and the project employees have realistic opportunities of working efficiently. All parties must have similar views about the objectives. The necessity of commitment must also be stressed.

5) A project targeted to a certain immigrant group must involve members of that group as workers, actors, organisers, partners, so that lecturers, instructors, evaluators and interpreters are drawn from the target group. The Bosnians in Finland include skilled persons for all these tasks.

6) Seminars, workshops and public meetings should primarily be targeted to the Bosnians, or the relevant ethnic group as a whole, instead of being PR meetings targeted to the Finnish partners.

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Internet-sivut; IOM, UNHCR, RIC, srebrenica.org, International Federation for Human Rights

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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|-------------|---|
| Amiedu = | the Vocational- Institut in Helsinki |
| TAKK = | the Vocational Adult Education Centre of Tampere |
| POW = | Prisoners of War from Zepa-Srebrenica |
| BiH = | Bosnia and Herzegovina |
| CRPC = | COMMISSION FOR REAL PROPERTY CLAIMS OF DISPLACED PERSONS AND REFUGEES |
| IOM = | INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION |
| UNHCR = | UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES |
| RIC/ICMPD = | INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR MIGRATION POLICY CENTER |