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EXPLORATORY TRIP IN YUGOSLAVIA

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Introduction

Ivana Franovic, Milan Colic and Nedžad Horozovic from the Centre for Nonviolent Action made an exploratory trip to Yugoslavia in October and December of 2001.

This research had the following goals:

- *Getting to know NGOs and their local conditions*
- *Analysis of the political situation in the country and problems of society*
- *Assesment of needs of the groups working on peace building, conflict resolution, inter-ethnic relations and cross border cooperation*
- *Assesment of needs for education in nonviolent conflict transformation.*

During the research, we visited 46 organisations from all over Serbia and Montenegro, from: Niš, Medveda, Leskovac, Vlasotince, Vranje, Bujanovac, Preševo, Cacak, Užice, Novi Pazar, Kraljevo, Kragujevac, Dimitrovgrad, Pirot, Knjaževac, Zajecar, Negotin, Bor, Beograd, Novi Sad, Sombor, Becej, Kolašin, Podgorica, Nikšić, Cetinje, Kotor, Herceg Novi, Tivat, Ulcinj, Bijelo Polje.

Having in mind the size of Yugoslavia, and the number of organizations active in it, our priority was to spend as much time as possible in the province, in small towns and cities, to explore the situation and contact organizations that are active there, rather than in Belgrade.

Research did not include Kosovo, for security reasons



Political situation

The political situation in FR Yugoslavia is rather complex. The complexity begins with perception of the term "Yugoslavia", which can be quite different. Some people consider Yugoslavia as: Montenegro and Serbia (together with the regions Vojvodina and Kosovo). For others Yugoslavia means: Montenegro, Serbia proper and Vojvodina. For some people Yugoslavia means only Serbia (questions remains whether "Serbia" is just Serbia proper, or includes the region of Vojvodina). All this means that the use of the term "Yugoslavia", for some people from this region, may sound like a political statement by itself, regardless of the fact that it is the official name of the country. The situation is similar with the term "Serbia".

Today, part of the population of the Republic of Montenegro wants an independent state. Part of the population of Vojvodina wants more autonomy for Vojvodina, and the majority of the population of Kosovo wants this region to become an independent state.

Parliamentary elections held in Montenegro in April of 2001 were mostly perceived as a referendum for the independence of Montenegro. The two biggest political coalitions confirm that with their names: "Collition Together for Yugoslavia" and "The Victory of Montenegro - Democratic Coalition of Milo Đukanovic". This unofficial referendum, however, did not untangle the complicated situation in Montenegro, because no one won more than 50% of the vote (official results were: 40,9% to 42% in favour of Milo Đukanovic's coalition). The rest of the votes went to the pro-independence Liberal Alliance (7,9%) and to some small parties like those of Albanian and Bosniak ethnic minorities.

During 2000, while Slobodan Milošević was still in power in Serbia, Montenegrin daily papers were full of feuilletons about "centuries of torture of Montenegro under Serbia". This atmosphere was very reminiscent of what was happening in Bosnia and Herzegovina or Croatia just before the war. Heavy police forces were present on the roads of Montenegro, with police wearing combat uniforms and khalashnikovs. There was fear of possible war between Serbia and Montenegro. The fear is gone now, especially after the so called "changes" in Serbia (the fall of the former regime).

What remains is the question of independence as an urgent problem in Montenegro. The first reactions in Serbia were: "Let them go if they want", "To hell with them", "No one asks us whether we want to live with them, only they are asked whether they want to live with us". During 2000, however, people became slightly tired and disinterested in the subject. For a long time, both authorities and most of the media acted as if a consensus had been reached on the issue of independence in Montenegro. All the attention was drawn to Serbia, like it was only up to Serbia whether Montenegro would become an independent state or not. Not enough opportunity was given to the citizens of Montenegro for dialogue and public debate. The situation is however very complicated, and people are extremely divided. In some cases it affects families: family members don't speak to each other because of their different political position. In some towns, those who support one or the other side go to separate pubs and do not mix. Riding in a car with Belgrade registration plates and asking people for directions gives

you an idea about whose side most of the people are that you talk to. Political parties or the media in Montenegro do not make it any easier, and instead increase polarization. The media has clearly made its choice. It seems there is no independent media to offer constructive criticism of both political options, and to give an effective approach to the problem.

According to the latest research from the Center for Democracy and Human Rights from Podgorica and Damar Agency (January 2002) the referendum results for independence of Montenegro would be: 46,7% to 41,9% in favour of independence. When asked about the best way for Serbia and Montenegro to establish their mutual relations, people gave the following answers: an independent and internationally recognized state (37,2%); a federation based on the new constitution (32,7%); a union of independent states (11,2%).

This conflict will certainly not be overcome without constructive dialogue and the public debate of supporters of different political options in Montenegro.

As well as Montenegrins and Serbs, there are members of other ethnicities in Montenegro: Albanians (mostly in the southern part), Croats (in central and northern part of the Adriatic coast), Bosniaks (in the east - the Montenegrin part of Sandžak), Roma and others. There are evident inter-ethnic tensions, but the matter of independence has pushed all the other problems in the background. These problems are either not discussed or denied. The precise ethnic structure of Montenegro is unknown, because the last census was done in 1991. The next census is expected in April of 2002.

According to the figures obtained in this research, Albanians make 7.6% of the total population, while there are 83% Albanians in the town of Ulcinj, at the very south of the Adriatic coast. Quite a large number of Albanians got their qualifications in Albania and Kosovo, because that way they had a chance to study in their native language. However, the authorities do not acknowledge degrees from Kosovo and Albania and that is one of the most common problems Albanians encounter in everyday life. It is interesting to notice that during the holiday season, the largest number of tourists visiting Ulcinj come from Kosovo (Albanians), while visitors from other parts of Yugoslavia are very rare. Undoubtedly, there are strong prejudices towards parts of the country inhabited mostly with Albanians.

Sandžak is a region in Yugoslavia, with a mostly Muslim (Bosniak) population, divided into two parts by the border between Montenegro and Serbia. Bosniaks in Montenegro do not have one political party to represent their interests. Their political leaders are members of the ruling coalition and support the independence of Montenegro. In Serbia, there are Bosniak political parties, and most of them are against the independence of Montenegro, because that would break the region of Sandžak into two, and break many family, friend and business ties of these people.

According to the 1991 census, almost one third of the population of Serbia including Vojvodina and Kosovo, are not Serb nationality. Ethnic structure has certainly changed a lot due to intensive migrations of population over the last decade. However, Albanians, Bosniaks/Muslims, Croats, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Slovaks, Rusins, Roma, Vlachs,

Macedonians, Slovins, Germans, Gorans and others still make significant percent of population.

Vojvodina is the most multi-cultural part of Serbia, where the biggest minority is Hungarian. Nacionalists still "remember" and blame Hungarians for being Nazi's allies in The Second World War. The support of a large part of the population and political leaders of Vojvodina for more autonomy of this region is perceived as a call for separation and unification with Hungary. These kind of populist comments coming from certain politicians are not harmless, because they fall onto the fertile ground of still existing smoldering nationalism.

Bulgarians are the largest minority in the south-east of Serbia (in Pirot county, they make up about 30% of the population). While the Hungarian minority have primary and secondary schools in their native language in Vojvodina, there are not any schools in Bulgarian language. Aspirations of some Bulgarian political parties to have primary and secondary schools in Bulgarian language are perceived as attempts towards unification with Bulgaria (just as with Hungarians). Nationalistic prejudices are very strong in that part of the country. Even the term »Bulgarian« sounds defamatory.

Over the last few years more young people of Bulgarian and Hungarian nationality choose to study in Bulgaria and Hungary, because they have a chance to learn in their native language, but also with the hope that they will be able to find a job and a better life in those countries.

Albanians are the largest minority in the southern part of Serbia. The situation is calm there after armed clashes between members of OVPBM (Liberating Army of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveda) on one side and the Yugoslav Army and police on the other side. There are, however occasional incidents. Intensive police and army presence is quite evident. For instance in the centre of Medveda, on the town square, there is a big army barracks. After the armed conflict, the majority of the Albanian population moved from Medveda, mostly to Kosovo. According to Serbs it was "voluntary", while Albanians said "they were forced to leave". Fear itself is a good enough reason to leave. Authorities in Serbia made some steps to calm down the situation, but most of it was rather clumsy. The establishment of a multi-ethnic police force sounds like a constructive step, but those Albanians who decide to join the force face the following problem: most of them got their training in Kosovo or in Albania, and their degrees are not accepted in Serbia. There are very few Albanians in the local administration of the town of Bujanovac. A local Serb commented: "The biggest problem is the fact that Serbs are now supposed to share something they consider to be their own, and they are not used to sharing it, but to be the bosses." But also: "There isn't any conflict between the Serbs and the Albanians here, it's the conflict between the Albanians and the state."

Bujanovac is divided: different radio stations for Albanians and Serbs, separate pubs, separate schools, different languages.

Media in Serbia still often use the term "Šiptar", which is pejorative name for an Albanian.

Ethnic groups have difficulty in preserving their cultural traditions in the educational process. Even if there are textbooks in their native language, they are simply translated from Serbian language and they bring a one-sided perception of history. Furthermore, there is either very little or no information whatsoever about the culture of those ethnic groups. It's absurd that history textbooks for pupils in primary school, translated into Albanian language, have a photograph of an orthodox church, on the cover. There are no books with the photo of a mosque on the cover page.

Additionally, there are a minor number of literary works written in the languages of the minorities of Yugoslavia, translated into Serbian language.

Education certainly does not offer a multicultural picture of the society we live in.

In April 2001, SMMRI (Strategic Marketing & Media Research Institute) completed research titled "Perception of truth in Serbia". The results were amazing: 39.9% of the population of Serbia think they should never again trust to those nations they once made war with. About 21% of those aged 18 to 29, and 34.6 % of people over 60 say they are totally unprepared for reconciliation with nations with which we were at war. The Army is considered to be the most important factor of the country's security and an institution of utmost trust. The most important factor for the disintegration of Yugoslavia is Croatian nationalism (77.7%) and the interests of USA (73,5%). Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina were more tolerant than the other nations there, which is why they suffered (41.9%). This is how some relevant factors from the Serb side are estimated: Ratko Mladic and the Army of Republika Srpska - excellent (46.3%); Radovan Karadzic and the Serbian leadership from Pale - excellent (34.9%). According to 52.5% of the respondents, Serbs committed 0 war crimes in the past ten years.

The federal Ministry of Ethnic and National Communities started a campaign with the slogan "Tolerance!" After so many years of hate speech in the media. This is certainly refreshing and a step that deserves welcome and support.

The economy of Serbia and Montenegro is in very bad state. As an example, according to the figures of the Federal Statistics Institute, the average salary in Yugoslavia in November of 2001, was 6.944 dinar (about 115 EUR). At the same time the basket of goods for the family of four was 1.2067,58 dinar (about 201 EUR). Many people are losing their jobs because big factories are closing down since they are no longer profitable and budget funds are spent on them. This can cause social turmoil of great proportion, but people have got used to various difficulties such as international sanctions, war, bombing, and inflation; and don't seem to react in a way one might expect.

At this moment several hundred thousand refugees and displaced persons from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo live in Yugoslavia. Figures about them vary a lot (according to the Red Cross, there are about 350.000 refugees and 185.000 displaced persons in Serbia). Most of them live in collective centres and very often their living conditions are inhuman. They are mostly situated in central Serbia and Vojvodina,

and they often make 14-37% of the total population of the municipality they live in, including the poorest municipalities in Serbia like Kraljevo, Kragujevac, and some towns in the south of Serbia.

These people usually are not accepted by the local population. They are often accused of being the cause of the difficult economic situation they find themselves in. Therefore, it's not uncommon for refugees to live their lives as in a ghetto.

In our contacts with NGO representatives, most of them expressed their disappointment with "changes" in Serbia. People complain it is taking too long for results, that they are almost invisible, that there is hardly any change in the system, that the new authorities do not know or are unable to perform true changes. However almost all the people we've talked to emphasized that there was a sense of freedom, no more fear of the police, arrests, no more of underground work. No matter how much disappointment, there is a general understanding of the problems the new government has, and therefore there's patience and hope that some essential changes will come in time. There's slightly less understanding for local authorities in some towns, where the very same people (who were once part of the previous regime) stay in power, but now belong to the different political party, or those new people who adopt old manners (corruption, nepotism, arrogance, etc).

This is what activists identified as problems within society, and in their local environment:

- Economic problems, strikes, low salaries, fear of losing job
- Quarrels within the ruling coalition
- Corruption ("When you want something done you have to take at least 200g of coffee to the clerk at the township, not the mention doctors")
- Apathy, melancholy, having no power or energy, especially apathy amongst young people
- Young people do not have a space to express themselves
- Unemployment
- Silent migrations of young people from villages and small towns
- Criminal
- Racism
- Nationalism
- Xenophobia
- Not accepting differences
- Disrespect of civil rights of minorities
- Hate speech in media
- Violence in families
- A minor number of women and young people in local government structures
- Population which is not informed - fertile soil for manipulations
- A minor number of independent media with well educated journalists who check information before broadcasting them

Non Government Organizations and Authorities

Non government organizations blame the "new" authorities in Serbia for the absence of law on nongovernment organizations, so they continue to function according to the old legal regulations. This means that when it comes to finances and taxes, NGO's are treated like profit organizations. NGO's are forced to engage in "creative bookkeeping" in order to survive. NGO's had an important role in overthrowing the old regime and gave direct support to the present government, which is why their disappointment is even bigger. One of the activists says: "We protested for them. We did everything as volunteers, never asked for any help. We haven't done that for their sake, but for our own. I don't need a medal or a tap on my shoulder. All I want is to know what my rights are, and not someone to do favours for me. At the moment it's in our favour, so there are no financial police here. The question remains whether they will be in favour of us when we start to criticize them."

NGO law in Montenegro is not much different when it comes to the financial aspect of their dealings (for example, if the organization has any money left on their account at the end of the year it's considered as profit and they must pay tax for it).

Both the government and local authorities in Montenegro provide some money in their budgets to support activities of NGOs. However, information on the amounts of money planned in the budget or organisations which were granted the money is unavailable. It seems that this kind of information is not for public consumption.

Many of those political parties in power, in both Serbia and Montenegro, have their own nongovernment organizations.

In some municipalities (like Niš and Pirot), there is an "empty seat" in the town hall for the representatives of NGOs, who cannot vote, but have a chance to take part in discussion.

Representatives of local authorities rarely or never respond to invitations for seminars organised by NGOs. Several people we talked to say that they were under the impression that local government had considered them as some sort of competition. It's because they were working on programmes local authorities should have been doing but never did. Also, it was difficult to get any information from the authorities. One of the people we spoke to said: I think local authorities see us as competition, because we had a chance to get more education than they had. We know more about some of the things they are supposed to know about. It is absurd that when we want to share what we know with them, they simply don't show up at the seminar."

There are very few organisations that achieved any kind of cooperation with local structures. There are also very few of those who got any kind of support from them, even though they work on programmes of common benefit. This is not the case when NGOs distribute humanitarian aid, because then they usually have the support of local government.

Cases of cooperation between NGOs and the republic or federal government are also rare. A woman we talked to said: "It is easier to get in touch with some foreign ambassador than with an official from the ministry."

The Difficulties NGOs Encounter

Most of the NGOs we visited experience one major difficulty - people are leaving them. There are several reasons for it:

- Educated activists go to work for bigger international organisations (they are mostly administrators and rarely in a position to make decisions, but they get better paid and their salaries are regular)
- Educated activists have become representatives of local and other authorities
- After the regime was overthrown the motivation of activists dropped.

Most of the people working in NGOs haven't got any social or health insurance.

The lack of adequate law on NGOs forces them to ask for funding from foreign donors, since local companies have no interest in financing NGOs because it's not tax deductible.

Most of the NGOs in Serbia and Montenegro are "project oriented", meaning they don't have a clearly defined mission and strategy, but prepare their project proposals based on open competition donors announce. Thereby, donors directly define strategy of work and development and priorities of civil society. Thus, authentic initiative of the local people is lost, and they are the ones who know local conditions better than donors. Programmes become oriented towards the donor, and not to the target group. This is one of the reasons why many NGOs were created to obtain jobs to some people. A man we talked to said: "Working on the programme, which is not a priority, makes you feel apathetic, but unless you accept what is offered there are not any funds. Donors finance humanitarian aid, which is why we do it, we need something to survive."

An additional difficulty lies in the fact that NGOs hardly manage to find donors eager to grant resources for structural financing (for office expenses like: rent, phone bills, power and heating bills, salaries), while the activities are easier to get funds for. In order for organisations to realize quality programmes, they need certain experience and well-co-ordinated structure to perform that in a professional manner. However, this structure is often missing, because there are not enough finances to support it.

Several organisations, especially Roma, said that it is very difficult for them to write project proposals in English. The majority of the population can't speak English and this goes for many of the activists, too. Some of the organisations have stated this as an example of discrimination: "If we can't speak English, we're automatically deprived of many competitions and funds."

Very few NGOs said they had a problem with local extreme groups.

Women's groups working on: prevention of violence against women and raising community's awareness of its presence in families (against women and children) and awareness of the unequal position of women in the community, very often are not accepted by local communities, especially in small towns.

For NGOs from small communities it is difficult to get access to information (about education, open competitions for funding, similar groups from other towns, literature about their field of work). Organisations from Belgrade rarely have these kind of difficulties, because Belgrade is at the same time an information centre.

Peace Building, Regional Cooperation, Multi-ethnic Dialogue

Present Initiatives

CNA regards contacts and acquaintances with groups working on peace building, inter ethnic dialogue and those groups whose priority is regional (cross border) cooperation especially important. It is amongst them, that we see our potential colleagues and allies in many activities to promote shared values.

There are over 3.000 registered NGOs in Serbia and Montenegro.

According to the latest figures from the Centre for Development of the Non-profit Sector, who has a data base of NGOs from Serbia and Montenegro, there are only 51 organisations that declare themselves as peace organisations and propagate a culture of peace and nonviolence. A large majority of them are either not active at all or their activities often have nothing whatsoever to do with peace building.

Most of the NGOs we visited, whose mission is to propagate a culture of peace, have dedicated most of their capacities to distribution of humanitarian aid. Although that work is certainly very useful and necessary for hundreds of thousands of people in Yugoslavia, it isn't a peace work in the true sense.

Nevertheless, some organisations don't perceive their own work as peace work, but in fact they are making steps towards sustainable peace.

Very few organisations work on conflict transformation and offer education in nonviolent conflict transformation (like Most, Hrast, Hajde da...). Most of the organisations we met never had a chance to get any similar type of education, and they found it necessary for their work.

Some of the organisations even want to include peace building and nonviolent conflict transformation in their long-term strategy, so they expressed an explicit need for education of their members. We haven't got any information on whether any organisation does training for trainers in this area of work, or not.

With respect to the parts of the country with an ethnically mixed population (south and south-east of Serbia, Vojvodina), there are few ethnically mixed organisations working on inter-ethnic dialogue. Organisations of ethnic minorities are mostly focused on preserving their culture and tradition, and perhaps on protection of human rights of the ethnic group they belong to.

A small number of organisations are involved in the direct monitoring of human rights and presenting cases of human rights abuse to the public. The work of those organisations is invaluable to the social groups whose rights are being broken. This way they get direct support, but it is also very important to sensitise society towards the discrimination that is strongly present. We should certainly point out the Fond za humanitarno pravo (Humanitarian Law Centre) and Jukom (Yugoslav Committee of Lawyers for Human Rights), but also local organisations such as Odbor za ljudska prava (Council for Human Rights) Bujanovac, Odbor za ljudska prava (Council for Human Rights) Negotin and others.

It is important to mention organisations whose programme is dealing with the past, like Odbor za gradansku inicijativu (Council for Civic initiatives) Niš, Gradanski parlament Srbije (Civic Parliament of Serbia) from Cacak, Medija centar Beograd, and others.

Regional (cross border) co-operation is also badly covered. Most of the rare organisations involved in cooperation with organisations from neighbouring countries or programmes regarding these countries were focused on Romania, Bulgaria and/or Hungary. Only several of them focused their work on one or several countries of former Yugoslavia, and set this as one of their priorities. A couple of organisations expressed their wish for cooperation with organisations from ex-Yugoslav countries and a need to establish contacts.

Needs and Lessons learned

Most of this research was done while CNA was preparing one of our basic training events in nonviolent conflict transformation. We received about 160 applications for this training, 100 of which came from Serbia. We were a little bit concerned about such a large interest, since we were able to accept only 20 applications per training.

With respect to the number of various problems in society, there is certainly a big need for *education in nonviolent conflict resolution*. There is also an interest for it. Present capacities in Yugoslavia are insufficient to meet all demands, and therefore *education of multipliers* deserves special attention.

Some of the NGOs we'd met expressed an explicit need for *cross border work*, especially within former Yugoslavia. We find this approach necessary for dissolving prejudice and mistrust that exists, for establishing communication and opening up

dialogue. An important dimension of cross-border meetings and cooperation is sensitising to violence within society, which is a result of a whole range of different experiences and perceptions. This means there is a need for more than just “recreative” gatherings of people from different nationalities, “from different sides”, but also for a meticulous and constructive approach to opening up those issues where conflict exist.

We estimate that it is very important to work on *education about different cultures* with and by whom we live. Publishers need encouragement to translate into Serbian language and publish the works of those authors who belong to either minorities or neighbouring nations.

NGO activities don't get enough media coverage. On one hand, the media are badly informed or not interested in NGO activities. On the other hand, NGOs don't give information and are not presenting their work well to the public. That's why it is important to *educate people from the media and NGOs* about each other, in order to broaden and empower the circle of individuals and organisations that understand and support peace building and establishing of civil society.

We also think it is a good idea to *support cooperation between NGOs*. One can often notice an atmosphere of rivalry between NGOs, which prevents fruitful cooperation and exchange of information and experiences, and above all mutual support. The solution of this problem is not in forming massive NGO-networks with many members, because they are doomed since they really are only formal. We estimate it is necessary to work on education on civil society based on cooperation, information exchange and mutual support.

A great number of the organisations we met expressed their need for education in teamwork, which is a basis for cooperation.

Besides cooperation between NGOs, there is a need to support cooperation between representatives of the media, authorities, NGOs and other representatives of civil society. A successful strategy towards this would be to get to know each other and work on building mutual relations between them.

It is important to exert influence on the Ministry of Education and other authorities to carry out *reforms of the educational system* quickly and more thoroughly, and also to pay special attention to the changes of school programmes. Up to now, school curricula are not sensitive on issues like minorities, gender, human and children rights, or violence within society. We would be very glad to see the transformation of those ideals, now presented in school books as “to give one's life for the fatherland” into values of a society which is finally determined to promote the culture of peace and non-violence.

To those organisations and individuals coming from outside this region, we recommend listening to *local needs and circumstances*, if they want to offer support to local initiatives building civil society and sustainable peace. This way they can avoid an

outcome in which programmes are oriented towards foreign organisations, instead of towards the target group and needs of local population.

No one can build a sustainable peace for the people of this region and make them deal with the past. This is a job they need to do themselves, with the support of all people of good will.

We must underline that this society does not need to concentrate only on extinguishing fires that are already burning, but to set priority to *prevent them from breaking out in the first place*.

The Role of CNA in Peace Building

The Centre for Nonviolent action certainly recognises its role in support of *peace education* where our capacities and competence are the most impressive. As until now, we will organize training events in nonviolent conflict resolution and try to respond to the present needs and requests we've already received. Participants of our training events are people who work in NGOs, media, political parties and education, from the countries of former Yugoslavia. According to the needs assessment we find all four levels of training to be important:

- work on techniques and skills of nonviolent conflict transformation (nonviolent communication; teamwork and decision making; understanding, analysis and transformation of conflict; etc.)
- Sensitising of violence within society and dissolving of national and other kinds of prejudice (establishing communication and giving people a chance to hear the other side)
- Empowering people to work actively in both their local community and society and to react in an adequate way on violence and violation of their own rights and rights of their fellow citizens
- Connecting and networking of people from both: different countries of former Yugoslavia, and different areas of public activity (NGO, media, political parties, education); and supporting their mutual cooperation.

With the opening of an office in Belgrade and broadening our capacities we've intensified our work with a chance to respond to more requests for training events. However, since we are not able to meet the demands of all those who are interested, we see our role in *education of multipliers*, and organisation and development of *The Training for Trainers Programme*, which includes special attention to the selection of participants.

An important aspect of our work is *support* to peace groups and individuals who wish to work on peace building, nonviolent conflict transformation and sensitising of society to violence around us. The Belgrade office enables a stronger presence in this part of

the region of ex Yugoslavia from which the majority of requests for training events come from, and therefore it is easier to respond to them and offer support.

We find stronger *public presence* to be important for our work; in order to include more people in discussion on those issues we work on our training events.

We think that the Belgrade office should have a special role in *dealing with the past and dissolving prejudice* against other nations/ethnic groups, pointing out discrimination and other forms of violence within society. This kind of work would be accepted more easily in public if local people do it.

Cooperation with other groups from this area with whom we share the same values: Gradanski parlament Srbije (Civic Parliament of Serbia) - Cacak, Odbor za gradansku inicijativu (Civic Initiative Council) - Niš, Most - Beograd, Centar za gradanske inicijative (Centre for Civic Initiatives) - Kolašin, Fond za humanitarno pravo (Fond for Humanitarian Law) - Beograd, Žene u crnom (Women in Black)- Beograd, Jukom (Committee of lawyers) - Beograd, etc. is very important and needed.

CNA is not a national organization. We have offices in Belgrade and Sarajevo with staff made up of people from different countries of former Yugoslavia. This fact seemed to be important to the people we talked to on this trip, since it's really very rare. Moreover, it is a concrete example of regional cooperation, communication and mutual peace building and a direct way to promote all of it.

This research has been invaluable for CNA, since we had a chance to personally meet many NGOs and their activists, and get a better picture of situation in local communities.

We thank all those individuals we met during this research for their hospitality, time and useful discussions.