Table of contents

Foreword and Acknowledgements........................................................................................................ 4
  A. Foreword ........................................................................................................................................ 4
  B. Acknowledgements ...................................................................................................................... 4
I. Executive Summary ........................................................................................................................... 5
II. Project Summary ............................................................................................................................... 5
III. The Development Problem and USAID’s Response .................................................................... 9
  A. Problem Statement....................................................................................................................... 9
  B. Theory of YSF Project Intervention ......................................................................................... 11
  C. Project Design ............................................................................................................................. 13
  D. Project Sustainability ................................................................................................................ 14
IV. Purpose of the Evaluation ............................................................................................................ 15
V. Research Design and Evaluation Methodology ............................................................................ 15
  A. Evaluation Design ...................................................................................................................... 15
  B. Evaluation Team ......................................................................................................................... 16
  C. Evaluation Methodology ............................................................................................................ 16
  D. Profile of Informants .................................................................................................................. 18
  E. Data Collection Tools ............................................................................................................... 18
  F. Data Collection Process ............................................................................................................ 18
  G. Desk Review ............................................................................................................................... 19
  H. Validation Workshop ................................................................................................................ 19
  I. Data Analysis ................................................................................................................................ 20
  J. Limitations .................................................................................................................................... 20
VI. Major Findings .............................................................................................................................. 21
VII. Evaluator’s Conclusions .............................................................................................................. 37
  A. Project’s Progress toward Goal and Achievement of Objectives ........................................... 37
  B. Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP): YSF Contribution to “Peace Writ Large” ..................... 37
  C. Implication for “Peace Writ Large” ........................................................................................... 40
  D. Peacebuilding Principles Evaluation Framework (PPEF) ...................................................... 40
  E. PPEF and YSF as a Peacebuilding Project .............................................................................. 42
VIII. Lessons Learned and Recommendations ................................................................................. 43
IX. Code of Conduct/Confidentiality and Rights of Informants ....................................................... 47
X. Distribution Policy ......................................................................................................................... 47
XI. Contacts .......................................................................................................................................... 47
XII. List of Attachments......................................................................................................................... 47
Acronyms

CMM (USAID Department of) Conflict Management and Mitigation
CCSD Center for Civil Society Development
CPN Catholic Peacebuilding Network
CPP Center for Peace Promotion
CRS/EME Catholic Relief Services Europe and Middle East
CRS/USCCB Catholic Relief Services/United States Catholic Council of Bishops
CSO Civil Society Organization
CWYC City Wide Youth Council
DOI (Kosovo Assembly) Declaration of Independence
EU European Union
GDA Global Development Alliance
GS Galaxy Stars
IR Intermediate Result
K-Albanian Kosovo Albanian
K-Serb Kosovo Serb
KAP Knowledge Attitude and Practices
M&E Monitoring and Evaluation
NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PB Peacebuilding
RPP Reflecting on Peace Practice Project
SO Strategic Objective
SOW Scope of Work
TOR Terms of Reference
TOT Training of Trainers
UNDP United Nations Development Program
UNMIK United Nations Mission in Kosovo
USAID United States Agency for International Development
YC Youth Council
YSF Youth Securing the Future

Final Evaluation “Youth Securing the Future” (YSF)

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Brussels, Belgium
Foreword and Acknowledgements

A. Foreword
The following is the final evaluation report for the Catholic Relief Services (CRS)/Kosovo “Youth Securing the Future (YSF) Project”, contracted by CRS to an external evaluator. This participatory evaluation engaged 54 direct and indirect project participants and focused on evaluating the long-term effects of the project, lessons learned and recommendations for the future, in pursuit of the project’s goal, “Youth feel secure about their future in Kosovo”.

It is hoped that the evaluation will illustrate that, in fact, many youth in fact do feel more secure about their future in Kosovo, and that this may be attributed to this project, although perhaps for reasons of which we were not aware. It is hoped that the evaluation contributes to a better understanding of this, as well as greater learning in development interventions for youth and peacebuilding.

B. Acknowledgements
I would like to acknowledge the CRS/Kosovo team, first of all, for their important contribution to this evaluation, as well as the commitment to youth and peace that I observed during my visits to Kosovo. These committed people provided vital assistance to the evaluation, which could not have taken place without their support. They are: Diana Blakaj-Demaj, Adnan Hasi, Enisa Medic, Petar Prica, Aferdita Tahiri and Florent Vranica.

Secondly, CRS/EME regional staff have played an important role in the design and quality control of this evaluation. They are: Khalil Ansara, Velida Dzino-Silajdzic, Vahidin Dzindo, Mila Gavrilova, Vivian Manneh, and Mark Schnellbaecher. Former CRS/EME staff, Marjan Jukic and Allison Smith also left a “footprint” in understanding the effects of the project and its contribution to youth feeling secure about their future in Kosovo.

I’d especially like to thank the staff of CRS partners, Galaxy Stars (GS) and (CCSD) for helping me to understand the “front line” issues of implementing such an ambitious project in a very complex operating environment.

This report is the intellectual property of CRS-USCCB. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the United States government or of CRS.

Alan Frisk
Brussels, 12 May, 2009
I. Executive Summary

This final evaluation report aims to answer two evaluation questions, focused largely on the effects of the project on the project’s stated goal, “Youth feel secure about their future in Kosovo”. This goal, and the project itself, were developed in response to CRS’ and USAID’s understanding of the problems youth experience in Kosovo related to their security, as described in the Problem Statement. The project itself and its original strategic objectives (SOs) are described in the Project Summary, and described in more detail following the Problem Statement in the chapter on The Development Problem and USAID’s Response.

Following this, a detailed description of the evaluation itself is provided, including its Purpose, Design, Methodology, as well as information on specific evaluation activities.

The Major Findings chapter is divided into two parts, organized under the headings of the two evaluation questions, namely, “What are the immediate and potentially long-term effects of project activities”, and “To what extent did project activities contribute to addressing factors important to youth feeling secure in their future in Kosovo?” Major findings under the first question cover a number of issues, including the mobilization effects of the project, stakeholder motivation, and project sustainability, but also the effects of the project on unemployment, the quality of education in secondary schools and the transfer of skills to project participants. Major findings under the second question focus more on the inter-ethnic dimension of the project, effects on localized violence as a threat to security, as well as issues related to the project’s adaptability within a changing operating environment.

In addition to a discussion on the attainment of project objectives, findings are analyzed with the help of two peacebuilding frameworks, developed by a CRS partner and CRS/Caritas, itself, in the Evaluator’s Conclusions chapter.

Lastly, seven Lessons Learned, with Recommendations as to possible future interventions are presented with the aim of providing CRS with ideas as to what future youth and peacebuilding projects could look like.

II. Project Summary

On May 22, 2006 by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Catholic Relief Services (CRS) was awarded The Cooperative Agreement No. 167-A-00-06-00103-00 to support implementation of the project entitled “Youth Securing the Future” (YSF). The project has been implemented over a period of three years, with a period of performance beginning on May 22, 2006 and ending on May 21, 2009. The total project value was $997,725 of which $893,636 was awarded by USAID and $101,630 contributed by CRS.

The YSF project was originally designed around the following two Strategic Objectives (SOs):

1. Most information presented in this section is derived from the original project proposal and mid-term evaluation.

Final Evaluation “Youth Securing the Future” (YSF)

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[SO1]: Youth are connected across ethnic lines; and
[SO2]: Inter-ethnic tolerance is increased at the local level.

The Strategic Objectives (SOs) shaped the project’s intended results and were supported by the application of appropriate strategies and activities. In June 2007, due to changes in the operating environment, CRS and its partners, in consultation with the USAID mission in Kosovo, revised project activities included in SO2. The revised SO2 shifted from a focus on advocacy, social marketing, and media in local participation and diversity mainstreaming to an approach that increases youth economic empowerment for pro-active participation in society, with special demographic consideration of unemployed youth.

In order to successfully implement the project, CRS engaged two local partners: Galaxy Stars (GS), focusing primarily on communities with a K-Albanian majority; and the Center for Civil Society Development (CCSD) (formerly Youth Initiative Mitrovica (YIM)), working with communities consisting of a K-Serb majority.

In order to achieve SO1: Youth are connected across ethnic lines, CRS employed strategies developed with over five years of experience with youth empowerment and connecting representatives of different ethnicities in the City Wide Youth Council (CWYC) of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë. The CWYC was intended as a model through which youth work together to address shared problems with commonly developed solutions, and implement them together despite overarching ethnic divisions.

CRS partners facilitated capacity-building in tolerance and acceptance, human rights, advocacy, proposal writing, and general organizational skills in order for youth to have opportunities to expand their views, improve their knowledge, and build a platform for positive change of attitudes, behaviors, and relationships that might otherwise lead to violence. Mini-projects and various thematic activities provided practical exposure to trained youth to test their skills and abilities and simultaneously improve their school conditions, social networks, and cultural life.

The project targeted 26 schools in the municipalities of North and North-West Kosovo, engaging 390 youth council members as direct project participants, and indirectly targeting the general student population of almost 15,000 students.

To achieve the newly developed SO2: Unemployed Youth are engaged in the society, the project provided livelihood improvement opportunities to unemployed youth. The project’s approach was designed to connect vulnerable, unemployed youth with local businesses and provide them with formal and non-formal education through internships and apprenticeships. The first phase of project implementation included an assessment of employer needs and youth capacities, and well as potential matches and placement opportunities. In addition to bridging the existing gap between employers and unemployed youth.

2 The original Results Framework is provided as Attachment 1 to this report

Final Evaluation “Youth Securing the Future” (YSF)

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this project component provided on-the-job learning for 50 youth that, in eight cases, lead to regular employment.

The YSF project targeted seven municipalities in northwestern Kosovo, namely: Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zvečan/Zveçan, Zubin Potok/Zubin Potoku, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Burim/Istok, Peja/Pec and Vushtrri/Vučitrn. These municipalities, stretching from the Montenegrin to Serbian borders, host major divisions across ethnic lines. Due to real and or perceived security concerns, YSF project areas are generally separated by varying degrees of freedom of movement, and in many cases, local communities are highly isolated. The degree of ethnic division can be illustrated by the population estimates provided by the OSCE below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Albanian Population</th>
<th>Serb Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leposavić</td>
<td>18,600</td>
<td>200 (0.1%)</td>
<td>18,000 (97%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leposaviq</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zvečan</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>350 (0.2%)</td>
<td>16,050 (94%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zveçan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zubin Potok</td>
<td>14,900</td>
<td>800 (0.5%)</td>
<td>14,000 (94%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zubin Potoku</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitrovicë</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>107,000 (82%)</td>
<td>17,000 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitrovica</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Istok</td>
<td>56,000</td>
<td>51,310 (92%)</td>
<td>800 (0.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Istok</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peja</td>
<td>170,000</td>
<td>159,500 (94%)</td>
<td>1000 (0.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pec</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vushtrri</td>
<td>102,600</td>
<td>97,470 (95%)</td>
<td>4000 (0.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vucitrn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>509,100</td>
<td>367,760 (20%)</td>
<td>70,850 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Rounded)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals for Kosovo</td>
<td>2,100,000</td>
<td>1,827,000 (24%)</td>
<td>189,000 (97%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 All estimates provided by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), April 2008 accessed on 24 April 2009 at http://www.osce.org/kosovo/13982.html
4 Statistics and estimates are based on Municipal Profiles prepared by OSCE in 2005.
5 CIA World Fact Book – Kosovo (2007)
Although specific municipalities within the territory concerned are referred to with both the Albanian and Serbian vernacular names, the name “Kosovo” is a commonly accepted reference to the territory in the English language. As this report is written in the English language, the English “Kosovo” will be used, as opposed to the Albanian “Kosova” or the Serbian “Kosovo i Metohije”. Although the cities of Mitrovica/Mitrovica and Pristina/Priština have counterparts widely accepted in the English language; “Mitrovica” and “Pristina”, reference is made to all municipalities in both local languages, excepting the use of Serbian (Cyrillic), again, given that the report is written in English.

Final Evaluation “Youth Securing the Future” (YSF)

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III. The Development Problem and USAID’s Response

A. Problem Statement

Youth and Violence

According to a survey of youth leaders conducted by Hope Fellowship in 2004, security was the main concern of Kosovo’s youth in that period. At the same time, literature from USAID’s department of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) and research data from Kosovo support the assertion that youth have been the main participants in violence. It is estimated, for example, that 70% of the participants in the March 2004 riots that swept across Kosovo were youth under the age of 24.

According to CMM, youth have two main reasons for the use of violence. First, violence can be a political act, particularly for those who do not have a political voice or who perceive their political voice to be ineffective. Therefore, a major cause of violence in Kosovo is the limited power and/or the perception of the limited power of youth in decision-making. This highlights the need for greater political participation of youth as a means to prevent violence.

Secondly, youth often resort to violence out of frustration when they see little hope for the future due to obstacles in their efforts to create opportunities for themselves and their communities. It often only takes a triggering event, such as the media coverage of the deaths of 3 children near Mitrovicë/Mitrovica in March 2004, to let loose this frustration in the form of violence, in this case, uncontrolled rioting.

Although nearly 50% of Kosovo’s population is between the ages of 15-25, they are “disenfranchised in many areas.” This represents not only a deficit in democratic practice, but implies violence as one of the few remaining options for the public expression of grievances. Despite differences in ethnicity, economic status, and language, Kosovo’s youth population shares several common concerns: unemployment, lack of personal freedom, and deteriorating education standards. Despite sharing these concerns, Kosovo’s youth lack unified platforms for effecting change through non-violent means. For youth in the school system, even basic structures such as student councils are frequently dysfunctional. Furthermore, neither K-Serb nor K-Albanian education systems incorporate concepts of tolerance into generally applied curricula. For youth who have graduated or dropped out, access to information and opportunities for creating change is virtually non-existent. Many youth, even graduates and degree-holders, are unemployed or semi-employed and see little future for themselves. Many youth in Kosovo seek to emigrate in search of increased economic opportunity, but are not organized or associated with active civil society groups.

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8 The Development Problem presented in this report is derived from the original project proposal, the project’s mid-term evaluation and external sources.
12 Ibid.
and therefore feel a greater sense of isolation and are more prone to violence and manipulation.

**Security and the Operating Environment**

Nearly ten years after the end of the Kosovo war in 1999, deep divisions exist within communities, but most clearly still between communities of K-Albanians and K-Serbs over the question of territorial sovereignty. Though outright warfare ceased with the intervention of NATO in 1999, the security presence remains and has recently increased, with the deployment of the EU’s largest civilian security force, EULEX, following the Kosovo Assembly’s declaration of independence in February 2008.

The security presence can be said to be justified, as there is still considerable tension in Kosovo to fuel violent conflict. The Kosovo-wide March 2004 riots in which 19 people were killed and over 900 injured, the February 2008 attacks by an organized, armed Serb group on boundary and customs posts and the March February 2008 clashes in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, leaving 2 dead and up to 180 police and protesters injured are all testimony to the potential violence that the root cause of disputed sovereignty can generate. Although the situation on the ground, at the time of this evaluation, can be described as relatively calm, the months immediately preceding and following the 2008 independence declaration by the Kosovo Assembly were those of enormous risk for CRS and partner project staff, essentially halting all direct programming efforts between K-Albanians and K-Serbs to this day.

Particularly in the north of Kosovo, deep divisions still exist and the possibility of multiethnic disputes remains a threat. The de facto physical and social separation of K-Albanians and K-Serbs translates into dysfunctional social, governmental, and civil society-based institutions. The lack of institutional communication is exacerbated by the fact that Kosovo’s youth does not share a common language, and the perpetuation of political rhetoric and manipulation compounds the lack of tolerance between K-Albanian and K-Serb youth, sowing the seeds for possible violence along ethnic lines. Due to real and or perceived security concerns, these areas are, in practice, frequently separated by the lack of freedom of movement, and in many cases, are highly isolated. USAID’s CMM office recently described

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14 [http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=cw_search&l=1&t=1&cw_country=58&cw_date=](http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=cw_search&l=1&t=1&cw_country=58&cw_date=)
15 “According to NATO, the situation in Kosovo is, on the whole, stable, though some regions, especially the north, are very fragile,” BETA News Agency, Brussels, 8 May 2009, accessed on 8 May 2009 at [http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2009&mm=05&dd=08&nav_id=59012](http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2009&mm=05&dd=08&nav_id=59012)
16 The CRS Knowledge Attitude and Practices (KAP) Baseline Survey conducted in the first phase of YSF project implementation illustrates the magnitude of the social and cultural gaps among youth in Kosovo. Although this report reflects an evaluation of southern municipalities, where K-Albanians are the majority (92% of total number of respondents), the findings indicate cause for concern. More than 82% of 1,505 respondents/participants in the evaluation surveys have no or poor knowledge of the Serbian language. Around 30% state that they would never work in a job that involves K-Serb counterparts, while 83% do not talk to their K-Serb counterparts except through organized activities of youth councils. Of the survey participants, 55% do not know what kind of music their Serb peers listen to, and 58% never watch Serbian programs or movies. Regarding education and learning, 43% of respondents feel uncomfortable or extremely uncomfortable about attending a school that includes both K-Albanian and K-Serb students.

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**Final Evaluation “Youth Securing the Future” (YSF)**

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Kosovo as a “lingering low-level conflict.” This can readily be seen in the city of Mitrovica, but the conflict has also been present in Peja, Istok, and Vushtrri.

**Current trends on youth and security**

According to the latest available information from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the risks for violent conflict in Kosovo have remained largely static following the brief period of violence immediately after the independence declaration. Using a combination of indicators on the economy, security and confidence in public institutions, UNDP’s USAID-funded Kosovo Early Warning System Project, has the following to say about the current situation:

- The paramount problems facing Kosovo, according to survey respondents, are unemployment (34%), poverty (26%) and corruption (9%).
- 57.89% of total respondents believe that unemployment and poverty are circumstances that affect the stability of Kosovo, with 61.1% of K-Albanians agreeing with the statement and 7.6% of K-Serbs agreeing with the statement.
- Lastly, while the government of Kosovo enjoys an overall 57% approval rating and the performance of KFOR and the Kosovo Police judged as “satisfactory” by 81% and 86% of respondents, respectively, UNMIK is only supported by 20% of respondents and the recently-deployed EULEX mission by only 23%.

Only general trends, i.e. not specific to the situation of youth, can be discerned from this data. However, given that youth between the ages of 15 to 25 constitute such a large percentage of the population, the threats to security in Kosovo identified by UNDP; unemployment and poverty, differences in perceptions by K-Albanians and K-Serbs and a lack of confidence in the international civilian presence, can be generally understood as representative of the concerns of youth. The significance of these problems was also verified during the data collection phase of this evaluation.

**B. Theory of YSF Project Intervention**

**Strategic Coherence**

The YSF project was designed as a peacebuilding project and supports the CRS agency strategy in this programming sector as described in Table 2 below.

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17 Ibid.
19 See below, Part V., Research and Evaluation Design.
20 CRS/EME regional staff correspondence, April 7, 2009.
Table 2: CRS Peacebuilding and Justice Programmatic Strategic Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Our one human family, in solidarity with its poor and vulnerable members, transforms conflict non-violently and advances justice &amp; reconciliation.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The project contributes specifically to the following Strategic Objectives (SOs) within the framework and the following immediate results within those SOs:

**SO1:** “People overseas in conflict have improved social cohesion and reconciliation”

**IR 1.1:** “Women, men and children in conflict have better integrated social networks”

**IR 1.2:** “Men, women and children in conflict utilize non-violent mechanisms to raise and handle conflict”

**SO2:** “Poor and vulnerable people outside the US, have increased equity in political, social and economic systems and structures”

**IR 2.1:** “CRS US and overseas constituencies increase their influence over the systems, structures and policies that affect poor and vulnerable people overseas”

**IR 2.2:** “Civil society effectively participates in decision-making relating to the common good”

---

**Theory of Change**

The design and application of the YSF project was founded in the following theory of change:

“When youth use peaceful means for participation instead of violence, they become the major agents for peace and thus play a large role in the future of Kosovo.”

This theory was based on the following assumptions:

- Inter-personal, inter-ethnic relationships developed by young people through regular interactions lead youth to value peaceful interaction;
- Common obstacles and desires identified by youth, regardless of their ethnicity, focus energy on overcoming obstacles and seeking their desires, rather than attacking other groups;
- In an appropriate space and context, youth want to participate and develop a voice to speak out for their values, and share these values with their peers;
- The adults who care for youth – parents, teachers, and community leaders – will listen, especially when youth speak with an organized voice, and
- School and community level achievements empower youth to regard themselves as agents of non-violent, positive change with a substantive and productive role to play in the larger society.

Following the change in SO2 in 2007, an additional theory of change was added, focusing on the engagement of unemployed youth in society. Following the logic of the revised results
framework, the theory postured that youth are engaged in society when they are empowered to take an active economic role. This empowerment was to be achieved by providing market skills, employment experience and outreach to “peers”, including other unemployed youth, as well as entrepreneurs.

C. Project Design
To implement the YSF project, CRS applied its experience in working with youth and multi-ethnic groups, primarily in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. CRS and its partners “aim[ed] to mobilize and empower youth to drive project activities and outputs whenever possible”22. The primary role of CRS and partners was to provide capacity-building opportunities and guidance for youth participants to take ownership of the problems faced in everyday life, to devise strategic solutions to address these problems, and finally, to implement these solutions together.

CRS staff and partners contributed with expertise and professional skills, but the actual project activities were implemented by the youth themselves. In support of this, the YSF project incorporated a three-pronged methodological approach: (1) Employing a strong cross-cutting theme of peacebuilding in all activities; (2) The project was designed for continuous internal learning to improve methodologies, and (3) The use of a “learning-by-doing” methodology.23

As the ultimate project goal was that “Youth feel secure about their future in Kosovo”, the project was “designed with and for youth to improve their overall well-being and to give them a foundation for becoming empowered and active citizens that can build a democratic, multi-ethnic Kosovo together.”24

Strategic Objectives (SOs)
Two SOs were designed to achieve the goal described above.

SO1: Youth are connected across ethnic lines.
This SO was to be achieved through the accomplishment of two Intermediate Results:
IR 1.1: Mobilized youth advocate for conflict transformation.
IR 1.2: Youth engage in joint problem solving.

The activities that were implemented to achieve this activity were to include the following:
- Providing support to YC election processes in all participating schools;
- Coordinating with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, UNICEF and OSCE;
- Strengthening the capacity of youth councils in the sectors of basic organization, conflict mitigation and management;
- Empowering student councils through TOT trainings;

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23 Original application, p. 7
24 See note 23
Sponsoring thematic essay and photo competitions;
Developing mini-projects and supporting implementation to address major needs as identified by YC;
Establishing project websites as well as audio and written materials for exchange across ethnic-lines, including a quarterly newsletter;
Advocacy campaigns, and
Designing joint action plans and follow-up strategies.

SO2: Unemployed Youth are engaged in the society.
This SO was to be achieved through the following IR:
IR 2.1: Unemployed youth are empowered to take active economic role in the society.

The project activities included:
• Assessing the needs of employers;
• Assessing youth capacities;
• Assessing availability of vocational training opportunities;
• Communication to bridge existing gaps;
• Selecting beneficiaries;
• Providing professional skills trainings;
• Providing of internships and apprenticeships;
• Mobilization of participants and their peers to participate in YSF activities, and
• Organizing of job fairs.

D. Project Sustainability
Due to changes foreseen in the operating environment, CRS designed the YSF project to be “fluid and adaptable to dynamic conditions”. Furthermore, “[t]he program relie[d] upon structures and attitude changes promoting sustainability, and [intended to leave] the empowered participants with flexibility to continue their work as appropriate during the project period.”

CRS recognized, at the inception of the project, that all advocacy structures, youth organization, and channels for communication/dissemination must be sustainable. One of the primary strategies of this project was support to Youth Councils (YCs), the student structures required by law in each of the schools. Youth Councils, according to the sustainability strategy, would continue to have a substantive role within the school community, even after the project is finished. Furthermore, YCs were to be used to drive a variety of other student needs and interests in addition to promoting tolerance because their structure is adaptable to many thematic areas.

25 See note 23
IV. Purpose of the Evaluation

Objective 1: To explore the immediate effects of project activities and to examine the project’s effectiveness in achieving it’s Strategic Objectives;

Objective 2: To identify lessons learned and recommendations for future initiatives of this kind.

Programming Related Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Question 1:
What are immediate and potentially long-term effects of project activities?

Lines of inquiry that guide the evaluation:
- a. Key stakeholders’ views on visible, tangible and potentially sustainable early signs of project effects, both positive and negative
- b. Identification of lessons learned and best practices

Evaluation Question 2:
To what extent did project activities contribute to addressing factors important to youth feeling secure in their future in Kosovo?

Lines of inquiry that guide the evaluation:
- a. The extent to which youth connected across ethnic lines
- b. The success of economic empowerment activities
- c. The attribution of project activities to change in youth perception about their future in Kosovo
- d. Identification of lessons learned and best practices

V. Research Design and Evaluation Methodology

A. Evaluation Design
As was recommended in the CRS mid-term evaluation of the project, the design of the final evaluation utilized, to a certain extent, the mid-term evaluation as a baseline and attempted, in as far as possible, to replicate the approach using similar data collection instruments with the stakeholders identified. This was due, both to the limitations (see below) of the final evaluation and this consultant’s satisfaction with the relevance of the methodology used by the evaluation team in 2007-08. What emerged were a series of unique findings, many of which relate to the mid-term evaluation, but which nevertheless, relied less on the mid-term evaluation as a baseline. As a result, the final evaluation focused on the cumulative results of the project during the project’s entire lifetime, and not only the change that took place from late 2007/early 2008 when the mid-term evaluation was completed.

26 Given the changes made to the design of the project after inception, it may be necessary to reformulate this differently, to e.g. “Level of youth mobilization around the issues of common concern”.
27 See note 23, p. 53.
The analysis conducted of primary and secondary source data collected focuses on the goal level, but more, importantly on the level of strategic objective (SO) level, as described in the results framework. Furthermore, it was deemed necessary to create additional lines of inquiry, using the outputs described in the results framework, as well as capturing major themes unforeseen in the project design that emerged from the data collection phase.

Finally, an assessment was conducted as to the usefulness of the indicators used in the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP), in answering the evaluation questions.

B. Evaluation Team
The evaluation was conducted by an independent consultant, Alan Frisk, based in Brussels, with previous experience of CRS programming in Kosovo. The consultant was supported by CRS/Kosovo staff in the field, as well as CRS/EME’s Regional M&E Manager, Velida Dzino-Silajdzic, Regional Advisor for Project Design and Implementation, Vahidin Dzindo and Senior Technical Advisor for Good Governance, Khalil Ansara, in the design of the data collection tools and review of the first draft of the final evaluation report.

All team members were considered to be sufficiently removed from the project to avoid internal programmatic bias. Although the independent consultant was, in the period 2001-2005, an employee of CRS/EME, he has had no involvement in the implementation of the project and was therefore deemed sufficiently objective in the project’s evaluation. The consultant conducted all field work (including the facilitation of the validation workshop on May 4, 2009), as well as the analysis and production of this report. The direct involvement of CRS staff has been intentionally limited, in order to ensure the integrity of the report.

C. Evaluation Methodology
The proposed methodology is a triangulated analysis of project documentation, secondary source data and primary source data gathered in the field. By “project documentation”, the approved project proposal including Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Performance Tracking Table for original and revised project is meant. Secondary source data, as indicated by CRS includes:

- Local Partner Reports with raw data (only in local languages);
- Quarterly USAID Reports including report on Performance Tracking Table
- Mid-Term Evaluation Report
- Any additional data that will help verify progress towards achievement of strategic objectives e.g. KAP Survey if completed.

A distinction here is made between project documentation and secondary source data, in order to compare what was originally proposed, i.e. to determine the projects “effects” (see objective 1, above).

Primary source data collection will be a combination of semi-structured interviews and focus groups. As indicated by CRS, the key data sources include: CRS Project staff, key
implementing partners staff engaged directly in project implementation, government officials, representatives of youth, and school principals.

Consultation was required with CRS project staff in Kosovo in order to determine a reasonable sample size and to determine stakeholder ethnic and gender representation, similar to that of the mid-term evaluation.

Lastly, following the first draft; containing findings and finding interpretations, a validation workshop together with CRS staff and selected stakeholders was conducted to affirm the findings and correct any misinterpretations. This workshop also provided space for a dialogue between participants to provide additional information in support of objective 2 of the evaluation, i.e. draw out lessons learned and develop recommendation for possible future activities of this kind.

The overview of data collection mechanisms and sources used to answer each of the evaluation questions is provided in Table 2 below.

**Table 3: Data Collection Mechanisms and Corresponding Data Sources for Evaluation Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Question</th>
<th>Data Collection Mechanism</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
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| 1. “What are immediate and potentially long-term effects of project activities?” | a. Focus group  
  b. Individual semi-structured interview  
  c. Desk review | Youth Council Members (Serbian); Youth Council Members (Albanian); School administrations; Municipalities; Entrepreneurs; (Serbian) Entrepreneurs; (Albanian) Implementing Partner Project Staff; CRS staff |
| 2. “To what extent did project activities contribute to addressing factors important to youth feeling secure in their future in Kosovo?” | a. Focus group  
  b. Individual semi-structured interview  
  c. Desk review | Youth Council Members (Serbian); Youth Council Members (Albanian); Entrepreneurs; (Serbian) Entrepreneurs; (Albanian) School administrations; Municipalities; Implementing Partners Project Staff; CRS staff |
C. Sampling
In consultation with CRS/Kosovo staff, the consultant used purposeful sampling for selecting primary and secondary data sources. The selection criteria for respondents were mainly based on their availability and accessibility to the field team. The documents for desk review were reviewed, including all the quarterly reports and partner reports sampled randomly, for verification purposes.

D. Profile of Informants
A total of fifty-four (54) stakeholders provided input to the Consultant over a two-week period. Of the total number of informants, 32 were K-Albanian (58%), 22 K-Serb (40%) and 1 Bosniak (2%), with 20 of the informants being female (37%) and 34 (63%) male. A total of 25 Youth Council members representing 14 Youth Councils provided input, with a ratio of 14 (56%) female and 11 (44%) male. A total of 10 Interns, 2 females and 8 males, also participated. Four school principles, 2 from each K-Albanian majority and K-Serb majority areas, respectively, were interviewed, as well as 3 entrepreneurs (1 K-Albanian, 2 K-Serbs) and 2 municipal officials from Mitrovica/Mitrovicë (K-Albanian). Lastly, nine project staff, 5 CRS staff and 4 partner staff were interviewed and participated in the validation workshop.

For more information, please see Attachment 4.

E. Data Collection Tools
Three sets of data collection tools were developed by the consultant, using the data collection tools developed by CRS/EME in the mid-term evaluation as a template, of sorts. Notably omitted were all questions related to the management quality of the project, which were covered in the mid-term evaluation but not within the TOR of the final evaluation.

The data collection tools were, as specified in the Scope of Work (SOW) of the evaluation, reviewed by CRS/EME regional staff and were adapted according to this feedback. In addition, CRS’ Senior Technical Advisor for Good Governance provided guidance as to how CRS views the project in terms of industry standards and what insights would be useful for CRS in terms of analysis. As a result of this guidance, a second model of analysis, Caritas’ 5 “Peacebuilding Principles” has also been included in the evaluation, in addition to the already foreseen CDA RPP model of analyzing project contribution to “Peace Writ Large”.

The data collection tools and consultant’s TOR are attached to this report, as Attachments 5 and 3, respectively.

F. Data Collection Process
Collecting data in the field lasted ten days. The interviews were conducted in South and North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, Zubin Potok/Zubin Potoku and in Pec/Peja. They lasted between 45 minutes to 2 hours depending on the information and informants’ availability. CRS scheduled all the interviews in advance, at which time the purpose of requests and the evaluation were explained to the informants.
G. Desk Review
The desk review of secondary data, consisting primarily of project documentation, was completed in three segments throughout the evaluation; project documentation and secondary source information prior to on-site primary source data collection, additional project documentation and CRS correspondence on-site and additional secondary source review to validate findings. YSF project staff have regularly documented programmatic results through various types of monthly, quarterly, and monitoring reports, and served as the main reference for the desk review. Primary emphasis was placed on CRS Quarterly Reports to USAID, which included input from all the partners. Additionally, the Consultant reviewed local partner reports for cross-checking purposes and to gather additional detailed information, especially regarding programmatic delays and challenges. The following documents fed into the desk review:

CRS Reports:
- Approved project proposal including Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Performance Tracking Table for the original and revised projects
- Randomly selected local Partner Reports with raw data (for verification purposes only)
- Quarterly USAID Reports including report on Performance Tracking Table
- The Project’s internal Mid-Term Evaluation Report
- Report on Post-Technical Assistance Recommendations by CRS/EME Regional Technical Advisor for Peacebuilding
- CRS Peacebuilding and Justice Programmatic Strategic Framework
- CRS Guided Worksheet Conflict Transformation and Change Goals

H. Validation Workshop
On May 4, 2009, a validation workshop was facilitated by the consultant at CRS’ offices in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, with the participation of CRS partners and staff. The workshop had three objectives:

• To validate/improve the initial findings of the evaluation (data collection phase)
• Answer 2 evaluation questions
• Brainstorm ideas for future project interventions

The workshop was an essential component of the evaluation methodology, providing the consultant with the opportunity to validate major findings of the evaluation with some of the most important evaluation informants, as well as to provide for an open space for these informants to provide additional information needed to answer the evaluation questions.

The validation of evaluation findings was done, firstly, by a quantitative ranking of the draft finding statements, in three working groups (divided largely on linguistic lines, but also with a certain degree of mixture between partners and CRS staff and CRS staff of different ethnicities).

Workshop participants were asked to rank the drafts findings answering the question “Is the finding correct?” using the scales of 4 = completely correct, 3 = somewhat correct, 2 = mostly
incorrect, 1 = completely incorrect. This ranking, intentionally, correlated with the ranking system used in the data collection tools.

If participants ranked a finding at 2 or 3, they were asked how it could be improved. Finally, if participants ranked a finding at 1, they were asked to come up with the correct finding (which did not occur, however, at the workshop, as all findings ranked 2-4).

Participants were then asked to try to capture any additional information related to findings by addressing in group form, the evaluation questions directly. Although no additional findings were created in this session, detail useful to existing analysis of findings was provided.

Finally, participants were invited to participate in a “visioning” exercise, in order to brainstorm possible areas of future project interventions. Given the scenario; participants are project alumni, multi-ethnic and interested in starting their own NGO without financial constraints, “what would be the first projects you would implement?”

The results of this workshop segment are presented in the “recommendations” section of this report. The workshop presentation is provided as Attachment 6 of this report and findings have been adapted according to the validation exercises.

I. Data Analysis
The review of primary and secondary data was based on the Evaluation Questions and themes of inquiry to track trends and patterns emerging from data obtained from field visits and available project documentation.

J. Limitations
The evaluation of the YSF project was presented with certain limitations that may have affected the findings and corresponding recommendations/ lessons learned presented in the report:

- Interpretation/Translation: some exact words of key informants might have been lost during the translation process.
- Presence of CRS staff and partners: In some cases, it was necessary to rely on CRS staff for interpretation, which may have influenced informants’ to speak critically of the project.
- Time: the time available for completion of the evaluation was somewhat limited, e.g. in comparison with the mid-term evaluation, given the need to complete the evaluation within the lifetime of the project.

The consultant attempted to reduce the impact of these limitations by explaining the nature of the evaluation and the confidential nature of the interviews and focus groups. At times, it was also necessary to deviate slightly from the data collection tools, in order to establish confidence, bring the discussion back on track or provoke participants to think critically. An attempt was also made to cross-reference data and validate findings with multiple sources in order to overcome these limitations. Given this, and the emphasis on the use of a participatory

Final Evaluation “Youth Securing the Future” (YSF)

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Consultant
Brussels, Belgium
approach, the evaluator is confident that the information presented in this evaluation represents a sufficiently realistic view of the project’s results.

VI. Major Findings

The findings presented in this evaluation are organized by each key evaluation question and explore in detail the effects and results of project activities and strategies implemented.

Evaluation Question 1:  
What are immediate and potentially long-term effects of project activities?

Lines of inquiry that guided the evaluation:

c. Key stakeholders’ views on visible, tangible and potentially sustainable signs of project effects, both positive and negative  
d. Identification of lessons learned and best practices

Finding 1.1. Youth are engaged in society to a greater extent than before the project’s inception

“This [youth mobilization] is the success that we are the most proud of.” – CRS staff

Explanation of the finding

A. Motivation: mobilization and engagement

The mobilization and engagement of youth in Kosovo society is the unparalleled single largest effect of the project. All evidence from the data collection phase indicates that all major stakeholders agree that motivation increased significantly from the baseline “apathy” of both school-based and unemployed youth prior to the project. This mobilization and engagement across SOs was an important result of the project, in the sense that, even though original SOs were relatively unique, the common theme of “engagement”, as described by beneficiaries and “engagement” as described by CRS and partners were results cutting across very different SOs.

B. Capacities built

Capacities, particularly in K-Albanian communities, have been built to the extent that Youth Councils (YCs), and to a certain extent City-wide Youth Councils (CWYCs), now operate largely independently of the project, CRS and CRS partners. This is a clear achievement, according to the Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) methodology, referring to the impact of peace projects on “Peace Writ Large”. The capacities that allow for this, and were built during the project, range from broad project planning and implementation capacities to more skill-set specific capacities such as tolerance and peacebuilding.

“There are about 20 NGOs in Mitrovica /Mitrovicë who actually do something. When they ask me about how to best work with youth, I tell them to use CRS as an example.” – Mitrovicë/Mitrovica municipal official
CRS partner organizations, Galaxy Stars (GS) and CCSD, themselves representing youth constituencies from both K-Albanian and K-Serb communities, have also increased their capacities to engage with youth in social change initiatives. “Our capacities have, without a doubt, increased through our experience in this project.” – CRS partner staff

CWYCs have experienced varying degrees of challenges to youth mobilization, according to the specific circumstances of their communities. Although many similarities can be observed between the largely homogenous communities targeted by the project, local realities varied considerably, particularly in the motivation of other stakeholders; school principals, entrepreneurs and municipalities.

Mitrovicë/Mitrovica (South) was, by far, the municipality that benefitted the most from the support of major stakeholders. This may not be very surprising, given the engagement of CRS in the community since 2001 and the geographical base of both GS and CCSD in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. The trust built in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica over a number of years was highly conducive to the project’s success in this (the second largest) municipality. According to CRS staff, “[i]n peacebuilding projects, 10 years is a good starting point.” But it is the recognition by major stakeholders of youth engagement, and their subsequent empowerment, that is indicative of the project’s success in this area. In the specific cases of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica and Peja/Pec, CWYCs have received office space and funding from the municipal authorities, as well as financial support from schools and private donors without the direct assistance of CRS or partners.

C. Effects of Training

The above effects are in no doubt due to the goodwill, in most cases, of major stakeholders and the support of school administrations (see below). However, a large part of the capacities built can be attributed directly to the trainings provided by CRS partners in the areas of project cycle management, tolerance and peacebuilding. Several examples of transfer of knowledge, particularly in project cycle management were observed during the data collection phase, ranging from YC members from one school being engaged to provide training to other YCs in the municipality to trained YC members being engaged to provide trainings for other Kosovo-level local NGOs, to one being certified by a US-based university as an international trainer.

“We had the opportunity to meet young people, like us, from other cities in Kosovo. We would have never had that opportunity before. We made a lot of new friends and we stay in touch.” – CWYC member, Peja/Pec

“If it wasn’t for the social time we got together, I don’t think we would have stayed committed to the project.” – CWYC member (North) Mitrovicë/Mitrovica
D. Social Motivation of Youth
The social aspect of the project has proven to be an important one. Given the “monotony” in social life experienced by youth, as described in the mid-term evaluation, the project has generated this result, seemed to be a driving factor for the participation of youth in the activities of the project.

Although it can be argued that it is not within the scope of the project’s theory of change to provide social interaction among youth, this was invariably identified in all interviews and focus groups with in-school youth to be an important component.

E. Youth Connected School Administrators
Although not directly funded by this project, the mobilization and engagement of in-school youth provided an incentive for school administrators (school principals) to engage in issues of common concern, The Principals Coalition initiative, supported by the Swiss Government, can be seen as a direct spin-off of the this project and one that served to reinforce the engagement of school administrations in the longer-term engagement of in-school youth (see also below finding no. …). It is doubtful that, without the engagement of school-based YCs in this project, that school principals would have felt the same incentive to collaborate between schools.

F. Emergence of Youth Leaders
This finding does not support the success of the so-called “Alumni Clubs”, i.e. youth that have graduated from individual YCs or CWYCs. Although there is evidence of the engagement of some former YC and CWYC members in subsequent trainings of younger YC and CWYC members, their engagement in the project has been limited and largely determined by individual commitment and/or personal gain. However, it is notable that those “alumni” who continued to engage were primarily those engaged as fourth year students in the first year of the project and had thus the greatest exposure to the inter-ethnic component of the project (see Evaluation Question 2 below).

One observation, however, repeated several times across informant interviews and in and between communities was the emergence of “youth leaders” who had become active in other organizations or forums. Examples include YC youth participation in the UNDP/Kosovo Government-sponsored Kosovo Youth Council, the US National Democratic Institute (NDI)’s multi-ethnic youth meetings, as well as other community- and political party-sponsored events on both sides of the ethnic divide. It is difficult to attribute the project’s activities to the emergence of these youth leaders. However, it is clear that the capacity-building activities, including trainings, having provided an opportunity for skills development and public

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28 See note 23, p. 21.
29 According to CRS/EME staff, “[w]e always assume in out design of our project that we need to address personal, relational, structural/systems, and cultural, in the project/program and that is the only good model for change we have been using at CRS.”
30 One of the few remaining multi-ethnic meetings following independence in February 2008
dialogue, that has given otherwise unknown potential youth leaders a platform for profiling themselves.31

Finding 1.2: The city-wide youth councils (CWYCs) are the project’s main contribution to social infrastructure in Kosovo. They are also the most vulnerable, particularly in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

Explanation of the finding

The concept of a “city-wide youth council” (CWYC) was first conceived by CRS in 2003 for exclusive application in the divided city of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. The purpose of the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica CWYC was the overt creation of a “connector” in an operating environment otherwise defined by “dividers”. As opposed to the legally-mandated school-based YCs – both in Kosovo and Serbian law – CWYCs were a unique contribution to the mobilization of youth and the contribution of youth in Kosovo society. Although “the CWYCs couldn’t exist without the YCs”, it is the finding of this evaluator that the project’s main contribution in this field – to “visible, tangible and sustainable effects” is the CWYCs. However and perhaps due to the fact that the project has reached its conclusion – they are the most vulnerable.

A. The Mitrovicë/Mitrovica CWYC

“If you compare to other municipalities covered by the project, or even in Kosovo, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica is always the exception,” according to CRS staff. For the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica CWYC, this is clearly the case, both in terms of inter-ethnic connections (see evaluation question 2 below), but also dividers. In the first 18 months of the project (see finding 2.1.) it can be determined that the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica CWYC did, in fact, function as a single entity. During the remaining half of the project, however, the CWYC Mitrovicë/Mitrovica functioned as two parallel structures, with a risk of contributing to ethnic divisions or “Doing Harm” – an issue that will be discussed later under Evaluation Question 2 of this report.

B. CWYC Added-Value

Outside of the unique dynamics of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, the central question remains as to what added value the CWYCs have contributed to the long-term effects of the project. There are three, widely-validated, answers to this question, which can be summarized as follows:

31 This is particularly the case in North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, according to partner CCSD, where otherwise moderate platforms for political expression are very limited.
33 CRS staff, validation workshop
• The CWYCs provided content to the YC structures – YCs, as mentioned above, “existed on paper”34, but the CWYC activities provided content for their work
• The CWYCs provided common platforms for issues that could not be resolved within the individual schools – Most schools experienced the same problems; hygiene, security, quality of education. By providing a common platform, it was easier for school principals to appeal to donors for common solutions.35
• The CWYCs provided a natural, structural link to municipal authorities – The fact that the YCs could organize on a municipal level provided them a natural link to responsible authorities on that same level, which did not exist before. Although the success of this linkage varied widely across the project, there are examples of success on both sides of the ethnic divide, namely Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South (Albanian), Peja/Pec (Albanian, mixed) and Zubin Potok/Zubin Potoku (K-Serb).

C. Vulnerability
In terms of relations with municipal authorities, as has been mentioned above, the project’s intervention has been viewed as a “model” for youth-municipal government cooperation, in those areas where the government of Kosovo has jurisdiction (i.e. the K-Albanian majority municipalities). At the same time, there is evidence, that the YCs in K-Serb municipalities have achieved results that have been recognized by Serbian authorities, as well.36

It is perhaps, natural, thus, that the CWYCs, as recognized actors on the municipal level, are vulnerable to exploitation – interest-based, political, or otherwise. Although some CWYCs have proven a certain resilience to political influence (see finding 2.2. below), their only recourse to heavily politicized municipal administrations leaves them largely without recourse to “official” structures that can support their existence. The fact that the (largely, dysfunctional) “North Mitrovicë/Mitrovica municipality”37 is dominated by officials from the Serbian Radical Party (SRS, in Serbian) and the Democratic Serbian Party (DSS, in Serbian, led by nationalist former PM Kostunica), and the fact that the municipal civil servants of the Kosovo Ministry of Youth, Sports and Education are appointed along political lines does not bode well for independent, municipal youth structures dependant upon local government support.

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34 School principals (2), from K-Albanian and K-Serb communities respectively.
35 Particularly in the case of North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë combined schools and principals coalition.
36 After several months of obstruction by the Serbian Ministry of Education, final sanction for the project was given by the Ministry’s representative in Kosovo, something that was described as a “breakthrough” by CRS staff. According to a K-Serb principal interviewed, the school concerned published a newspaper advertisement in the local Serbian language press recognizing CRS/Kosovo for its contribution to the school (note: original source not confirmed).
37 Elections sponsored by the Serbian government were held in K-Serb majority areas in Kosovo in 2008. Although they were tolerated by UNMIK and EULEX, they were also declared illegal by the Kosovo government.
It is interesting to note that, although school-based YCs have developed sustainability plans, no such effort has been taken with the CWYCs. According to CRS partner staff, if this is not done, “They’ll be left alone.”

**Finding 1.3. CRS and project partners (“sub-awardees”) were/are correctly positioned in the communities, which increased their abilities to achieve the project’s objectives and their chances of future sustainability.**

**Explanation of the finding**

**A. CRS’ Positioning in North/North-western Kosovo**

CRS’ positioning of its activities in Northern Kosovo in 2001 has allowed it access to communities that would be otherwise inaccessible, particularly to the run-up to the Kosovo Assembly’s declaration of independence in 2008. Particularly in the K-Serb majority municipalities targeted by the project, CRS and partner CCSD were well-positioned to gain the confidence of communities, although many of them were largely hostile to the presence of civil society organizations (CSOs) and international CSOs, in particular.  

**B. Partners**

In K-Albanian communities outside of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Galaxy Stars (GS), however, faced new challenges to the implementation of activities outside of their traditional geographical area. “We underestimated the challenge a bit,” admitted GS. However, the mini-grants activities conducted by the partner appeared to be crucial in GS gaining access to new communities, using the model developed in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë.

**C. Sustainability and Potential Spin-offs**

Both GS and CCSD will continue to implement projects with other agencies and donors similar to those employed by the project. During the data collection phase, it was observed that YCs are also attempting to organize beyond the scope of the project, with some hoping to register CWYCs as legally-recognized NGOs under Kosovo government legislation.

On April 30, 2009, a new local NGO, the “Center for Peace Promotion” (CPP) was registered by two local CRS staff, 1 K-Albanian and 1 K-Serb, and will likely maintain an office in the building inn the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica “Confidence Zone” that has housed CRS’ offices since early 2003. The spin-off is a direct effect of the project although it is unclear whether or not CPP’s future programming will be directed at youth or in receipt of needed funding.

**Finding 1.4: Support of school administrations was gained, enabling the project’s success**

**Explanation of the finding**

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38 See note 23.
39 Peja/Pec and Mitrovica/Mitrovicë (South)
A. Role of Principals
Of perhaps even greater importance to the sustainability of the project’s effects has been the engagement of school administrations, particularly secondary school “Directors” or “Principals”.

In the school administration system in Kosovo, inherited from Yugoslavia/Serbia, the role of the school principal is paramount. Although the school is expected to conform to local law, and certain educational curricula, schools, and school principals, “enjoy” a significant degree of “autonomy”, both from the respective Ministries of education and also the municipality. It is quite clear that, given the lack of public funding for education, principals are simultaneously deprived of resources, but also given wide berth in their own individual attempts to draw external resources to the school. This gives them both an enormous responsibility (although accountability can be questioned), but also a near complete authority over the budgeting and resources of the school.

It is this, among other reasons, why the project’s activities, particularly “min-grants” were so important to the project’s success, but also, in the view of the principals, the main long-term effects of the project.

B. Differences in K-Albanian and K-Serb School Administrations
As documented in the project’s mid-term evaluation, there are significant differences in the ways that secondary schools are administered in K-Albanian vs. K-Serb areas. According to CRS partner CCSD, “70% of school principals in northern municipalities are from the Milosevic era. They feel neither accountable to Pristina or Belgrade.” The result of this situation – central to the dispute over sovereignty, even over the educational system – is that principals receive so-called “double salaries” (from Kosovo and Serbia, respectively) that, while, compelling them to be accountable to both school systems, essentially leaves them accountable to neither. Having said that, Ministry officials from both sides are reluctant to call these individuals to task, which essentially leaves them in almost uncompromising control over the conditions and operations of “their” schools.

C. Motivation of School Administrators/Principals over project activities within schools
It was made absolutely clear then, during the data collection phase, that the principals are key actors in any programming activities within the schools. The project’s methodology, in combination with other non-USAID funded activities, took this into account. Indeed, many of the delays in project implementation can be attributed to various school administrators’ insistence that “authorization” be provided by respective Ministries of Education.

However, in early 2008, CRS/Kosovo reported a “breakthrough” in relations with the Serbian Ministry of Education over access to secondary schools in K-Serbian administered Kosovo municipalities. According to CRS staff, the official, who had previously attempted to block the participation of K-Serbian schools in the project, suddenly became an avid supporter. “He realized that it was in his interest and could be seen to be doing something, instead of doing nothing,” CRS staff explained.

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40 “Principal’s Coalition” project, funded by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP).
While it is clear that many school principals clearly see the need to support quality education in their schools, the recognition that came with the project was not lost on them. “The principal [of one school] could take the credit for the activities,” according to one CWYC member.

According to the principals, themselves, clear communication with CRS and partners also raised their motivation to participate in the project. “CRS didn’t raise our expectations in an unrealistic way,” according to one.

Finally, as a way of formalizing the participation of school administrations, the idea of electing “mentor teachers” to the YCs was introduced mid-way through the project. Give the natural turnover of students in the YCs, as they graduated from schools, mentor teachers were involved as a way to provide sustainability in continuity in the work of the YCs.

**Finding 1.5: Mini-grants were employed as a necessary confidence-building mechanism**

**Explanation of Finding**

**A. Implementation**

One specific activity was short-term in nature but contributed directly to the long-term effects enjoyed by the project – “mini-grants” for youth council-designed activities within the schools. These grants, usually a maximum of $5,000 each, aimed to provide a concrete contribution to education in the schools, e.g. through the donation of computer labs, used for both formal and informal education activities. Largely unsustainable for longer periods of time, the activities were important to the longer-term effects of the project, in that they gave CRS and partners access to schools and youth leaders.

**B. Mobilization**

“The mini-grants were the main activity for mobilization,” according to CRS staff. “Without them, it would have been very difficult to get the youth to participate in other activities, like the trainings.”

The main contribution of this part of the project was confidence, but between CRS/partners and the schools/YCs, but also within the YCs and CWYCs themselves. It was this confidence that allowed the project to channel youth into more sensitive aspects of the peacebuilding activities of the projects, e.g. trainings on tolerance or, within the first half of the project, activities with other ethnicities.

“By showing them that they could do something, it increased their [the youth’s] ability to do much more,” according to partner staff.
Finding 1.6: Unemployment is the foremost concern of youth. It is not evident, however, that the project produced major effects in this area.

Explanation of the finding

A. Effects of Unemployment
In the data collection process, unemployment was named as the single largest problem facing young people in the communities reached by the project, followed by “freedom of movement”. As emphasized in the validation workshop, however, the phenomenon takes on different shapes in the different communities. In many K-Serb majority areas, unemployment is offset by subsidies; pensions, stipends or “double salaries”, as described in the project’s mid-term evaluation report. Unemployment is more widespread throughout K-Albanian dominated communities, among all age groups. However, according to CRS partner staff, “[it] is exactly the youth that are affected by unemployment. Older people receive Serbian pensions and subsidies, but today’s youth, on the other hand has to pay for things.” According to other partner staff, “[youth] are affected by their own unemployment, but also their parents’ unemployment,” particularly in K-Albanian majority communities.

B. Effects of the Project on Unemployment: Question of scale
“It [the employment component under SO2] was a kind of pilot,” according to CRS staff. Although a total of 50 unemployed youth were engaged in these activities, it is clear that the long-term effects can be felt on the “individual/personal” level, whereas the impact on youth in society was minimal. “[The project addressed our main problem, but of course, it didn’t solve it],” according to one intern participant. A total of eight participants did go on to regular employment and, during focus group discussions, there was general agreement that all of those participating did feel that they had gained something: experience, knowledge, skills, that helped them on the individual level to take a more active economic role in society. “But with just 50 people, the project was very symbolic in this sense,” according to CRS staff.

C. Motivation of youth
On the whole, however, it was evident that participating youth were motivated to engage in this way, despite the relatively low (22 euro per month) stipend. As indicated in the mid-term evaluation report, motives varied somewhat, in the sense that many interns (particularly from K-Albanian communities) viewing the internships as a necessary complement to their studies, while others (e.g. K-Serbs) viewed the internships as a more direct channel into the local labor market. Nearly all youth commented that they would have preferred a longer internship period, e.g. 6 months instead of 3, and partner staff have reported that, in the last year of the project, interest was greater among youth than there were places available. While not sustainable, these are clear indications that motivation among youth was generally high.

D. Motivation of Small Businesses
Finally, an interesting sign of the project’s tangible effects is the interest that it has stimulated among the local businesses that were involved in the project. “Awareness [among
entrepreneurs] was low,” according to participating youth. However, those entrepreneurs interviewed expressed clear interests, not only in obtaining labor for profit motives, but also a sense of contributing to the community. “We want workers,” said one, “but we also want to help people”.

**Finding 1.7 The project made a significant contribution to the quality of education in the schools in which it was implemented.**

**Explanation of the finding**

As described in findings 1.1., 1.4 and 1.5, the project created a high degree of motivation and motivation of students, principals and teachers within the secondary school system(s) in Kosovo. “The mini-grants, especially, gave education opportunities to the students that they would otherwise not have had,” a statement by one principal interviewed that was echoed by all the principals participating in the evaluation.

**A. Encouraged Critical Thinking**

At the same time, the project’s methodology seemed to encourage critical thinking, something which had carry-over effects into other aspects of their schooling. “A motivation to create better conditions in the school,” was created by the project, according to one school principal. “They started looking at the problems in the school in a different way and wanted to do something about them,” she explained.

**B. Overcoming Skepticism**

A number of the youth interviewed described an initial skepticism to the project, both by themselves and their teachers. But, “[the skepticism] was overcome when people saw that the mini-grants produced results,” according to one YC member. In some cases, this encouraged the YCs to take other initiatives outside of the project, among those mentioned were: clean up campaigns, book donations to the local library, and awareness campaigns on substance abuse and HIV/AIDS.

**C. Role of Trainings**

Trainings were also mentioned as a form of extra-curricular education that both stimulated engagement, but also provided a form of learning. The training on “Tolerance” was mentioned by the greatest number of informants as the one that provided the most new information, but also one that shaped their way of thinking to a lesser or greater extent, depending on the informant.

**Finding 1.8: The project provided youth with skills that are transferrable to the labor market.**

**Explanation of finding**
A. Capacity-building
Related to the contribution of trainings to the quality of education, was also the discovery that some of the project activities have also provided skills that are transferrable to the local labor market. This was the part of the intention of SO2, however, many of the youth informants also mentioned other-capacity building activities as providing them with skills that they expected would be useful for them when they would seek or enter into employment. In one case, one informant, described how he has now himself taken paid training assignments, based on the experience he gained in the project trainings.

B. Project Management
The training “Project Cycle Management” was the activity that was mentioned by most school-based youth informants, as one that was practically very useful and one which they believed would help them in their careers. The informants reminded us that project management is a skill used in a number of professions, from marketing to owning one’s own business. Aspects to the training related to goal-setting and results-based management appeared to be those which participants found to be most helpful in their own work. Examples were cited where YCs and CWYCs applied these skills in proposal development and fundraising for activities outside the project, a number of which were successful.

Evaluation Question:
To what extent did project activities contribute to addressing factors important to youth feeling secure in their future in Kosovo?

Lines of inquiry that guided the evaluation:
   a. The extent to which youth connected across ethnic lines
   b. The success of economic empowerment activities
   c. The attribution of project activities to change in youth perception about their future in Kosovo
   d. Identification of lessons learned and best practices

2.1 The project connected youth across ethnic lines in the first half of the project. In the second half, connection was limited.

Explanation of the finding
Despite the success of mobilization activities, it cannot be said that youth are today connected across ethnic lines as a result of the project. Although some informants indicated informal contacts between youth who had participated in the early phases of the project, this contact is limited and cannot be directly attributed to the project.

Informants provided several reasons for the lack of activities across ethnic lines. While it is commendable, and noted by informants, that many activities did include e.g. K-Bosniaks, K-Roma and K-Albanians, together, these activities, while multi-ethnic did not really cross the lines, themselves, i.e. the divide which is predominantly between K-Albanian and K-Serb youth. In predominantly K-Albanian communities, and to a certain extent within K-Serb communities (e.g. Roma in North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë and Zvecan), the ethnic groups tend to

Final Evaluation “Youth Securing the Future” (YSF)
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co-exist with the dominant ethnicity. While, for example, training on “Tolerance” may have contributed to cementing this status quo on an individual-personal level for training participants, it is unlikely to have made a major contribution towards the project’s goal of youth feeling secure about their future in Kosovo, while the major rift between K-Albanians and K-Serbs remains.41

A. Changes in the operating environment
Although changes in the operating environment were envisaged in the project proposal,42 in the expectation of a decision on the future status of Kosovo, the rapid politicization of the context created risks for the safety of CRS staff and partners, and in some cases, was deemed impossible due to the refusal of youth and major stakeholders to participate. As one CRS staff member put it, “[a]ny activities that attempted to cross the ethnic divide were seen as political. For the K-Serbian communities, any activities that included both Albanians and Serbs were seen as an acceptance of the Kosovo Assembly’s declaration of independence.”

B. Implications for Project Implementation
In the run up to the independence declaration and immediately afterwards, CRS staff and partners themselves were divided along ethnic lines, following a decision by CRS to establish a satellite office in Zvecan for its staff living in North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë. For a period of eight months, CRS staff and partners attempted to implement the project by working apart, which, according to them, had a negative impact on the inter-ethnic activities. Staff and partners reported a sense of “fatigue” with the project during this period, given the fact that much greater efforts were required to convince stakeholders of the value of the activities and conduct them in a meaningful way.43

C. Limitations of Virtual Activities
While the project was implemented in parallel in K-Serbian and K-Albanian communities, attempts were made to make “virtual” linkages across ethnic lines through the production of a joint newsletter and website. While partners reported that “[t]here was no resistance by the youth contributing to the newsletter which they knew would be read on “the other side”,” it is unclear as to the coverage of the newsletter and whether or not participants considered the newsletter as an actual dialogue.

CRS staff also confirm that the number of unique users of the website was very limited and attribute this to two factors: internet literacy among youth and language difficulties. “Kids who had access and know how to use the net, sometimes used the website. But the problem

41 This can be captured e.g. in the remark of many informants describing “lack of freedom of movement” as a major problem.
42 See Project Narrative, “Project Adaptability”; “It is impossible to predict what will happen in Kosovo in the next three years; much is beyond the project’s span of control,” p. 17.
43 Validation workshop.

Final Evaluation “Youth Securing the Future” (YSF)

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was that there wasn’t always much recent material in their own language. We simply didn’t have enough resources to translate documents for the web site in time,” according to a CRS staff member.

It was observed that very few youth informants were aware of or had visited the website.

**D. Motivation of Youth**

One potential outcome of CRS’ decision to conduct programming in parallel on both sides of the ethnic divide is a change in the motivation of youth to engage in multi-ethnic activities. Youth informants from predominantly K-Albanian communities were considerably more open to the prospects of activities involving K-Serbs, while K-Serbs YC members were much more cautious. “We want to think about it,” according to a CWYC member from a K-Serbian community. It is unclear as to if the success of mobilization activities without a multi-ethnic component, actually contributed to increasing divisions or not. Motivation appears to be, at least to a certain degree, influenced by the changes in the operating environment described above. As to the future, “[w]e feel like the other side doesn’t want to be open… but we remain open to them,” according to one CWYC member.

**2.2. The project made a contribution to the prevention/reduction in violence among youth on the local level.**

*Explanation of finding*

**A. Changes in the Operating Environment**

There is, however, some evidence to suggest that the project increased youth’s sense of security within communities, if not between communities, the sense that recourse to violence is seen as less acceptable. According to one CRS staff member, “[t]he role of the CWYC on the North after the UDI [unilateral declaration of independence] was crucial. They were recognized as youth leaders then and when students organized protests against the independence declaration, they worked very hard to make sure that they were non-violent.”

A CRS partner described the situation in more detail:

A month of daily protests had been declared in North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë. They were organized by the students, but were under enormous pressure from; let’s call them “political sources”… On a number of occasions, they were provoked and pressured by some adults to throw rocks and Molotov cocktails. Although it wasn’t an official CWYC action, it was “our” students who urged non-violence and the protests were largely non-violent as a result.

Although violence across ethnic lines was largely not a possibility in this instance, the role of youth in increasing security may be attributed, to a certain extent, to the influence of the project. As one CRS staff member put it, “[w]e may not have increased the feeling among youth of a secure future in Kosovo, but we may have removed one of the reasons not to.” “Violence in not an option anymore,” echoed an YC member.
B. Changes within Schools

Increasing youth mobilization around issues in their schools has, in some cases, also led to a certain increase in their accountability and responsibility for these issues. Some school principals have shared their belief that a drop in violence within schools has occurred—something which was influenced by the project. When pressed to explain the attribution of the project, they explained that YC members, with the support of teachers, appointed a number of “peer mediators” who were then engaged by the school administrations to resolve disputes between students. One YC member described her experience as a peer mediator: “Two girls were being very aggressive and were really about to start a fight. Other students were watching and cheering them on. My teacher asked me to talk to them, so I took them aside, talked to them and stopped them from fighting.”

Another school principal attributed to a drop in vandalism in her school to the project. “When the students started trying to improve conditions in the school,” she explained, “they also got very protective about them. I think that sent a bigger message to students that it’s not OK to destroy school property.”

2.3. The project’s design did not allow for enough flexibility in the course of change in the operating context.

Explanation of the finding

A. Replication of the Model

As stated in the project narrative, “[i]n implementing this project, CRS will employ its hands-on experience in working with multiethnic Kosovar groups as well as employing its international expertise in conflict mitigation and grass roots mobilization.” This experience was concentrated in a model that emerged from working with youth in Kosovo, but particularly in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, over the previous five years. As discussed above in the Project Summary, the project strategy focused on replicating the use of this model in other, high risk, communities.

At the Validation Workshop on 4 May, CRS staff and partners discussed the appropriateness of the project in the changed operating context. While the impact of the context on inter-ethnic activities is discussed above, the larger issue of flexibility of the project model was discussed in relation to the overall goal of youth feeling secure about their future in Kosovo.

A CRS staff member, who also had been engaged in CRS’ earlier youth work and the development of the model said: “There was a lack of innovation in simply replicating a model… There were too many activities to be implemented for this, so there wasn’t enough time for reflection,” i.e. on possible changes. Participants of the workshop also commented on the “different realities” in K-Albanian and K-Serb communities, and partners specifically pointed out a need to work with a model that was more adaptable to the situation of new communities.

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44 Project proposal, p. 7

Final Evaluation “Youth Securing the Future” (YSF)

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B. Flexibility of Inter-Ethnic activities

Another common explanation to the inability to connect youth across ethnic lines, was the inability of the project to conduct inter-ethnic meetings outside of Kosovo, e.g. in Montenegro, as had been done in the past with the Mitrovica/Mitroviç CWYC. Whereas, many CWYC members described their experience of participation in other inter-ethnic meetings, sponsored by NDI or UNDP, for example, “[t]here were simply no funds available to do this,” according to CRS staff. Although considered, this was apparently not deemed possible, due to the specific requirement of the local USAID mission that no expenditures outside of Kosovo would be allowable.

2.4 The replacement of SO2 had limited effects on the project’s goal of youth feeling secure about their future in Kosovo.

Explanation of the finding

A. Rationale

As described in the Project Summary and discussed in Finding 1.6, an attempt was made to change the focus on SO2 from the earlier “Inter-ethnic tolerance is increased at the local level” to the more economically-empowering activities of “Unemployed youth are engaged in society”. In trying to understand the rationale for this change, CRS staff explained that CRS and USAID agreed that this was largely due to the infeasibility of the project’s activities and the completion of a rapid assessment of youth where, as was done during this evaluation, the issue of unemployment topped their list of concern.

B. Alternatives

Prior to this, in early 2007, CRS/EME’s Regional Technical Advisor for Peacebuilding had visited the project and made a number of supporting recommendations as to how the project could adjust to the changing context. Although warning of the danger of “insisting” on inter-ethnic activities, his recommendations focused to a great extent on strengthening and diversifying the activities that were envisaged under the original SO2, especially the media component. As has been reiterated by his successor, CRS views the YSF as a peacebuilding project and it is not evident that the change in SO2 contributed toward this goal, i.e. about youth feeling secure about their future in Kosovo. This as much a problem with the logic of the revised results framework, in which the revised SO2 is largely a repetition of the mobilization objective of IR1.1, and where a weak link is established between the SO and its only supporting IR, as it is to the assumption that employment will lead to youth feeling secure about their future in Kosovo, even though considerable ethnic tension still exists (see Problem Statement above).

Observations by some CRS staff seemed to support the view that the revised SO2 was a “strange fit” with the rest of the problem, particularly given its limited scale, as discussed in finding 1.6. At the same time, “[i]t was a challenge to compete with organizations like UNDP and Caritas,” who have more experience in trying to tackle this issue, staff added.

45 CRS/EME, “YOUTH SECURING THE FUTURE” Post-Technical Assistance Recommendation April 20, 2007, p. 4
46 Ibid.
2.5 A lack of communication and coordination with and among donors/political actors created difficulties in the participation of youth.

Explanation of the finding

A. Coordination
As is evidenced from CRS quarterly reports to USAID, a myriad of development actors existed in the operating environment, and initially, a number of attempts were made within the project to coordinate with them. “Priorities shifted for many of the players after independence,” however, according to CRS staff, and this may have impacted the perceptions and abilities of youth in participating in larger efforts in support of the project’s goal. Despite efforts to build coalitions and “logically connect” with other actors in order to create greater social impact, the donors and non-state development actors appeared to fragment to a certain extent in the changed context. As priorities changed, an element of greater competition emerged and “[o]ther partners were trying to hide their data,” according to CRS staff, in order to jockey for support, sometimes at the expense of project activities. One CRS partner added, “particularly in the North [K-Serb communities], donor support dropped dramatically, with only very symbolic gestures to encourage youth participation.”

B. Communication
At the same time, CRS staff experienced difficulties in communication with various offices USAID, which, according to them suffered from high turnover and changing priorities, as well. “Peacebuilding was no longer a priority for the local USAID mission,” explained a CRS staff member. “We ended up giving more priority to what the donor expressed as its needs, rather than the needs of the youth,” added another.

USAID was invited to participate in this evaluation, but declined.

C. “Missed Opportunities”
Although it is clear that activities were implemented according to the Cooperative Agreement, CRS staff and partners spoke, at the Validation Workshop, of what they perceived as “missed opportunities”. As will be discussed in the Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations sections of this evaluation, they believe that USAID had the influence and ability to “bring it up a level”, i.e. to a socio-political level by engaging more actively in the project and create connections that would have a larger impact e.g. on politicians and/or other societal leaders; the religious, UNMIK, EUFOR, other governments. “You can’t only work on the grassroots level…,” explained a CRS staff member, “…you have to find a way to bring the results closer to the top.”

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Ibid., p. 8.
VII. Evaluator’s Conclusions

A. Project’s Progress toward Goal and Achievement of Objectives
As stated in the Evaluation Design section above, in conducting a final project evaluation, it is important to understand progress made towards the project’s goal, through an assessment of its success in achieving its objectives. Both SOs, “Youth are connected across ethnic lines” (SO1) and “Unemployed youth are engaged in society” aim to advance the goal “Youth feel secure about their future in Kosovo”.

As described in Finding 1.1, excellent results were observed in the project’s pursuit of SO1, Intermediate Result (IR) 1.1 “Mobilized youth advocate for conflict transformation”, particularly in mobilization activities. IR 1.2, “IR 1.2: Youth engage in joint problem solving, proved more problematic, however, as described in Finding 2.1 of this report. Although joint problem-solving did take place within the social infrastructure (YCs, CWYCs) created by the project, its mono-ethnic constituted a change that did not allow for observable connections across ethnic lines.

Under SO2, the project did achieve results in achieving the SO’s IR 2.1 “IR 2.2: Unemployed youth are empowered to take active economic role in society, although these results were somewhat limited, as discussed in Finding 1.6 of this report. It is not immediately evident, however, to what extent youth became more engaged in society as a result, however. As discussed in Finding 2.4, although the revised SO was relevant to the project’s goal, the limited scale of the intervention, as well as insufficiencies in the revised project design, did not allow for observable engagement in society.

B. Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP): YSF Contribution to “Peace Writ Large”
In evaluating the peacebuilding effectiveness of the YSF project, at its conclusion, two frameworks of analysis are applied here, in order to better understand the project’s impact as a CRS peacebuilding intervention. As is noted in the Evaluation Design and in Finding 2.3 of the project’s mid-term evaluation, CRS’ partner Collaborative for Development Action (CDA) has implemented an evaluation and learning project aimed at better understanding the effectiveness of “peace projects”. Following over 25 case studies and numerous implementation exercises (including in Kosovo together with CRS) since 2001, a matrix for understanding the cumulative impact of project effects, or as CDA described it “Peace Writ Large”.

There are four main variables to the matrix in its current form: “more people” interventions, “key people” interventions, “Individual/personal level” interventions and “socio-political level” interventions. “More people interventions” aim to engage large numbers of people in actions that promote peace, while “key people interventions” focus on involving selected people or groups of people identified as critical to the continuation or resolution of conflict. Projects that work at the “individual/personal level” seek to change attitudes, values, perceptions or circumstances of individuals, on the premise that peace is possible only if the hearts, minds and behavior of individuals are changed. Finally, projects that concentrate at the “socio-political level” are based on the belief that peace requires changes in socio-political
or institutional structures. These programs aim to support creation or reform of institutions that address grievances that fuel conflict and to institutionalize non-violent modes of handling conflict within the society.

Table 4 places the YSF project, during 4 distinct phases: Inception, Mobilization, Advocacy and Change of SO2, mapping the project at various points along the matrix, as indicated by the different arrows.
Table 4: Collaborative for Development Action (CDA) “Reflection on Peace Practice” Matrix\textsuperscript{48} with YSF Project Positioning

\textbf{CURRENT SITUATION:}
Conflict Analysis
Key Driving Factors of Conflict and “Key People” or Actor Analysis

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{INDIVIDUAL/ PERSONAL CHANGE} & \\
\hline
Healing/recovery & Change of SO2/
Perceptions YSF Completion
Attitudes 2008-2009 & YSF Inception
Skills \\
\hline
Behavior & YSF Mobilization;
Individual relationships YSF Advocacy;
relationships & Youth leaders,
Perceptions Public opinion principals, local
Attitudes Social norms officials 2007 & \\
\hline
SOCIO-
POLITICAL
CHANGE & \\
\hline
Group behavior/
relationships & YSF Advocacy;
Public opinion Mitrovica CWYC, 2007
Social norms & other CWYCs

\hline
Institutional change & \\
\hline
Cultural or Structural change & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\hspace{1cm}  \\

\textbf{VISION: A desired future}
Societal change\textsuperscript{5}Peace Writ Large

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Final Evaluation “Youth Securing the Future” (YSF)

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At the project’s inception phase, individual stakeholders and youth were engaged in small-scale development processes (mini-grants), building the capacities of youth to organize and, then quickly thereafter, mobilize. The mobilization phase overlapped here, to a certain extent, as other stakeholders were included in then process, the main threshold being the establishment of the CWYC’s, which, as discussed in finding 1.2, was a contribution to Kosovo’s social infrastructure and moved the project to the socio-political level.

For a brief time – and in isolated cases, in mono-ethnic settings – the project moved into the socio-political/more people level (illustrated by the bold arrow) with the joint advocacy activities, primarily by the Mitrovica/Mitrovice CWYC. It was also at this level that the original SO2 aimed to operate, with its emphasis e.g. on media and social marketing. It was also on this level that the project had the most potential to achieve an impact on the larger systemic level, or as informants described it, for the results of the project to “add up” (see finding 2.5).

Finally, with the change of SO2, to move away from public activities and target more beneficiaries directly transferred the project to the more people level, yet on the an individual/personal level (illustrated by the arrow highlighted in red).

The project’s mid-term evaluation described a diversity of opinions as to where to place the project on the matrix at that time. This is perhaps understandable given that this was the same time period in which the changes to SO2 were taking place. In the data collection phase of the final evaluation, there was greater consensus on the above analysis in the sense that key informants (i.e. those familiar with the matrix) believed that “project has experienced all four levels... perhaps even coming around full circle,” according to CRS staff.

C. Implication for “Peace Writ Large”

The implications for this on “Peace Writ Large” appear to indicate a shortfall in the project, using the RPP Matrix. The “missed opportunities” described by informants may well relate to the relatively limited time that the project was operational in the more people/socio-political level. Given both the Problem Statement in this evaluation and the observations discussed under finding 2.5, the more people/socio-political level may have been the most appropriate in which to achieve the project’s goal of youth feeling secure in Kosovo. Given that the time period described was also the period when the greatest numbers of connections were being made across ethnic lines, it may also be possible to say that this was the window in which there was the greatest opportunity for transforming for the conflict.

D. Peacebuilding Principles Evaluation Framework (PPEF)

At the same time, it may be useful to examine the findings of this evaluation using another, second framework, the “Peacebuilding Principles Evaluation Framework” (PPEF). The PPEF, developed by Mennonite scholar and practitioner John Paul Lederach, in collaboration with

49 See note 23, p. 33
the US-based Catholic Peacebuilding Network (CPN), also aims to evaluate peacebuilding projects according to a set of observable criteria, or “principles”, given that they are also potentially useful in conflict analysis and project design.

The five principles as developed by Lederach et al are: (1) interdependence (relationships); (2) infrastructure; (3) sustainable (long-term); (4) strategic; and (5) comprehensive. The principle of being strategic can be included in a matrix into the three categories of the strategic who (whom we work with), the strategic what (what we do in our programming) and the strategic where (where we focus our efforts). These include the strategic who, the strategic what, focusing on, for example, our comparative advantage in terms of our resources, energy, or expertise, and the strategic where, which identifies locations that are best situated for linking groups or other peacebuilding activities.

Table 5: The YSF Project in Peacebuilding principles evaluation framework: An Illustration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Strategic Who: Who we work with</th>
<th>Strategic What: What we do</th>
<th>Strategic Where: Where we work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major stakeholders of youth; youth leaders, principals, local officials, entrepreneurs/employers</td>
<td>Inclusive, participatory mobilization activities and smaller scale economic empowerment and conflict transformation (temporary)</td>
<td>Targeted initiatives for vulnerable communities, some geographic linkages, some inter-ethnic connections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Infrastructure | Creation of social infrastructure through CWYCs, YCs, partners | Capacities built in areas of organizational capacity, peace and tolerance | Infrastructures built in targeted, vulnerable communities, strongest in highest-risk community (Mitrovica/Mitrovicë) |

| Interdependence (Relationships) | Major horizontal relations created, vertical linkages to mid-level actors, but not high-level actors or potential “spoilers” | Horizontal relationships made in areas crucial to youth feeling secure in Kosovo, mainly mono-ethnic | Some interdependence created linking up smaller communities into CWYCs |
### Sustainability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Schools (especially teachers), local partners with increased capacities, some local government</th>
<th>Sustainability plans for YCs, but not CWYCs</th>
<th>All CWYC locations except joint in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Comprehensive (Overall vision)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Partners across ethnicities, with access to communities, supports infrastructure for a majority of the population (youth)</th>
<th>Reduction in violence at the local level</th>
<th>Infrastructure localized, with potential to scale-up further</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### E. PPEF and YSF as a Peacebuilding Project

Although the above illustration is not exhaustive, it demonstrates to contribution of the project to the overall goal of youth feeling secure about their future in Kosovo. The main difference with this illustration, comparing to the RPP Matrix, is that it goes beyond the two variables; essentially numbers and issues, illustrated, over time, in Table 4, capturing a number of additional elements that define what peacebuilding actually means. The creators of this matrix would argue that, without these components/principles, it is not possible to see the strategic value of the project or the contribution that it has made to social change. Critics may argue that it is too broad and does not include the aspect of change over time.

Inserting a number of the findings in this matrix, however, seems to demonstrate how much, in fact, the project was a peacebuilding project and not just a “peace”, or conflict transformation project. This is important for those wishing to understand (e.g. USAID, CRS) what the level of investment in the project has actually yielded. To say that it has yielded change for more people on the individual/personal level only is perhaps not enough. To more accurately see what the project has “built” in terms of infrastructure, relationships and sustainability - as well as how strategic that investment was – the Lederach/CPN model tells more about the “peace built”.

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Final Evaluation “Youth Securing the Future” (YSF)

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VIII. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

The evaluation has uncovered a number of good practices that may be of a more general interest to CRS in the implementation of future projects, specifically with youth and in the peacebuilding sector.

Lesson Learned and Recommendations #1 (relates to findings 1.1, 1.4, 1.5 and 2.4) – Entry points for success in working with youth

In many development settings youth can be considered a “marginalized group”, even in a setting such as Kosovo where they constitute a majority of the population. Particularly in societies where youth are not encouraged to question the authority of those older than them, opportunities for critical thinking and constructive change may be limited. The empowerment of youth may be perceived as a threat to established authority figures and these figures often have the power to display skepticism or discouragement about the involvement of youth in “adult issues”.

Both adult and youth informants spoke about the success of mobilizing youth, but also building their self-confidence. It should be understood that, when beginning to work with youth, development actors are entering an unequal power relationship, the first objective of which should be to balance. The project’s mini-grants did this in a way that both increased the self-confidence of the youth, but also gained them respect in the eyes of their peers and adult stakeholders. The YCs demonstrated capacity to work independently of CRS and partners demonstrates the pinnacle of achievement that in this area and has important implications for both sustainability and “Peace Writ Large”.

At the same time, as one CRS staff member put it, “working with youth requires working with adults”. Although the project did require the tacit consent of a number of adults, the greater involvement of parents and teachers (and not just school principals) in both the implementation, but also the design of activities, may have had the potential for even greater mobilization, particularly across ethnic lines.

Recommendations for future interventions would be to include this aspect more explicitly in the context analysis, design and even monitoring and evaluation aspects of the project.

Lesson Learned and Recommendations #2 (relates to finding 1.2) – Risks for politicization and “Doing Harm” in social infrastructure interventions

The CWYCs are an important and unique investment in the social infrastructure of Kosovo. They have attracted positive attention, and in many cases, recognition from key societal stakeholders. As such, they have also entered into relationships with other institutions that are in possession of power or influence.

Although, for example, following the independence declaration, it emerged that that the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica (North) CWYC exerted a positive political influence in the situation, in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South, there are clear attempts and intentions to co-opt the work that
that (half) CWYC to deliver on the plans of municipal officials who belong to political parties. As they become interdependent with local authorities, there is a risk that the CWYCs can become politicized themselves, which is not necessarily in the interests of a project intervention that seeks to mobilize and create “connectors”.

In the specific situation of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, there is also a possibility for doing harm by running two City-wide Youth Councils in parallel. Legitimizing this de facto division serves specific political interests within this context and would be better for youth to continue working under the understanding, if not the physical reality, that they are one multi-ethnic body with that multi-ethnicity as an operating principal.

One recommendation for addressing this issue in future interventions would be for newly created structures to adopt statutes or a “code of conduct” which defines their mission and way. This could also be done through the CWYCs creating sustainability plans as has been done in the individual YCs – a specific recommendation for project partners in this project.

**Lesson Learned and Recommendations #3, (relates to findings 1.1, 1.3, 1.4 and 2.1) – Partners from involved communities and operations “owned” by those communities are key to success in peacebuilding projects**

Within the peacebuilding sector, this is not an entirely new observation. It is abundantly clear in the case of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica that the project would have been impossible without the involvement of project staff and partners known in those communities and preceded by their reputations.

Having said that, it may have been possible, within the project, to look for ways of enhancing community outreach, beyond the direct beneficiaries. Operations that involve local vendors, local support workers, and different local venues all create a sense of greater local ownership, confidence and security. In the changed context, this may have allowed greater interaction across ethnic lines.

In the case of partner Galaxy Stars, for example, which was entering into new communities – although not a fatal assumption – it may have been more beneficial to engage more capacities from the new communities that they have entered.

One recommendation for future interventions of this kind is to source as much from the project locally, particularly the “human capital”.

**Lesson Learned and Recommendations #4 (relates to findings 1.6, 1.8 and 2.4) – Youth unemployment is an economic issue, but also a social issue and should be treated as such in project design**

The individual/personal level activities of the economic empowerment component of the project have had a positive impact in the lives of several dozen people. At the same time, the project left the issue of youth unemployment largely untouched. Given that awareness was already low, according to informants, of the dynamics of the issue and possible remedies, the project contained no activities for awareness-raising. Another way of putting this is to say that
the project may have attempted to solve youth unemployment for a handful of people, but
did little or nothing to address its root causes.

A recommendation for future projects of this kind would be to include awareness-raising,
advocacy and learning activities in any project designed to address youth unemployment.
Internships are excellent learning opportunities for direct beneficiaries, but conferences (e.g.
even involving beneficiaries themselves), publications, round tables and other means of
public communication would be necessary elements of any project working to deal with
youth unemployment in a sustainable way.

Lesson Learned and Recommendations #5 (relates to findings 2.1 and 2.3) – The need
for creativity and innovation in working with youth in a difficult security context
As was recommended in CRS/EME’s RTA for Peacebuilding’s report, in the emerging
difficult security context in Kosovo at that time, there was a need for greater creativity in
conducting inter-ethnic activities, particularly in relation to the original SO2. The fact that
these activities were abandoned in the project may have been rooted in legitimate security
concerns, but at the same time, the action sent a very negative signal to project participants
about feeling secure about their future in Kosovo. On the contrary, there may have been some
unique opportunities that the project could have seized on – with the appropriate support of
e.g. USAID or other top-level actors – that could have turned the deteriorating situation into
one in which innovative solutions or new models could have been developed. Improving the
potential for “virtual” activities; exchanges of videos, video conferences, or simply meeting
outside of Kosovo, could have likely been done given greater flexibility within the project and
a greater commitment by all concerned that this was a necessary, if not difficult, component of
the project.

Related to this was the lesson learned already at the time of the mid-term evaluation on the
involvement of so-called “hardliners” or “spoilers” in the project’s activities. It is clear that the
project relied on a theory of intervention that was intended to marginalize extremist views
and exert a more moderating, or “tolerance” influence over youth. According to CRS staff
involved in peacebuilding programming in Kosovo in since its inception, this may have not
been the right approach. Indeed, the RTA for Peacebuilding, in his report, suggested the
involvement of these actors in public settings, the assumption being that, given the correct
exposure extremist views could be exposed for what they are and those advocating them
would be publicly understood to be in the minority, and thus marginalizing them in a more
transparent manner.

Recommendations for future projects would be to try to design and budget for more flexible
activities in operating environments where a change in the security situation is anticipated. In
these situations, it may be important to involve project participants more directly in CRS’
understanding of the situation, similar to the context analysis exercises and scenario planning
recommended by the RTA in his report.

Lesson Learned and Recommendations #6 (relates to finding 1.1 and 2.2) – Mobilization
of youth in peacebuilding projects can have replicable effects on the
individual/personal level
A great deal of resources, and often a great deal of criticism, is directed at training activities within peacebuilding projects. Over the years, the peacebuilding practitioners have tried to go beyond the activity of training people on the individual/personal level in order to achieve results on the socio-political level - one of the main aims of CDA’s RPP initiative is to try to understand this and respond with more appropriately designed projects.

At the same time, it is important to understand the impact that these key people can have in localized situations and to support their actions. As was observed in the evaluation, participants in the project went beyond what was expected of them in some instances, such as reducing violence within schools through a “peer mediation” system, preventing vandalizing, or even preventing scenes of potentially enormous violence during political protests.

It would be recommended for future projects of this kind, and serve as an interesting contribution to peacebuilding learning, if effects on the individual/personal level on e.g. violence could be captured in a learning activity, such as an expanded component of a project M&E system.

Lesson Learned and Recommendations #7 (relates to findings 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5) – Genuine partnerships with larger and/or top-level actors is conducive to project results

As was described under Lesson Learned #1, youth are often in need of specialized support in order to sustain social change projects. As was discussed in Finding 2.5, this support could be from top-level actors, including formal political actors but also non-formal actors such as USAID.

CRS and partners were not satisfied with the level and quality of communications with USAID in the project. In the report of the RTA for Peacebuilding discussed above, a recommendation was made to transform the relationship between CRS and USAID, where USAID would become a “true partner”. This was unfortunately not possible and was viewed by a number of informants as leading to “missed opportunities” in achieving results set out by the project.

It is recommended that, due to the particular types of dynamics experienced in projects of this kind (e.g. in sensitive political and/or security environments), that extra attention be paid by CRS in involving donors from the outset in a more intensive partnership based on a commitment to achieve project results. This could take the form, for example, of an additional Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), allocating resources in the budget for regular activities in support of the partnership, or a formal commitment by the donor to have a regular staff presence within the project implementation team.
IX. Code of Conduct/Confidentiality and Rights of Informants

All data gathered through the on-site data collection process guarantees confidentiality of informants to the maximum extent possible. Raw data is appropriately coded and available upon request. However, coding is not applied to all inputs and allows for target communities/stakeholders to remain named in order to ensure usefulness of the report.

X. Distribution Policy

The data collected and contained in this report remains the property of CRS and should not be distributed without prior notice. For any further distribution within CRS please contact Florent Vranica, Head of Office, e-mail: fvranica@eme.crs.org.

XI. Contacts

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XII. List of Attachments

Attachment 1  YSF Results Framework 1
Attachment 2  YSF Results Framework 2
Attachment 3  Terms of Reference
Attachment 4  List of Stakeholders
Attachment 5  Data Collection Tools
Attachment 6  Validation Workshop Presentation