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SIX-MONTH REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. TRAININGS	4
Basic Training in Nonviolent Conflict Transformation, <i>October 2004</i>	4
Basic Training in Nonviolent Conflict Transformation, <i>December 2004</i>	5
3. WORKSHOPS	8
Workshop on Strategic Planning «View of the Future»	8
4. PUBLICATION	9
Preparation of the Publication about Reconciliation and Dealing with the Past	9
5. REGIONAL MEETINGS / MEETINGS IN THE REGIONS	10
Regional meeting - Vojvodina	10
The second regional meeting - the "React!" group	11
6. WORKING PLAN FOR 2005.	12

1. INTRODUCTION

Dear friends,

In this six-month period CNA's had plenty of activities.

Besides having dedicated ourselves to our basic activities related to various peace education programs, in this period we also started exploring some other directions of work.

On CNA's meeting in August 2004 and at the workshop with our friend and great supporter, Dr Martina Fischer in September 2004, we discussed what ways we wanted to go to and develop in the future. Therefore, we decided to continue our work on peace building and dealing with the past through different media: production of documentaries and video clips and release of the publication about reconciliation and attitude towards past in our societies ...

And what is it that we have been doing in this period?

In September 2004, CNA Sarajevo office organized the second part of the Training for ex-combatants, as a part of the preparations for the «4 Views» forums that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina in November and December 2004.

In October we had a workshop on trauma, organized and facilitated by Amela and Randy from Mennonite Central Committee from Sarajevo. Afterwards we had preparations for the Basic Training in Nonviolent Conflict Transformation. The training was organized by CNA Belgrade office and took place in Tivat at the end of October and the beginning of November,.

In November and December, forums "4 View" were held in the following towns in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Nevesinje, Gornji Vakuf/Uskoplje and Sarajevo. Our local partners gave us huge support for this project (you can find more about it in the report of CNA Sarajevo office). At the end of November, the first regional meeting was held, this time for the region of Vojvodina.

In December, we implemented another basic training in Vogošća (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and the end of the year was marked with the completion of the first documentary produced by CNA, called «Traces» (Tragovi).

Although it's been only two months since the beginning of the 2005, we did another basic training, in Tivat, Montenegro (you can find more about it in the report of CNA Sarajevo office). We also got together with our local partners to discuss work on a book of interviews about reconciliation and past and we also organized another regional meeting. Besides, we started to collect material for the next documentary under the working title «simulated dialogue» and to plan our future activities ...

And, one more thing:

While we were editing this six-month report, we talked about what this report should contain in the future, if and how interesting, important, useful it might be. That is why it would be useful to us to get information from you - our readers, what it is that you'd like to read about - what kind of information, how many details, how interesting you find these reports or how useful for your own work.

If you have any suggestions, any feedback, please contact us on the following e-mails: cna.beograd@nenasilje.org or cna.sarajevo@nenasilje.org.

We welcome your suggestions, criticism ... Thank you.

2. TRAININGS

Basic Training in Nonviolent Conflict Transformation

Tivat, Montenegro, October 29 - November 8, 2004

The third basic training in nonviolent conflict transformation in 2004 was organized by CNA Belgrade office.

Unlike CNA's ordinary practice, there were 21 people who took part on the training. Although the maximum number of participants of the training is twenty, this time we decided to approve participation of one more person who came as a personal assistant to one of the participants (a person with handicap).

Although the training took place in Montenegro, none of the participants came from there. We had two applications from that region, but in the final selection, two other people were ranked higher on our priority list with respect to the current events in the region. Participants came from Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The training team included Gazmend Murselli from Action for Nonviolence and Peace Building - Gnjilane, Kosovo and Helena, Ivana and Milan from CNA's Belgrade office.

Documentation from this training titled "333-222" (75 p.) for those who are interested is available at CNA offices. Financial support for this training was provided by German Ministry for Development and International Cooperation (BMZ).

Satisfaction of the training team with the **concept of the training** (order of workshops and the way they were added to one another in the context of meeting the needs of the group) is based on the following points:

- The impression that the group's needs were adequately followed, that we worked one block after another, constantly analyzing the situation, opening new themes and issues, based on the changes we observed;
- Our perception of the motivation of most of the people from the group to analyze society and violence in the society which was rising in the course of the training;
- Great effort that participants invested in creative conflict transformation which was worked on the day before last, and suggestions they had as a solution to de-escalation of violence in concrete situations that were presented;
- Group's high motivation to work on their personal development, which was apparent also after the workshops and formal working time, through constant asking and giving feedback from one another (as well as from the training team);
- The impression that the team work was pleasant, which was accompanied by the feeling that we were following and aiming the training in a good way.

There are several things that deserve to be thought through regarding the concept of the whole training:

- The key opening of the theme *violence* in the society came almost at the end of the training, during the workshop on *creative conflict transformation*. Having in mind that it was quite late, it caused people to feel certain heaviness, which might look like pessimism, at first sight. The fact that the workshop *violence* passed quite moderately, was the *characteristic of this training*, because the feeling of heaviness that often accompanies the process of sensitization for violence, came later therefore there was no time to step out of it, although there were many chances for transformation and reduction of violence by the participants. On a deeper level, this is not a big problem with respect to reexamination of one's own responsibility for acting or non-acting in the society, but it evidently influences the level of energy and optimism of people when they are about to finish the training.
- Amongst the part of the group, there was a lack of safe space for getting into some themes. It was certainly caused by jokes, heckling and banter that came from one part of the group at the beginning of the training. Although the team reacted to it, it is possible that it needed more time;

- The impression remains that the issue of personal responsibility for the situation in the society regarding the structural violence was not covered thoroughly enough. We had it as a theme and left some time for it, but there was an impression that it wasn't open enough.

Workshops were quite abundant and most of the themes were covered in a deep way, especially prejudices, national identity and creative conflict transformation. We would like to mention especially the workshop on *national identity* which was very strong, deep and carried a lot of emotions.

The important point in building of mutual trust and establishing safer space for dealing with "harder" issues was our decision to bring in feedback (giving return information on how I experience you on the training) as one of the themes and to take some extra time before the day off for the exchange of feedback. We are glad that we estimated correctly how useful this was, which proved to be true later, since participants used that technique until the end of the training.



Regarding the **work of the group**, here are some short hints that represent a total of our impressions:

- There were noticeable differences within the group, although not all the differences were expressed fully, like there was no space to be completely different. Big age difference within the group was not a barrier.
- Participants listened and followed each other very well, during discussions. An important point for the group was that people gave each other support, especially after some difficult issues were worked on.
- Participants from Serbia and Kosovo often discussed the context and the difficulties that exist in their communities, and what was lacking at some moments was the social context of other countries.
- We are under the impression that there were many conflicts within the group, that were not dealt with transparently, which eventually resulted that some people felt there was a lack of safe space.
- We missed people from Sandžak, Serbia and Albanians from Macedonia.
- It felt good to work in the group because there was warmth and great activity. It was a pleasure to spend informal time with people. We felt that there was a sense of trust in the training team.

With several participants, we see potential and motivation to take part either in the Training for Trainers program or in the developed concept of the additional training we have been working on.

Work of the training team was filled with good energy, and often accompanied by laughter. We took care of each other and our work was a primary source of support. Although it was the first time we worked in this constellation, we were managing fine.

We completed this training with the feeling of satisfaction.

Basic Training in Nonviolent Conflict Transformation

December 10 - 20, 2004, Vogošća (Sarajevo), Bosnia and Herzegovina

The fourth Basic Training in Nonviolent Conflict Transformation in 2004 was organized by CNA Belgrade office. Seventeen people took part at the training. They came from Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The training team consisted

of: Blerim Jashari ("Loja" Tetovo, Macedonia), Lovorka Bačić (Center for Peace Studies - Zagreb, Croatia), and Helena and Milan from CNA Belgrade office. The training was financially supported by the German Ministry of International Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Although we invited 20 people, several unexpected last minute cancellations disallowed us from inviting some of the people from a rather long waiting list. Despite the fact that they had confirmed their participation, two people simply didn't show up at the training.

We finished this training quite exhausted, unmotivated and carrying a great heaviness. In our work so far, we have encountered various kinds of difficulties, but their intensity and frequency made this training one of the harder ones since there were several persons in this group whose behaviour we perceived as obstructive, and who often won over other people from the group to their side. It has been a valuable experience, and we've got some learning points out of it, but we hope it will never happen again.

We will present the difficulties we have encountered at this training, in more details, further in this article.

Main difficulties related to the group:

- Part of the people from the group expected that we would deal with individual psychological analysis on this training, which resulted in a diminished possibility to analyze society and social processes in workshops. This tells us that part of them didn't read the invitation letter for the training carefully, before they applied. Obviously this had an impact to the expectations as well as to the actual work process.
- Some people expressed their distrust with respect to the methodology, training team's approach to themes and to work. We were under the impression that with some of the people that distrust transformed into the attitude of dispute and negation of the way we work and into the lack of understanding of the values that stood behind it. We believe that this problem occurred because of the lack of safe space for the analysis of one's own behaviour and responsibility in the society, while on the other hand it is a frequent mechanism of shifting responsibility to the training team in those moments when it is too difficult to look within oneself and realize one's own responsibility. However, this time, not only was there shifting responsibility, but also obstruction of work. For example, on several occasions one could hear that only the training team could see the violence around them, while it didn't really exist. Besides, some individuals often analyzed the form of the workshop, and not the essence of the social process that was being discovered through the workshop.

This kind of drawing attention away from the essence of the process to the form induced a certain feeling of mistrust within the group towards the methods and the work of the training team.

The additional problem was the fact that those people were recognised as some kind of «leaders» by the rest of the group, therefore their influence was even bigger.

- There were very few "allies" within the group. Usually, at the end of the first part of the training, confrontations start appearing amongst the group members and some kind of false compactness plunges, as it is established in the first place as a result of insecurity and the lack of safe space for different attitudes and confrontation. From that moment on, trust within the group starts to rise gradually which opens up possibility to re-examine violence in the society and one's own responsibility for it. It is our impression that there was not enough space for it at this training and that this false, initial compactness remained present throughout the entire process. Even though one part of the group certainly did re-examine themselves and work on their personal development, there were many attitudes and thoughts that weren't presented publicly, due to the lack of courage and security, all of which made it much harder for us to start covering various important issues. Few people who expressed opinions different from the rest of the group during the first couple of days of the training were criticized by some individuals, but outside the work process, during the informal time, therefore those cases could not be dealt with at the workshop (which is a common practice) because the trainees didn't disclose them in front of the group.

- Different view of the role of the training team at the training, expressed by some of the participants. Perception that the team should only facilitate the process, not present their own opinions and not interrupt anybody. The view expressed as "They get paid for this" and they don't have the right to be tired, unsatisfied etc.

Regarding the difficulties in work of the training team, we emphasise the following:

- Imbalance of experience between the members of the training team, which is often desirable and expected at the training, due to the complexness of this training was often recognized as a difficulty by the entire team which influenced the groups' distrust towards the team.
- Fatigue of some team members, who came to the training with that feeling which only increased as the training was unfolding.
- Part of the training team experienced the difficulties strongly and emotionally, due to the constant pressure they felt the team was exposed to during both workshops and outside of them.
- The need for frequent confrontations with the group in order to open up some issues on several occasions cause a feeling that we were on a different "frontline" from the group (the example we have already stated gives a good example of that: "only the training team sees the violence around them").
- Lack of energy to take care of each other and to mutually support each other due to the emotional and physical exhaustion caused by the difficulties at the training.
- No time for rest for the members of the training team due to the constant need to make alterations of the concept and to analyze the situation the group was going through.

Main learning points we draw out of this training are the following:

- In situations like these lower the expectations from the training and cover as much as possible with the workshops, while supporting more intensively those who are "pushing forward". Do not impose some themes, even though they are very important, but stay focused on what can be done. The problem that exists within the group should be the priority. Even though we opened up some space to discuss problems with our views about the goals of the training and the expectations, we believe that we should have dedicated ourselves to that sooner and discuss it more often both in the plenary and individually, with participants.
- Save some spare energy for the team and for mutual support. Take care of the people in the team and set that as a priority.
- Be obliged to take time to rest and to "exit" the training.
- Think about some other changes that should be made in the part of the invitation letter concerning the goals of the training in order to make it even clearer what it is exactly that will be worked on.
- Think about cutting down the training (in situations like these) for a few days in order to preserve the energy and the motivation of the people from the training team.
- Have three more experienced team members and one guest trainer in order to balance their experience.

Event though we finished the training with and overall dissatisfaction with what we accomplished and the results we achieved, we concluded that this training gave us plenty of material to learn from. We look at it as a big and quite valuable experience for our future work, experience of dealing with many problems and difficulties in the work process. Learning about it, even when it is done in such a hard way, is important to us so we can improve both our work and ourselves.

We see potential and motivation for participation in the Training for Trainers or at the advanced concept of the continuation of the training with only a few female participants from this training.

After the training we published a documentation (72 p.) that is available in both CNA offices.

3. WORKSHOPS

Workshop on Strategic Planning «View of the Future»

Belgrade, October 2 -3, 2004

A two-day workshop under the working title «View of the Future» was held in CNA Belgrade office on October 2-3, 2004. CNA team invited Dr Martina Fischer from Berghof Research Centre from Berlin, to conduct this workshop which gathered the entire CNA staff from both our offices, Belgrade and Sarajevo.

It was a chance for all of us to set aside some time just for this purpose and together with a valuable contribution of someone outside of our team, think about the future of our organisation, especially regarding the type and the nature of the activities we wanted to pursue in the future.

Having in mind that CNA has been active in the region of former Yugoslavia ever since 1997, and that we have been perceiving various forms of peace education as our basic activity, our team estimates that it's the right moment to discuss possible changes of our strategy and to talk about the way we want to go to and develop in the future. Since the social context of our work (nevertheless) changed since our beginning, and so were our individual affinities and needs, with this workshop we wanted to make some draft of the future activities and capacities that existed within our team.

We spent two working days in an intense activity, without the pressure to make decisions. As a result of that work, several basic guidelines were sharpened: our organisation's main mission and orientation towards work on building of sustainable peace in the region of ex-Yugoslavia remained the same, as well as our primary focus was to regional work.

What we have been striving towards for quite some time already and what was underlined as one of the basic value assumptions of our work, is that CNA is a group which not only offers space for the existence of different affinities within our team but also for their implementation in accordance with the main guidelines of our work. As early as next year we will see how much we succeed with this, since we have planned to implement not only our «standard» educational programs but also to deepen our work in the field of dealing with the past, through some media that are completely new to us: production of documentaries and video clips as well as release of the publication about reconciliation and the attitude towards past that exists in our societies.

Since encompassing new activities brings along the need to build new capacities and gain knowledge from new areas, a lot of attention was paid to the evaluation of the existing capacities and prioritizing in gaining knowledge and skills in the forthcoming period.

Even though our «view of the future» at some moments reached some, within our limits, too far away future (four to five years ahead), which once again reminded us of the uncertainty of the social context we work in, we are still empowered by the mutual support and readiness to try something new and different, not giving up the old, already tested approaches that gave good results.

4. PUBLICATION

Preparation of the Publication about Reconciliation and Dealing with the Past

What Is It About?

With this publication we want to present the opinions of a diverse group of individuals from the entire region, about reconciliation, for what it is needed, what obstacles and fears are related to it, what hopes, how people see the process of dealing with the past, how necessary it is and why, in what way...

Publication is intended to be a collection of interviews with people from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia, belonging to different age, professional, social and ethnic groups.

It will be three-lingual: in Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, Macedonian and Albanian language.

Our goal is to offer a chance to those whose voices that are either never or very rarely heard in public.

Why?

People from this region have a chance to learn something new about the official politics of the neighbouring countries, to hear statements from high officials in media (especially those that provoke an outrage), or to hear about some incident that occurred in the neighbouring state. However, they almost never get a chance to hear what citizens of the neighbouring country think, especially if those voices speak affirmatively about the sustainable peace and dealing with the past. In these societies with twisted social values, story about peace building doesn't make it into the news headlines because there are no incidents, scandals, adrenalin rush caused by hate speech nor blood in it.

We are aware that we cannot change this situation at once. However, with this project, we want to contribute to making a path and raising a public interest, and especially the interest of media for the values that are not «news material».

Who?

We are especially pleased to announce this part ☺

About 20 people from the entire region (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia), who we are very fond of, will be working on this project. Most of them are former participants of our *Training for Trainers Programme*, as well as *Basic Training events* - people with whom we share values, who are motivated and have the sensibility required to work on such matter.

For a long time already, we have wanted to organize an activity in which people from our «informal network» would be included, those who went through various programmes, so they could get to know each other and in order for network to start to function independently from our initiative. Work on this publication looks like our wish is coming true in an excellent way.

On February 19th, we had a meeting during which we agreed in more detail about goals, ways, approaches, responsibilities, etc. Even though many people didn't know each other prior to this meeting, we were able to focus on the essence very quickly and easily. The atmosphere was quite motivating; therefore we can hardly wait until our joint work on this project gains momentum. And we are looking forward immensely to our mutual cooperation.

5. REGIONAL MEETINGS / MEETINGS IN THE REGIONS

Regional meeting - Vojvodina *Belgrade, November 27-28, 2004*

Regional meeting for people from Vojvodina, took place in CNA Belgrade office, on the last weekend of November.

About the Need

This meeting came as a result of our need to support people who went through our activities (primarily training events), as well as from the need to inspire people and encourage them to react to violence in everyday life in our communities, especially the one that was inter-ethnically inspired.

We have been thinking for quite some time about giving support to people from our training events. We decided to organize meetings of people from certain regions. The decision to have the first meeting with people from Vojvodina is based on political problems that occur on daily basis, overshadowed with a growing nationalism, and violence in general in Vojvodina, which provokes almost no reaction at all. We are worried because of the growing violence, and want reactions against hate and inter-ethnic intolerance. Voices raised in condemnation of this violence are too silent and insufficient, while the state institutions hardly pay any attention to it at all.

Eight people from different parts of Vojvodina responded to our invitation and gathered up.

What Did We Do At The Meeting?

Except getting acquainted and talking about our motivation and expectations from the meeting, we also talked about our views of the problems that existed in Vojvodina, what problems those were, what could be done with respect to them, what we could do and what we were going to do.

After we had made an agreement about the future actions, we made a detailed plan about who was in charge of specific action and what was the deadline, what was the message we were sending with our work (what exactly we wanted) and what we were going to name our working group.

We also agreed about the future work and how we were going to function. For start, we also agreed about the time of the next meeting and who was in charge of the organisation.

What Was Done After the Meeting?

Group of eight people together with two of CNA team members formed a group named "React!" and decided to declare December 18, which was the day of their action, the Day against Violence in Vojvodina. In order to proclaim the main activity of the Group and many others who joined this action, we named it "Take the Violence Off the Wall!" In many towns of Vojvodina graffiti were painted over and fliers were distributed with the message "I don't want anyone out! We are all Vojvodina" (written in all the languages that are spoken in Vojvodina) as a response to the frequently seen graffiti messages "Get out of here!", "Out of Serbia" etc., aimed mostly against the minority ethnic groups in Vojvodina.

The activity took place in Novi Sad, Kikinda, Zrenjanin, Subotica, Novi Bečej, Vrbas, Pančevo, Bačka Palanka and Vršac at 12 o'clock on December 18.

It was covered by many electronic and printed media such are daily newspapers: Subotičke novine, Dnevnik, Politika, Blic, Građanske novine, local TV channels: TV Panonija, Subotička TV and nation-wide channels: B92, TV Novi Sad etc. The activity was broadcast over the satellite TV, since Hungarian TV also covered it. Besides, the announcement of the event with

more details about the reasons for it was published in the bulletin called "Tolerance" which was distributed together with fliers in public libraries, cafes etc.

We are already planning another action which is going to take place on January 30, 2005 the International Day of Nonviolence.

The second regional meeting - the "React!" group *Novi Bečej, February the 26th, 2005*

On Saturday, February the 26th, 2005, the «React!» Group which had been formed in November 2004 had its second meeting. This time, there were more of us since our informal group is slowly growing and expanding. Like the last time, facilitators of the meeting were Milan and Helena from CNA.

What We Were Talking About?

We did an evaluation of our action called «Take the Violence Off the Wall» that took place on December 18, and of the activities that accompanied it. We also discussed the difficulties, things we were satisfied with and the learning points we were able to get out of it. Since we were rather dissatisfied with the contacts with media (some of those that we had invited didn't come), we paid more attention to that segment. On the other hand, when we counted the media that covered the event or announced it (it was 30 of them!) we realised that there was really no particular reason to feel dissatisfied☺.

We also agreed on what to do further and how to do it, how our list and group would function, we distributed responsibilities and agreed on the future actions we were going to undertake.

Look at the Future

Further actions are going to be pursued on several levels: reactions to certain events (for instance on «incidents», hate speech, anniversary, like for example the one of the violence that happened in Kosovo, Serbia and Vojvodina on March the 17th, etc), reactions to the situation in the country (xenophobia and so on), as well as support to people and actions related to peace building.

And finally, here is something that describes the «React!» Group and our work in the best way:

React

Energetically,

Activist,

Civil,

To violence, (and condemn it in public!)

The React Group!

6. WORKING PLAN FOR 2005.

January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summit CNA in Belgrade, 10-13. I - Basic training 1, 28.I-7.II
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting of partners - book of interviews "Reconciliation" 18-19. II
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional meeting (Kosovo, Makedonija, Srbija), 4-8. III
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic training 2, 1-11.IV - Filming for the documentaries - Ex-combatant training, 29.IV-9.V
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Filming for the documentaries
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Filming for the documentaries - Advanced training, phase 1, 24.VI-4.VII - Publishing of the Training Handbook in Hungarian language
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic training 3, 8-18.VII - Filming & Editing of Documentaries
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced training II, 5-12.VIII - Editing of Documentaries - Holidays, 26.VIII-18.IX
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting CNA, 19-23.IX - Promotion of the film "Tragovi" ("Traces") in Belgrade
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Film promotion Tragovi, in Sarajevo - Basic training 4, 21-31.X
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic training 5
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Film Promotion "Simulated Dialogue" (Serb-Bosniak) - SA-BG

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