

CENTAR ZA NENASILNU AKCIJU  
CENTRE FOR NONVIOLENT ACTION



**Belgrade office:**

Studentski trg 8/5A, 11000 Beograd,  
Serbia and Montenegro

Tel: +381 11 637 661, 637 715

Fax: +381 11 637 603

[cna.beograd@nenasilje.org](mailto:cna.beograd@nenasilje.org)

[www.nenasilje.org](http://www.nenasilje.org)

# 3-MONTH REPORT

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*Centar za nenasilnu akciju (Centre for Nonviolent Action) is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation whose basic goals are peace building, development of civil society, cross-border cooperation and promotion of nonviolence.*

*Our main activity is to organise and implement trainings (seminars) in nonviolent conflict transformation and to support groups and individuals who wish to do this kind of work. Through training in nonviolent conflict transformation we are aiming to develop political awareness of the training participants, and to pass on skills in nonviolent dealing with conflict. At our trainings CNA gathers people from all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Yugoslavia and Macedonia, hence giving special focus on networking, and communication between people from different areas, and supporting the process of prejudice reduction and trust building.*

*CNA started to work in 1997 with an office in Sarajevo. Office in Belgrade started in 2001. CNA is an external branch of KURVE Wustrow.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

**Dear friends,**

The period of time between December and February, we in CNA Belgrade office, spent working hard and mostly in good spirits. The New Year's Eve and all the preceding and succeeding holidays passed pretty quietly. It seems that the whole team used the time to get a break after the many activities we took part in and a very strenuous work plan we had in the last year.

Part of the team was engaged in phases V and VI of the Training for Trainers Program, which included follow-up meetings with participants and preparations for training events they were going to conduct, as well as a five-day training in Bečej, Vojvodina, which was without any doubt the most difficult one we've had until now, in respect of external difficulties.

As a part of the research for the sequel of our program "Dealing with the Past", we also visited some Veterans' Associations in Serbia.

Our office has moved to a spacious apartment full of light, which is an important precondition for us to feel good. This change had instant effects on all of us who work in the office and obviously lifted our spirits. Hopefully some of the difficulties we had along the way regarding installing the telephone and Internet lines will not wear us down too much, despite some current indicators...

We are very glad to announce that the CNA Sarajevo office gained another team member - Sanja Deanković from Kašteli, Croatia. Every time our team enlarges we receive some new energy and enrich our work with some new ideas, views and approaches.

Finally all the conditions were set so we could have our first annual meeting in the Belgrade office. The work plan for year 2003 includes even more activities than the former one, which is at the same time both scary and joyful. Besides all the activities we pursue there are many other things that need to be worked on, and unfortunately we are not able to dedicate ourselves to them due to the lack of resources and capacity. There is an obvious need for the empowerment of valuable local initiatives (people) and their regional networking, which is something we tend to do through our Training for Trainers Program.

We received visitors from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs as well as many of our friends, associates and colleagues.

A few days ago this country's name was officially changed from Yugoslavia to Serbia and Montenegro, without much fuss or ceremony. The event has provoked different reactions inside and outside the country.

The situation in the South of Serbia is very worrying. It seems that the flame of armed clashes has started to smoulder, mostly according to the same scenario and in the same sequence of events as has happened already in the past. Once again one can hear the same phrases and qualifications coming from politicians in the media. Again there's not enough space to discuss people's needs and their existing feeling of insecurity.

A certain level of public debate was initiated on lustration of the judicial system (imposing a public functions ban on people who committed human rights abuses and/or were involved in corruption). This occurred after several striking examples of corruption were discovered inside the system some time ago. As well as this there are currently a few cases in which those responsible for crimes committed during the past decade are being brought to trial (as in the case of abduction and killing of Muslims in Štrpce, Serbia).

One of those indicted for war crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Vojvodina - Vojislav Šešelj, has given himself up to the Hague Tribunal, after the indictment on him was announced. The Serbian public is still waiting to find out real reasons for such an act. It would be ridiculous even to think that the reasons lied in the catharsis or belief in the international justice.

Here in Belgrade, we've had several warm, caressing days in a row... Spring? ☺

While we were finalising this report we have heard the news that another person was killed. We are horrified.

We hear comments that it happens in these regions quite usually. We are annoyed with those comments, as we do not want to believe that we live in a place where the level of awareness accepts a murder as very "normal" and expected phenomenon.

A prime Minister was killed during daylight in front of the Government building. That fact gives a very strong and brutal message.

A man is killed, who knew, who had strength and will, to work on crucial changes in Serbia. No meter how much we criticised his work, considering constructive criticism our citizen's duty, we are aware of the great loss for this society his death presents. No meter how unsatisfied we were with some of his political moves, he was still giving us hope that there was a chance to build a society together, society with basic values of peace, nonviolence and human rights.

We are discouraged hearing from a large number of young people that they lost hope and that they now think more than ever to leave this country.

With strong feeling of solidarity we express our condolence to the family and friends of Zoran Đinđić.

## 2. MAIN ACTIVITIES

### 2.1. Training for Trainers in Nonviolent Conflict Transformation Programme (phase V and VI)

#### 2.1.1. Phase V (Follow-up meetings) *November - December 2002*

During phase IV of the Training for Trainers Program, teams of participants were formed, based on participants' ideas for the activities they wanted to pursue. Teams took responsibility for the development, organisation and implementation of these ideas. There were six teams gathered around the following ideas:

- Training for teachers from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Vojvodina
- Training for activists from different parts of Macedonia
- Training for journalists from FR Yugoslavia
- Training in nonviolent conflict transformation for people from the region of former Yugoslavia
- Training for youth in Kosovo
- Training for youth in Montenegro

We were very glad to see how participants chose these activities, because we didn't have the feeling they were just interested in "trainings for the sake of trainings", but were highly motivated to work on problems in their own environment. One of the indicators for this was the choice of issues that participants chose to work on. Those from Macedonia wanted to work on inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia, participants from Kosovo wanted to work in Kosovo, journalists wished to work in media, pedagogues from a primary school wanted to work with teachers, while participants from Montenegro planned to work with youth in Montenegro. Besides being "oriented locally", a certain number of participants wished to work on a regional level, therefore they decided to work with people from the region of former Yugoslavia or to join some "local" activity, so they could contribute to it with an "outside" view and with their relatively similar experiences.

Phase V of the program gave participants a chance to meet, elaborate ideas about their activities, work out a precise work schedule, distribute responsibilities accordingly, and get as much support from the CNA team as needed. Participants spent most of the time in these meetings finishing their internal agreements and distributing responsibilities. Our role was reduced to giving recommendations about things they needed to think about and do in the process of organising the training. The second part of the meeting was dedicated to advice and open issues about project proposal, budget, financial report and narrative report.

In this phase of the program, two people who had participated in some of our previous Training for Trainers Programs joined us. One of them was a man who participated in the program in 1998-99, and the other person was a woman who took part in 2001 Programme. Therefore, we made another step toward connecting participants from different Training for Trainers Programmes thus widening the network of mutual support between them.

Participants requested to have one CNA team member in each training team, for five of the activities chosen. Our colleague and friend who participated in Training for Trainers Program in 1998-99, who has a lot of experience in this type of work will join the sixth team. This was a result of the participants' wish to have a person with more experience within the team. This is important as it means that having a more experienced team member within the team gives support to those team members who do not have it.

We are very satisfied with this phase of the program. Meetings did take a very long time (sometimes up to 10 hours a day), however participants were very motivated to work. It is really wonderful to see participants become our colleagues with equal rights, taking on more and more responsibility.

### **2.1.2. Phase VI (a 5-day training)**

*December 13-18, 2002, Bečej, Vojvodina*

Phase VI of the *Training for Trainers* Program was quite a new experience for both the participants and the training team. The original idea for this phase was to practice public presentation of peace work, but also to return to a wider context of work on peace building, analyse "peace degrading" and work on the issue of 'Dealing with the past'.

We decided to have this training in Vojvodina, just like the previous one, primarily because of good traffic connections with other parts of former Yugoslavia, and the nice experience from our last stay in Bečej. We chose to stay in another hotel, The «Fantast» hotel, near Bečej thus making a mistake, which cost us a lot of energy, effort and time spent in perpetual negotiations with hotel staff and management, since they didn't stand to the original agreement. On the first day of work, we realised we didn't have a proper room to work in, regardless of the fact that it had been agreed on. Hotel management however reordered their priorities and decided to give it for some celebration party attended by local politicians and covered by Serbian television. Our attempts to get a working space remained futile since the hotel manager kept shrugging his shoulders and saying "there is nothing one can do", "our people still give priority to politicians and state television" and that we "have to understand that". We couldn't understand it because that was not the deal we had made, especially since we paid the full amount in advance because that was "the hotel policy". We've had quite good experiences with such payment policy until now therefore we didn't have any suspicions, especially because many people recommended this hotel to us.

We spent half a working day trying to provide some room for work, hardly believing what was happening. Finally, we ended up in a bungalow lobby, with extremely difficult working conditions, because despite the agreement and a notice at the door, guests and staff of the hotel kept passing through it while we were working.

Because of the new circumstances we had to turn the concept of the training upside down, trying not to lose anything in the process. However, everyone was nervous and disappointed (we had to put our coats and jackets on while working in a freezing lobby, meals were tasteless and small so we were all hungry) and the energy and motivation for work were the least possible. If this was by any chance a Basic training where people met for the first time, it would have been a total disaster. We would not be surprised if some people just went home. People from this group, however, know each other very well and we think they are highly motivated to work on peace building. They managed to summon up their strength to take part in the afternoon workshop, show some understanding and not blame everything on us.

From the second day on, we were able to work in the room we had previously agreed on, but the situation with heating and food remained the same, as well as the way most of the hotel staff treated us.

In spite of all these difficulties, which influenced the working process and required daily arrangements and negotiations with the hotel management, we managed to do a lot, primarily thanks to participants' high motivation.

We don't want this report to be just about our complaints about the hotel, however, we do feel responsible to pass on this experience and warn the other groups that do not have their own premises and sometimes organise meetings in hotels.

If we forget the troubles with the hotel for a moment, the highlight of the training was certainly the workshop on the public presentation of peace work. As a part of this workshop we did short scenes in which the participants' task was to present the activity they had chosen to implement as a part of a Training for trainers program in the beginning of 2003. Participants appeared in the morning show of "YU info" TV station, visited the Ministry of Education where they asked for permission to work with school employees, visited local authorities to ask for support, went to local veterans' association to invite them to sign up for training, presented their idea in front of donors and to an international peace organisation, etc. We videotaped these short scenes, played them and later analysed them. The scenes we did in the morning were simpler, while the afternoon ones were a lot more complex and difficult. It turned out this workshop required more emotional effort and was more stressful than we had expected. For many participants it was the first time they found themselves in situations such as visiting pro-nationalist local authorities, visiting war veterans, being interviewed by a not very well-intentioned journalist; and they had difficulties dealing with them. The analysis of these scenes was very thorough and useful. We paid a lot of attention to the language and manner with which we address a wider population, or people who are not directly connected to peace work, since we noticed that peace groups (including us) tend to develop their own "meta" - language, which we suspected not everyone would understand.

The workshop on building and degrading of peace was very interesting because we analysed how much we, as well as other social groups, contributed to peace building, with our work, and how much of it had quite the opposite effect and contributed to degrading of peace. The discussion was focused on the analysis of terms often used by people who consider themselves to be activists. It is our opinion that these terms are not being re-examined enough and that some aspects of these terms are neglected ('conflict resolution', 'meeting foreign standards', 'nonviolent

communication', 'healthy competition between NGOs' are just some of the terms we covered).

In this phase of the program, we discussed for the first time the issue of Dealing with the past. While we were preparing the concept of the workshop, we had great expectations about it wishing to cover as many open questions regarding this issue. The training team intended to approach this subject on a social level, while participants turned out to look at it on a more personal level, not setting a social level as their priority. We also noticed that the work on peace building is often mixed up and equalised with work on the issue of Dealing with the past. Although these two areas overlap we cannot say they are basically the same. Such an outcome of the workshop helped us realise how much more work it takes to deal with the past, especially with people dedicated to peace building and sensitive to a productive approach to this subject.

## **2.2. Meetings with Veterans' Associations in Knjaževac and Medveđa, Serbia**

In February, two CNA team members visited Veterans' Associations in Knjaževac and Medveđa, to explore possibilities for further work on the project "Dealing With the Past".

The basic goals of the visit were:

Search for potential participants in the project (those who took part in wars in the region of former Yugoslavia) who might take part in public debates organized by CNA;

Implementation of cooperation and mutual support between CNA and Veterans' Association as an important factor in the success of our work in the field of dealing with the past;

Getting to know local circumstances and the needs for this kind of work in local communities;

Search for potential partner organizations with which we want to establish different forms of cooperation in development and the creation of this and similar programs.

On February 11 we had the first meeting with representatives of the War Veterans' Association in Knjaževac. The meeting was held in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and we got the feeling that our partners really liked the idea. This was something they confirmed themselves on several occasions during the conversation. We established that there were possibilities for cooperation with some individual members of the Association on concrete activities within the project "Dealing With the Past" and its further development. (The activities would be with individuals because unfortunately the Association had come to a halt due to some difficulties and a lack of "driving force", although they had many members.) We also received a lot of information on what was going on in this town that we did not know anything about prior to this meeting. (E.g. many citizens of Knjaževac were drafted to go to war in 1991 and refused to do so).

On February 21 we visited Medveđa, the municipality which partly borders on Kosovo, where a strong tension between the Albanian and Serbian population seemed to exist. It is important to point out that the municipalities of Medveđa, Preševo and



Bujanovac belong to those with high inter-ethnic tensions, resulting in several armed clashes. We are under the impression that this situation is a result of very complicated problems including a non-resolved conflict over the human and civil rights of different ethnic groups from that area (until recently Albanians have been treated as second-class citizens); an unclear mandate by the local authorities; political turmoil between Serbia and Kosovo (trading demands and collecting political scores) as well as many others, that had all interlaced together. Use of an "ethnic key" for the representation of different ethnicities in local institutional structures is treated by authorities as the solution of the problems, and not as a way of dealing with the problems. The consequence is that people do not have a feeling that they are represented in local institutional structures due to the lack of needs assessment and communication between local authorities and citizens.

We visited «The Association of Veterans from the Wars from 1990» which was the branch organization of the Serbian Association with many local offices in towns all over Serbia. The Association has many members and continues to have good cooperation with Municipality of Medveđa. We met some representatives of the Association who showed they were highly motivated for cooperation with CNA concerning the work on dealing with the past. It was indicated with their thorough preparations for the meeting and some suggestions for future cooperation they offered us. We think that we'll be able to use many elements of our cooperation in our further work and there was an obvious feeling of satisfaction we all shared after meeting each other.

These two one-day meetings helped us realize once again how important cooperation with veterans associations was for peace work, and especially for work on programs that were related to dealing with the past and trust building in the area of former Yugoslavia. We think this cooperation is necessary and it is one of the best ways to work on the process, because it opens up much more space through involvement of those who participated in the past armed conflicts, into the activities aimed to building of sustainable peace. Any feedback these organizations and individuals give us is worth solid gold, and we want to use it to create future programs. The understanding of our work that members of these social groups show indicates that we are on the right track.

### 3. OTHER ACTIVITIES

#### 3.1. CNA Annual Team Member Meeting

*Belgrade, Serbia, January 17-18, 2003*

In the beginning of the year all of us gathered in the CNA Belgrade office to define a precise annual plan of further activities and delegate responsibilities accordingly. Besides determining our work plane more precisely, and discussing other matters concerning our work, we used this rare opportunity to gather all in one place and exchange ideas, thoughts, etc.

While we were defining our work plan for 2003 we spent part of the time discussing training events, "dealing with the past", the networking meeting, and fundraising. We also exchanged information and ideas and agreed on some concrete activities prior to the debates from the "dealing with the past" program, which was going to take place in Bosnia and Herzegovina in March. We decided to reschedule the networking meeting to the end of the year, since the subject of the meeting would be "dealing with the past". Therefore after the debates we would have much more ideas, people, and material.

With respect to the training events we agreed that the training team should pay more attention to the fulfilment of goals during the evaluation (if they were fulfilled?, to what extent?). In relation to the selection of participants for Training for Trainers we agreed to give priority to those people who had attended our basic training events. Since we weren't completely satisfied with information received from participants' applications we came to an agreement to underline more clearly the context of peace building in which we work and to pay more attention to ways people who were interested in such work had perceived their own role in it.

The meeting also resulted in some new initiatives concerning some new ideas and activities we would like to engage in. The difficulty is certainly our lack of capacities and time to implement those ideas, but on the other hand there is still a chance they get incorporated into our work in some ways, and that we support those who work on them. For example the research on the possible consequences of the arrival of NATO is very important to us, so we are going to try and support the Centre for Peace Studies in Zagreb, Croatia that started this research, by offering suggestions and feedback. The discussion about our (non) membership in NATO was very inspiring for us. We think that some of these widely accepted phrases like "Euro-Atlantic integration" may be worth analysing from the aspect of the structural violence we deal with in our workshops.)

Another idea we had was to support the organisation called "Loja" from Tetovo, and their idea to make a TV show named "Decoding Cultures", dedicated to breaking

down prejudices and stereotypes about people with different national, religious and cultural identities. We want to make some test recordings - interviews with people and then see how we can get further involved in the project.

We also discussed participants of our previous basic training events and ways we can continue to support them after the training. Although some of them didn't become involved in our Training for Trainers program, as they continued to work on peace building. We will try to support some of them by connecting them with other participants and keeping in touch, but we are at the same time aware that this kind of support depends to a great extent on a personal initiative of each of our team members.

One of the reasons these meetings are important for us lay in fact that through mutual exchange and dialogues we continuously work on the process of team building. The exchange of information how do we feel, what kind of difficulties and needs do we have gives us better view how can we support each other. This kind of mutual relations makes us stronger to gather together and focus our energy on the activities we work on. For the first time we had our new team member Sanja Deanković taking part in such a meeting.

Finally we discussed the work we have done in the past year and opened up some new areas of our work. We have felt under pressure on several different levels during this year but we shared the same impression that all of it was a valuable toughening experience for what was to come this year.

## 4. WORK PLAN

### 4.1. Work plan for the year 2003

On the CNA annual team member meeting held in January we agreed upon the work plan for the year 2003. CNA offices in Belgrade and Sarajevo will organise the following events:

#### *Training for Trainers 2002/03, Phases VII and VIII*

Phases VII and VIII are the last two phases of the programme *Training for Trainers in Nonviolent Conflict Transformation* that started in July 2002.

During the Phase VII, which will last for 5 months, participants of the programme with the support of the CNA team will implement activities developed during the previous phases of the programme. It is one of the most important parts of the programme. Besides the practical use of all the skills gained, the aim of this phase is empowering and networking of the trainees for the future work, i.e. the work on multiplication, which is one of our priorities.

Sequent and the themes of events that will be organised and implemented by trainees:

1. **28.02 - 07.3.2003.** Cross-community training in Montenegro (for youth from Montenegro),
2. **15.3. - 23.3.2003.** Journalists Training on prejudice reduction and «speech of hatred» (for journalists from Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo),
3. **03.4. - 13.4.2002.** Inter-ethnic cooperation training in Macedonia,
4. **09.4 - 13.4.2003.** Training for Teachers in Nonviolent Conflict Transformation (for teachers from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Vojvodina)
5. **08.4. - 15.4.2003.** Cross-regional Training in nonviolent conflict transformation (for people from the countries of former Yugoslavia)

The eight (the last) phase of the programme will be held **23-27.5.2002**. During it we will evaluate all the phases of the programme, and it's concept, and discuss future plans, what kind of support is needed, and how we can support each other, how do we see our network and our future cooperation, and how can we improve our work on peace building.

#### *Basic training in Nonviolent Conflict Transformation*

We plan to organise three *Basic Trainings in Nonviolent Conflict Transformation*: These trainings will be held:

1. From 2-12.5. 2003
2. From 6-16.6.2003.
3. From 1-11.8.2003.

#### *Dealing with the Past*

After four pilot public forums held last year in Serbia, we plan to organise another seven public forums in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro. The theme of the forums will be «From the past: HOW I FOUND MYSELF IN WAR, towards the Future:

HOW TO REACH SUSTAINABLE PEACE». Guests will be people who participated directly in past wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. These forums are continuation of the project "Dealing with the Past", which we see as very important for the work on peace building process in the region.

The first public forum will be held in Zenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina, **15.3.2003**, the second will be held in Banja Luka, Bosnia-Herzegovina, **28.3.2003**. Another five public forums will be held in Serbia and Montenegro in October and November 2003.

In the framework of the «Dealing with the Past» project we will organise in May and June two trainings for people who participated in wars in BH and Croatia. The aim of these trainings is preparation of the participants for the public forums.

### ***Networking Meeting with the Theme «Dealing with the Past»***

In December, from **17-22.12.2003**, we are going to organise the first of three networking meetings planned. The theme of the first one will be «Dealing with the Past». Participants will be individuals and organisations that work on these issues in the region. The idea is to work on exchange of experiences and information on activities done so far, to work on recommendations for improvement of approaches to the theme (Dealing with the Past) and to find the frames of cooperation and mutual support.

### ***Training for Trainers 2003/04 (Phases I - VI)***

In July the new Training for Trainers programme will start and it will last until mid 2004. During this year we will carry out the first six phases:

Phase I - 10-days training (**4-14.7.2003.**)

Phase II - follow-up meetings (**July - August**)

Phase III - 10-days training (**22.8-2.9.2003**)

Phase IV - 5-days training (**17-22.10.2003**)

Phase V - follow-up meetings (**November**)

Phase VI - 5-days training (**5-10.12.2003.**)

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CNA will very much welcome feedback, suggestions,  
questions and criticism concerning this report and our general work.  
Your thinking along helps us.  
Thank you.

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