

FACILITATING CHANGE

Reflections on Six Years of Education
Development Programming in
Challenging Environments



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Development Programming in
Challenging Environments

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Gary Anderson & Anette Wenderoth
Editors



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*To all educators working towards
peacebuilding in the Balkans*

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 /	The Educator Development Program in the Balkans, 2001-2007	
	Introduction	3
	Education in the Former Yugoslavia	4
	The Beginnings of Program Implementation	9
	Program Results	13
	Expansion to Serbia.....	19
	Montenegro Joins EDP.....	22
	Social Dimensions.....	23
	Leadership Development	26
	Challenges.....	26
	Conclusion.....	28
CHAPTER 2 /	“They just don’t understand” - (Cross) Cultural Perceptions, Collisions, and Learning	
	Introduction	33
	Cross-Cultural Dissonance	34
	Dealing with Cross-Cultural Dissonance.....	40
	Local Staff: Translators of Culture.....	46
	Conclusion.....	49
CHAPTER 3 /	The Challenge of Change	
	Introduction	57
	Change and Values.....	60
	Leading Change	63
	Differing Starting Points and Approaches.....	66
	Change Processes	68
	Conclusion.....	71

CHAPTER 4 /	Governing & Learning to Govern Democratically	
	Introduction.....	77
	Building the Enabling Environment through TTRB.....	80
	Other Democratic Governance Mechanisms in KEDP	88
	The Different Situation in Serbia and Montenegro.....	92
	Project Governance – Complicity or Meaningful Contribution?.....	93
	Conclusion	97
CHAPTER 5 /	20,000 Teachers Hungry for Learning	
	Introduction.....	103
	First Steps Towards Education Reform.....	104
	Trial by Fire – The Professional Development “Blitz” of 2001.....	107
	LCI Program Description	111
	Effective Multiplication of Training through a Cascade Model: Training of Trainers (TOT)	112
	Inclusion	118
	Building and Sustaining Quality Standards.....	120
	Conclusion	122
CHAPTER 6 /	Leadership for the Future	
	Introduction.....	129
	Phase I – Kosovo, 2001-2004.....	130
	Phase II – Kosovo, Serbia, and Montenegro, 2004-2007.....	139
	Conclusion	145
CHAPTER 7 /	...a Faculty with European Standards	
	Introduction.....	151
	Developing a Faculty of Education (FE) in Kosovo: The Short Story	152
	Four Challenges	158
	Modelling and Mentoring	163
	Introducing Professional Practice.....	165

	Other Tactics for Successful Change.....	170
	Conclusion.....	174
CHAPTER 8 /	Developing Socially and Social Development	
	Introduction.....	179
	Overview of Social Development in EDP.....	180
	Youth Participation.....	189
	Ethnic Minorities.....	195
	Gender Equality.....	198
	Cross-Jurisdictional Social Development.....	201
	Conclusion.....	202
CHAPTER 9 /	Regional Networking	
	Introduction.....	207
	EDP as a Regional Program.....	207
	Regional Results.....	216
	Reflections on Resistance.....	226
	Conclusion.....	227
CHAPTER 10 /	Count Me In!	
	Introduction.....	233
	The Role and Place of the Local (Field) Office.....	233
	Necessary Qualities of International and Local Staff.....	236
	Structuring Teams.....	240
	Building Organizational Culture.....	243
	All Good things Come to an End – Project Closure.....	247
	Conclusion.....	249
CHAPTER 11 /	Sustaining and Dynamic Development	
	Introduction.....	255
	Investing in People.....	257
	Organizational Development.....	260
	The Enabling Environment.....	262
	Factors that Contribute to Sustainable and Dynamic Development.....	263

Lessons Learned.....	264
Conclusion	266
CHAPTER 12 / How Far Have We Come? What Have We Learned?	
Introduction.....	271
EDP's Legacy.....	273
Lessons Learned.....	277
Conclusion	281
References.....	283
Contributors	287
Acknowledgements.....	291
Abbreviations.....	295

CHAPTER 11

Sustainable and Dynamic Development

W. DUFFIE VANBALKOM
& TIM GODDARD

INTRODUCTION

International Development work is rightfully guided by concerns about sustainability. We hear all the time about sustainability and the environment... of endangered species, of ecosystems, and indeed, of the planet as a whole, but there are other aspects of sustainability as well, such as the sustainability of cultures, of organizations, and of the results of development projects. Donors and implementers alike share a concern about the extent to which program initiatives and results can be sustained beyond the life of a project. Can local partners carry on with reforms initiated with project resources, after the project ends and after those resources, both financial and technical are withdrawn?

Projects such as the Educator Development Program (EDP) hope to contribute to long-term economic and social impacts, including the capacity for local individuals and organizations to respond to yet unrealized challenges. Thus, our development approach needed to be flexible, responsive with a focus on helping to build systems, organizations, policies and processes that could manage current and future reform processes. Questions of sustainability concerned us from the very start of EDP and they influenced our planning and implementation strategies throughout.

Programming in post-conflict and other volatile environments face additional challenges. Often, structures and organizations that we take for granted are non-existent or are in utter chaos. It is common that the most educated are also the most mobile and have fled the country during the conflict, leaving behind a shortage of highly qualified personnel and, in particular, a leadership vacuum. Ethnic tensions, and related security issues continually influenced our ability to program. Finally, the broad political arena and the various pressures from the international community shaped to some extent the development priorities in different jurisdictions, and, by extension, the direction of our programming

Thus, while “sustainability” became an important mantra in our approach to development, we also realized quickly that the situation also called for a “dynamic” approach to programming. That is, we needed to be willing and capable of responding in creative ways to shifting circumstances and priorities. Our programming took place in a context that was trying to shake the negative effects of conflict and communism, which emphasized this need for sustainable and dynamic development, although the basic premise of this approach lies at the heart of all good development practice. While engineers might build a bridge with a focus on sustainability, emerging educational leaders need to develop suitable attitudes, skills and knowledge that become dynamic capacities that allow them to respond to yet-unknown future challenges.

While donors like to legitimately “protect their investment” by seeing various initiatives sustained after a specific programming phase ends, a true measure of mature development is the ability of local individuals and organizations to change the course of reform in response to emerging needs and changing circumstances. Thus, the goal of development is not merely to have local partners carry on with programs started by or with international collaborators, but rather to develop in them the capacity and deeper understanding of development that creates the confidence to improve existing approaches, create new programs, and indeed drop initiatives that no longer serve the country’s needs well. In short, good development needs to be simultaneously dynamic and sustainable.

In conjunction with our local partners, EDP managed what was sometimes a tension between the need for stability, continuity and sustainability on the one hand, and responsiveness, dynamism, creativity on the other. The approach added new challenges to our programming, and sometimes called for difficult decisions such as when to insist on previous agreements in the interest of sustainability, and when to be flexible and develop new common understandings in response to changing realities.

Our post-conflict arena was particularly fragile: basic institutions had yet to be created and key positions had to be created and filled. Political uncertainty and positioning, both internal and external to the jurisdictions, influenced reform processes beyond educational priorities. As internationals we needed to better understand local sensitivities, culture, existing and emerging strengths, challenges and opportunities, and the continuing impact of the recent conflict. Within weeks of the project’s approval, 34 Canadian trainers landed in Kosovo. They, and the project’s management team and steering committee (PSC), found themselves on a steep learning curve. The thinking, reflection, research, and particularly the respectful engagement with local partners and staff in an effort to deepen our understanding of context and of development never ceased and it is the single most important contributor to the project’s success.

A number of project documents, including inter-governmental memoranda of understanding, donor-implementer contracts, performance monitoring frameworks, annual work plans and the like, are designed to serve as roadmaps for project implementation. We discovered quickly that these maps, while useful, also had their limitations. In many ways they had, in the best way possible at the time, attempted to map yet uncharted territory. The map did not include yet-to-be-developed institutions, policies and processes in Kosovo. It could not anticipate that in Serbia, four different ministers would lead the Ministry of Education and Sports in a single year, each with new reform priorities, new working methods and a new cadre of trusted inner-circle staff. And the map had not fully captured the complexi-

ties of post war sensitivities and politics. EDP leadership and staff became map-makers, in collaboration with our partners, drawing in new roads to good development as we discovered them. This chapter tells the story of our map making, informed by a healthy tension between sustainability and dynamism.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE

In its simplest rendition, sustainability is about leaving something behind that will last. It may be a simple concrete thing such as a building, a more complex construct such as a “well-functioning organization,” or an abstract idea such as professionalism. If we want it to last, we want to leave it in a place where it is protected, nurtured and appreciated, and in the care of capable persons who have the resources to sustain it.

EDP was purposeful in its design to “invest in people.” This is particularly important in fragile environments where organizations and institutions are not yet in place, as was the case in Kosovo, or still very unstable, as we experienced in Serbia (and to a lesser extent in Montenegro). One needs to be cautious, however, if the people in whom a project invests are exceedingly mobile. Thus, we wanted to avoid investing in the development of professionals who then would leave the education system or the reform process, altogether. We continuously monitored this, particularly in Serbia where there were continuous structural and human resource changes, by tracking the professional paths of those who were the recipients of EDP capacity building. While the people we supported were continuously moved around, by and large they stayed within the education system, and a disproportionate number received promotions to positions where their EDP acquired skills had even greater impact on the reform process.

There is a substantial body of literature that highlights the importance of “effective leadership” in motivating others, in managing change processes, and in organizational development. While there is ample discussion about roles, styles and approaches of leadership, there is an overwhelming consensus that leadership matters (See, for example, Burns, 2003; Gardner, 1989; Neenan & Bennis, 1999). The participation of leaders in capacity building and reform has practical human resource development implications, as well as political and symbolic value. Leaders who do not engage positively in the reform process have an extraordinary ability to block progress. Thus, in all jurisdictions, we invested in capacity building of senior and middle-level managers of the education system. We interpreted leadership broadly to include civil society and youth. Chapter 6 has already provided a detailed overview of EDP leadership programming, but it is mentioned here because leadership development was part of an explicit sustainability strategy.

While senior managers play a key role in supporting and leading reform processes, the change management literature also points to the challenges of motivating groups of people and moving entire organizations forward. Resistance to change is particularly acute when people don't understand its purpose or don't feel that their particular skill set adequately matches new requirements. To be sustainable, EDP programming had to assure that a "critical mass" of change agents in each organization targeted for EDP supported reform would receive similar training and speak the same professional language to continue the "reform conversation." To further assure that the different institutions could contribute to a comprehensive and integrated reform process, a number of capacity building activities engaged people from across the educational system, often providing opportunities for engagement that they otherwise would not have. Thus, senior leadership training and study tours were purposely designed to create a critical mass of change agents across organizations.

In Kosovo, resources allowed for both a broad and an in-depth approach. Using various training of trainers (ToT) models, more than 10,000 teachers received training in learner-centered teaching methodologies (See Chapter 5). Educators at all levels received complementary training and support, based on a shared vision and philosophy. In a much larger Serbia, limited resources were more narrowly directed at strengthening the system's internal capacity for professional development of educators. In both Montenegro and Serbia, critical mass was achieved by concentrating on fewer organizations, but assuring that entire teams of people shared the same capacity building program.

One of the most dangerous, and unfortunately common, errors that undermines sustainability is a lack of "local ownership" for the vision, approaches and results of development. It is easy to overlook this fact as local capacities are often limited, and deep local engagement in planning and implementation may undermine efficiencies expected by donors. Furthermore, local partners may readily defer to the "expertise" that internationals bring, which may unintentionally further erode the perceived value of their own tacit knowledge and their confidence. Finally, many leaders in developing countries have experienced donors and implementers who are far better talkers than listeners, and they readily accept donor suggestions rather than risk losing the resources that donors bring. Ultimately, such relationships reinforce dependencies, ineffectiveness and inefficiencies, even though annual reports may paint a positive picture of short-term results. Most importantly, without local ownership development results are not sustainable beyond a specific internationally-sponsored intervention. The importance of local ownership cannot be overemphasized, but the concept is complex, contextually and culturally sensitive and, despite its *cliché* status in development circles, is not well understood.

In Kosovo, our partners were professionally severely undernourished and seriously lacking an infrastructure in which leadership could be properly exercised. At the start of KEDP, Kosovo had neither a ministry of education nor a faculty of education, and other educational institutions were, at best, in their formative stages. Furthermore, the international staff of UNMIK initially provided all aspects of governance, imported the vision of reform and developed the policy framework to support it. EDP's active leadership in guiding the reform process was welcomed by UNMIK, the emerging local political elite and the donor community alike. Our programming required a careful sequence of building capacity, both individually and organizationally, with a view to "handing over" the reigns of reform in a gradual and supportive manner. As capacity developed, the project increasingly handed over responsibilities. A project steering committee with broad representation encouraged increased ownership and became a forum for building governance capacity (See Chapter 4).

In Serbia and Montenegro, there was never any question of local ownership at the *macro* (state) or *meso* (organizational) levels. Because of greater, albeit fragmented capacities, a history of professional development and networking, and national pride, the vision and impetus for reform were explicitly locally owned, particularly in Serbia²³. Various local political groups had, however, different views about the preferred course of educational reform and the needed structures and interventions to accomplish them. Perennial political changes would frequently re-focus the vision and direction, challenging many international donors and implementers to reconcile this with their approved project work plans. This was less an issue for EDP because we invested substantial energy in continuous relationship building with the changing decision makers to avoid misunderstandings, and our capacity building efforts focused largely on advanced but generic leadership skills. Most importantly, CIDA also understood the need for programming flexibility in such a politically volatile environment.

Initiatives such as co-chairing the Teacher Training Review Board (TTRB) in Kosovo (See Chapter 4) and handing monthly Leadership Forums over to a progressive school in Serbia and the Bureau for Educational Services in Montenegro also contributed to an increasing sense of ownership and professional pride. The particular use of local project staff also allowed us to model local ownership by promoting local staff, in succession, to assistant directors, co-directors and ultimately directors of our projects.

²³ *The notable exception relates to the Government's relationship with the World Bank, and its, sometimes reluctant, compliance with World Bank directives, particularly regarding rationalization.*

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The strategies for sustainability in an educational reform project such as EDP also include creating or supporting the capacities of appropriate organizations in which to “house” the responsibility for continuous progress. Educational reform expresses itself at different levels, ranging from the ministerial level where the responsibility for policy development, finance and quality assurance lies, to the classroom, where the teaching/ learning process unfolds at the heart of all reform efforts. Organizationally, ministries, regional school administrative offices, schools and classrooms, faculties of education, and sometimes civil society, collectively take responsibility for improving education.

In Kosovo, decades of neglect and isolation culminated in conflict that devastated the educational infrastructure and left a “system” that was poverty-stricken in all respects, including organizationally and professionally. Kosovo had no ministry of education, no functioning regional school offices and no faculty of education as we normally understand these. Nation-building aspirations on the part of the Albanian-speaking majority did, however, fuel a remarkable energy, commitment and motivation to create systems and processes of a quality one might expect of an independent, European state. How could EDP harness this energy to help build well-functioning, sustainable institutions? Ideas and even people dissipate easily unless they have a mature and stable institutional home in which they can be sustained and nourished.

Given the need for sustainable institutions in Kosovo, EDP supported the capacities of both existing structures (e.g.: schools, NGOs, the Teachers’ Union) and newly created organizations such as the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), our primary partner, and a modern Faculty of Education. We did this in a number of ways. The Senior Leadership Development Program (SLDP), sponsored by both Irish Aid and CIDA, brought a critical mass of senior people together for intense three-day training sessions at three months intervals, during which Canadian counterparts with expertise and experiences relevant to the particular professional roles the Kosovars played mentored the participants. Importantly, assignments that participants worked on between workshop sessions focused on self-selected institutional development issues, and were supported through mentoring and peer feedback (See also Chapter 6). In the case of the nascent Faculty of Education at the University of Prishtina, where development was frequently undermined by shifting local power politics, a number of full-time highly qualified experts were engaged to steer various aspects of the institution’s development, based on independent external reviews (See Chapter 7).

In Serbia and Montenegro, legitimate organizations already existed although their capacities varied. In Montenegro, a newly created Bureau for Educational Services was supported in its early stages of development, as it worked out its mandate and focus. In both cases, a modified approach based on the previous SLDP was also used. In politically fragile Serbia, the senior leadership shifted so often, moving middle management both within and among institutions that a conscious decision was made to concentrate on generic professional capacity building of a cadre of highly motivated individuals. The functioning of existing institutions did improve as a result of developing capacities of individual administrators/managers, but in a much less focused way than was the case in Kosovo.

Having institutional structures in place, and legitimate partners to collaborate with, did not imply that there was necessarily a consensus about the needs, direction or means of reform. While this was true in all jurisdictions, disagreements were particularly pronounced in Serbia, which suffered from an extreme polarization and politicalization of education, and in Kosovo where struggles of politics, power, and autonomy became a temporary hurdle in modernizing the university in general and the newly established Faculty of Education in particular.

Minimal and predictable financial resources are also required to manage ongoing reform initiatives in sustainable and dynamic ways. This is sometimes a difficult issue for developing countries, their institutions and individuals, as this factor operates at all levels. It was common in all jurisdictions, for example, for education professionals to hold multiple jobs out of economic necessity. This sometimes limited their engagement in professional development activities, or full participation in committee work such as the PSC. Scarce knowledge was also sometimes seen as a scarce commodity, fuelled by international organizations that would hire civil servants to facilitate workshops. While the use of local expertise encouraged ownership and sustainability, it inadvertently limited the “free” sharing of knowledge within departments and organizations. Finally, holding multiple jobs invited conflict of interest issues, for example, when key decision makers held jobs in both MEST and the university.

At the *macro* level in Kosovo, teacher motivation and professionalism were, in part, addressed through the creation of a series of incremental qualifications (titles), but the State lacked the funds to pay for them. In Serbia, World Bank induced rationalizations caused restructuring, lay-offs and anxieties that were, at least in the short run, not necessarily supportive of other educational reform priorities.

At the organizational level, with limited and unstable resources coming from the State, various institutions experimented with quasi-entrepreneurial approaches, seeking to broaden their funding sources. To that end, EDP

provided training in project procurement and management, to increase capacity for managing international partnerships. In Serbia, the Institute for Education and Upbringing was given a mandate by law to attract external education and training work, in addition to their service function to the Ministry. This included the ability to provide staff with additional pay, an enormous incentive.

THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Building professional capacities and strengthening institutions takes place in contexts that can, to various degrees, be enabling or disabling. These are difficult to understand, and EDP spent an inordinate amount of time on a continuous analysis of the environments we worked in and the ways we might positively influence them²⁴. This collective “map making” pulled Canadians, local staff and members of the various project steering committees together in an unremitting effort at better understanding the contexts in which we worked, and their influence on our development processes and results. EDP became a “learning organization,” constantly adjusting its approaches as we peeled off the many layers of deepening understanding of the economics, history, politics, culture and security environments in which we worked and lived.

Throughout the project, we monitored the extent to which we could count on a “supportive political and policy context” and encouraged its development based on democratic principles that would make institutions more transparent and accountable. The importance of creating policy that is supportive of intended reforms was addressed through organizational development and capacity building approaches, moving beyond the merely sustainable to the dynamic. The creation of, and support for, the Teacher Training Review Board (TTRB) in Kosovo, is a prime example. It developed independent capacity to create much-needed policies through wide consultation that could then be used to guide various processes in predictable and transparent ways. At other times, policy and politics were intertwined and negotiated as prerequisites for engagement, as was the case with the University of

²⁴ For an analysis of the historical, sociological and political context in which we operated to affect change in Kosovo, see: VanBalkom, W. D. & Buleshkaj, O. (2006). *Parathënie*. In M. Fullan, Forcat e Ndryshimit: Vazhdim. Pristina: Ndermarrja Gazetare Botuese ADEA Publishers – Contextual Foreword, in both English and Albanian to the Albanian edition of Michael Fullan (1999) *Change Forces: The Sequel*. In the case of Serbia, see: VanBalkom, W. D. & Kovac, T. (2005). *Predgovor za Knjigu*. In Michael Fullan, *Sile Promene: Nastavak*. Pp. 11-34, Belgrade: Dereta Publishers – Contextual Foreword, in both English and Serbian, to the Serbian edition of Michael Fullan (1999) *Change Forces: The Sequel*.

Prishtina. In Serbia and Montenegro, the project's scope and therefore our influence on policy development was limited, but as our understanding deepened we were able to mitigate potentially negative influences on project results.

We worked in fragile security environments and circumstances that were beyond our control and that changed frequently, requiring new and innovative responses to new challenges and realities. Security and related political posturing affected our ability to program, particularly with regards to the Serbian minority community in Kosovo. As it was clearly beyond our mandate and capability to create a "secure and safe environment," often the existence of such an environment simply became a prerequisite for our engagement.

Security, more broadly defined, also includes the creation of safe-spaces where professionals could meet to discuss things in safety, and our leadership forums were specifically designed to achieve and model this. In Serbia in particular, the polarization and politicalization of education, combined with frequent firings created an oppressive atmosphere where few could muster the courage to speak freely about issues that, in the Canadian context, would simply be seen as welcome suggestions for improvement. Remarkably, professionals working on the same issues in the Ministry and the regions never, or hardly ever met, and the highly centralized and directive decision-making approach discouraged creativity and openness. Thus, while our direct influence on institutional development was very limited, we invested in networking and providing safe spaces to support the development of a "virtual" network of reform-minded professionals.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SUSTAINABLE AND DYNAMIC DEVELOPMENT

The EDP projects emphasized a view of development as a process that needs to be simultaneously sustainable and dynamic, and this helped to sharpen our understanding of the factors that contribute to achieving it. The preceding chapters have already provided many anecdotes that illustrate how these factors operated in practical terms and how challenging it can be to assure that all of them come into play within the limits of time and resources, particularly when working in challenging political contexts.

The EDP projects used the common, although sometimes poorly understood, Results-Based Management (RBM) approach to planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Given the challenging and sometimes volatile environment, we used an iterative approach to planning and programming, while keeping our eyes firmly focused on the impact we wanted to contribute to and the outcomes we tried to achieve. However, our planning, implemen-

tation, monitoring and evaluation were strengthened by being cognizant of the factors that contribute to sustainable and dynamic development. From our first planning meeting we discussed such issues as “local ownership,” “policy frameworks,” “critical mass,” appropriate “organizational structures” and the other factors that we knew would increase our chances to attain dynamic sustainability. In a sense, we planned for our exit from the day we started active programming.

We found that all factors need to be considered in relation to the three levels where development commonly takes place, namely the *macro* (societal or “enabling environment“), *meso* (organizational/institutional) and *micro* (individual capacity building) levels, even though our project design allowed us to influence some factors more at one level or another.

In summary, seven inter-dependent factors across these three levels impact substantially on the attainment of sustainable and dynamic results:

MICRO: The Individual Capacity Building Level

- Effective and Dynamic Leadership
- Critical Mass of Change Agents
- Local Ownership

MESO: The Institutional Development Level

- Mature and Stable Institutions
- Minimal and Predictable Financial Resources

MACRO: A Conducive Enabling Environment

- Supportive Political and Policy Context
- Secure and Safe Environment

LESSONS LEARNED

We recognized the limits to our capacity to influence some of the sustainability factors in some contexts and circumstances. Nevertheless, the factors helped us to stay the course towards our goals while modifying our program activities to respond to changing perceptions of priorities and concerns of local partners.

Many factors became the focus of specific activities designed to achieve them; others, however, became pre-conditions for engagement. For example, recognizing the importance of effective and dynamic leadership in leading and managing reform processes, we provided specific leadership training

that included such topics as “managing change,” “leading people,” “organizational development,” etc. One of the strengths of the training model was that it integrated support for implementation into the course work through various modalities ranging from mentoring to developing personal professional development plans. Similarly, we specifically designed activities to achieve a critical mass of change agents, we advised on appropriate organizational structures and the like.

Ownership for project-specific activities is often shared in relation to organizational capacity, and to developing trust, and individual capacities and confidence. The complexity of encouraging “local ownership” lies in the individual and personal nature of trust, capacity and confidence. These often evolve unevenly over the course of a project, requiring flexible rather than fixed timelines, individually-tailored support, particularly of leaders, and sensitivity to cultural interpretations of leadership, power, decision-making and the like.

Related to the issue of local ownership, different project components “graduated” to local management, local financing, and local monitoring at different times during a project period. Indeed, in dynamic development, some components may come to an end altogether, having fulfilled their usefulness.

The process of our continuous reflection on development that needs to be both sustainable and dynamic, has given rise to several lessons that we believe can be applied to other development contexts.

Lessons Learned about Implementing Dynamic and Sustainable Development

1. Development planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are strengthened when informed by the factors that contribute to sustainable and dynamic development.
2. Donors and implementing partners have limited capacity to influence some factors in some contexts and situations.
3. Depending on contextual circumstances, some factors are best addressed in capacity building activities while others may need to be negotiated as pre-conditions for engagement.
4. In development partnerships, project ownership is generally shared in relation to developing trust, confidence, and individual and organizational capacity. It evolves over the course of a project, requiring flexible rather than fixed timelines.
5. Different project components “graduate” at different times during a project period. Indeed, in dynamic development, some

components may come to an end altogether, having fulfilled their usefulness.

6. Change at the “cultural level,” i.e., for professional practices to become a normal part of “how we do things around here,” takes time.²⁵

CONCLUSION

Close to the end of our project in Serbia, we brought together, perhaps for the first time, key leaders from the twelve regional offices of the Ministry²⁶ with the Deputy Minister and various department heads from the Ministry in Belgrade for an interactive workshop featuring four parallel sessions facilitated entirely by Ministry personnel. All central Ministry facilitators except the Deputy Minister had completed our 12-month Leadership Development Course, while most of the participants from the regions had been participants in other SEDP programming.

Both groups had independently expressed concerns that they did not know each other well, and this workshop was the second of two that focused on networking strategies in support of professional development. At the suggestion of a particularly confident leadership graduate, she and fellow graduates would, for the first time, facilitate these workshop sessions in pairs to share newly acquired leadership skills with colleagues from the regions. SEDP staff, both Canadian and local, provided the structure and otherwise acted as observers, providing feedback to the group as a whole and to individual facilitators.

A senior regional administrator came to see us during a lunch break to share an analogy that poetically illustrates the results of our Dynamic and Sustainable Development approach. He had been a music teacher before accepting his current position, and he drew on this earlier experience to comment on our engagement with him:

²⁵ Michael Fullan (2001) points out that neither bottom-up nor top-down change works. Successful change only happens when bottom up and top down forces are aligned, and permanent (sustainable) change takes time.

²⁶ Similar to School Boards in Canada and elsewhere in function, but less independent, as they are primarily an extension of the central Ministry of Education and Sports.

When SEDP conducted its first workshop for us, I felt like I was in a concert hall listening to a strange and foreign performance. I didn't really understand the music and appreciated only parts of it. Some pieces sounded nice, but others were just too strange to my ear. We were invited to participate actively, but I didn't feel confident that I could play along without ruining the concert. Besides, I felt that I had a paid ticket and it was up to you to entertain me.

As time went by and I went to more workshops, you helped us find our own instruments and our own voices and slowly we played along, occasionally stopping to tune our instruments as we were introduced to completely new scales, and we learned which music pleased our ears best and which did not. We developed a deeper understanding and appreciation for your music, but you also encouraged us to improvise, and we brought in our Gaida and our Tambura²⁷. Soon we were jamming together.

Today is a great day for me. We are putting on a concert and you are the audience. It is not like the concert you put on when you had your first workshop with us. We wrote the music, we selected the instruments and tuned them and we are playing for and with our colleagues from across Serbia. The piece is uniquely from this region and only a trained ear could hear a faint Canadian influence. I know that you know us well enough to play along, but I appreciate that you just listen – I hope you like what you hear.

²⁷ Local and traditional instruments. The Gaida is a Balkan bagpipe and the Tambura is a Balkan lute.

While each of us is constantly involved in and part of different kinds of change, truly understanding social change in all its complexities is difficult – particularly when this change is happening in challenging environments such as those in post-communist and/or post-conflict states, and in countries in transition. The team of authors contributing to this book have spent six years trying to understand and help facilitate change in the education systems of Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro. They have applied the theory of change in an international development program that has been evaluated as “one of Canada’s most successful development interventions, anywhere in the world, in the past 25 years.” This book aims at sharing some of the key lessons learned about cross-cultural dissonance, conflicting values about social inclusion of minorities, differing perspectives on gender equality, and how former enemies can build peace by connecting professionally. It reflects upon processes to train 10,000 teachers, the development of leaders for the future, and efforts to change an intransigent university. The different authors – from Canada, Kosovo, and Serbia – consider issues such as the cycle of change, why people resist change, and how local leaders can be empowered to embrace change, lead it, and own it as conditions in their context evolve. While the illustrations and examples refer to education systems in the Balkans, we believe that the book is relevant to development professionals in all sectors and every part of the world.



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