

Eastern European Update

The Center for Democratic Education and Governance in **Budapest** has gone through a certain transformation since late last year. Its key-members have decided to pursue professional goals somewhat different from those of the preceding decade. Joseph Julian has returned to Syracuse University and nowadays works with the Center's Balkan network from there; Eric Weaver has decided to complete his graduate work; and Ferenc Hammer has shifted his attention somewhat towards media policy research. The Center has a few small projects and a few pending project proposals, mostly in the fields of minority issues and media policy.

The Belgrade Open School (BOS) is a non-governmental, non-for-profit educational organization active in the fields of social sciences and humanities, research and civic education. BOS' mission statement states that "the goal of the School is to enable its beneficiaries and participants to become autonomous, self-confident and respectable citizens, competent to act in the transitional process to democracy." Hence, social commitment, activism, and active citizenship represent the core of their programs. BOS is the largest educational NGO in **Yugoslavia** involved in various civic education projects with a very well developed international component and emphasis on the South East European (Balkan) region. The nations of the former Yugoslavia, that suffered terrible wars, still speak exactly the same language fact that greatly enables any kind of educational efforts meant to connect a rather devastated civil society.

Since their participation at the International Deliberative Democracy Workshop (IDDW) in July 2002, they have had several opportunities to use the deliberative methodology that got incorporated into workshops and training sessions. It gave the participants the opportunity to get acquainted with a slightly different approach to social issues, and they used it for promoting it.

Among them, the most important activity was one of the regional workshops, which was held in Laktasi (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The aim was to gather young activists from the former republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska and the Muslim-Croat Federation) in order to give them additional knowledge and skills necessary for their future contribution to the democratization of the societies they come from.

After that, four weekend-seminars were conducted for local activists from one of the biggest NGOs in Serbia. The participants were from almost every town or city; they came from different educational and political backgrounds, but all of them shared concerns for their local communities and common issues concerning entire Serbia. This pilot-experience made for a good base for going deeply towards an implementation of the deliberative methodology.

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Parts of this methodology were also used during another workshop held at the end of April 2002, in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) for participants from various parts of the former Yugoslavia (Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro).

There are plans for a few more workshops to be held this.

Besides this number of workshops there is another important project going on and very closely connected with the deliberative democracy methodology as well -- “Public Policy in Serbia’s Classrooms.”

This project was started together with Prof. Joseph Julian (Syracuse University), at that time (summer and fall 2001) head of the Joint Eastern Europe Center for Democratic Education and Governance in Budapest. The objectives of this project are: to help secondary level teachers and community organizations to develop public policy materials and issue books that focus on Serbia’s most pressing issues; to contribute to enhance classroom teaching skills; and to help Serbian students to understand how citizens can shape public policy. The workshops are meant to introduce faculty and students to the process that Serbia’s schools and NGOs used to publish their issue books and how that process led to the organization of study circles and community forums. The objective of these workshops is to encourage schools to develop partnerships with their host communities and to promote civic engagement. One of the major difficulties in promoting such a methodology though is motivation. How to encourage citizens to start dealing with huge problems around them? The sense of the community is very undeveloped as well. How to inspire them that those things can be changed in the right direction if they get organized for a proper public action, that activism is worth and can be successful? Public deliberation can be used as a powerful tool for social mobilization. Values are essential in the deliberative methodology and thus they enable us to identify the range of concerns about a public issue. The costs and consequences of one option, the benefits and drawbacks are all very related to the values that are shared by the society. There is no society without a value system, but a big problem is an under-developed conciseness about it.

Citizens in Serbia avoid discussions on values due to the chaos in their own value system. Tradition and religious ethics are rather disconnected, official false “socialist moral” which was the part of communist propaganda until late eighties is far away, the nineties were spent in survival, inflation, inter-ethnic conflicts and civil wars. In the year 2000, after significant democratic changes, the Serbian society started to build a system of values appropriate for democratic progress. It will take years, like in the rest of emerging democracies in Eastern Europe, until the majority of a real body politic develops such a system. Deliberative dialogue through weighing the views can empower a value system for the coming years.

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In **Romania**, on the other hand, *Partners for Democratic Change* has used some parts of the problem-identification process (the first stage of framing the problems) in the participatory problem. They have also tried to promote the methodology and apply it in future projects, such as:

- (a) Romanian Soros Foundation started a project on identifying and making available for public discussion the problems raised by the Romania European integration. They want to develop materials focusing on different sectors, such as agriculture, industry, education, etc.
- (b) They have started a project financed by the United Nations' Development Program; (UNDP) Center for Conflict Analysis, Prevention and Resolution, and they are thinking to use the method in their problem/conflict solving processes. It is still a project that will be fully implemented beginning with this summer.

Moldovan NGO Sector: Profile and Overview of Experience

Viitorul Foundation was founded in June 1993 by a group of young intellectuals and researchers, aiming to help create democratic institutions and develop new sense of responsibilities for politicians, public officials and citizens in the **Republic of Moldova** and in the neighbouring countries. The Viitorul Foundation is a non-profit, non-political, non-governmental and independent institution, whose objectives are: to disseminate the principles and practices of civic self-government as a basic form of democracy on all levels of local community and to support local governments and thre structure of the local authorities.

Being actually a response to the urgent needs of the Moldavian post-totalitarian society, the Foundation is not a hierarchically and centralized, but a flexible and functional organization, meant as an alternative non-governmental support to the most pressing social demands and encouraging the development of an open society, the free exchange of information, opinion and knowledge, as well as that of the democratic institutions. During the last 6 years, the Foundation has been actively involved in projects on local government transformation in the Republic of Moldova, but also in other neighboring countries, gaining a substantial experience in implementing cross-country research and consultancy.

In close co-operation with experts and practitioners of the public administration, the Viitorul Foundation develops strategies for up-to-date actions of administration. It advocated for more transparency of public institutions in Moldova, regarded as a pillar for the institutional consolidation; it designed and implemented seminars and projects on: administration reform, organisational development, personnel management, leadership style, local development and management techniques. The foundation conducted empirical research and surveys on local government issues. It assisted the reformation of the local government in Moldova by mean of training, research and publications for the the newly elected councilors, members of municipal boards, mayors and other local government officers.

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Moldovan NGO Sector: Profile and Overview of Experience (continued)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- ✂ Organize advanced training programs for the leaders of local governments and support the legal efforts aimed at improving the legislative framework in local public administration.
- ✂ Facilitate the development of independent media in the Republic of Moldova, encouraging the creation of a free thinking environment of journalists, politicians and researchers;
- ✂ Promotion of partnerships between Moldova and foreign NGOs which, identification of research partners for any foreign organization interested in including Moldova in cross-national research;
- ✂ Fund-rising for research topics of top priority for the development of an open society in Moldova, as well as organizational support for research and training by acting as a go-between Moldavian young researchers and professionals and foreign organizations;
- ✂ Publication and distribution of books, other publications, electronic bulletins throughout the country on a free of charge base;
- ✂ Developing links between research institutions and individuals in Moldova and abroad, mediating lectures and experts on a neutral base;

AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT

June 1993 - Research conducted on the perspectives of solving the regional/territorial conflicts in Moldova.

October 1994 - Conference organized in Kent, England, on conflict management, post-conflict rehabilitation, thank-tank dedicated to the Transdnestrian conflict in Moldova

1993 - 1994 - Public campaign in the national mass media on European integration.

September 1995 - May 1996 - Viitorul Foundation's experts have been involved to the IFES-Moldova's local administration reform Working Groups, taking part in a series of seminars and conferences, conducted by the IFES-Moldova Foundation.

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Moldovan NGO Sector: Profile and Overview of Experience (continued)

May 1996 - August 1996 - involvement of the Foundations experts into a Joint Comparative Study conducted by the Council of Europe: DEMOCRATIZATION IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, at Strasbourg.

Since June 1996 - the Viitorul Foundation, in cooperation with IFES-Moldova, initiated a one-year program, entitled: MODERNIZATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN AN OPEN SOCIETY. The project was a result of drafting and approval of a one-year grant (1996-1997) jointly with the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES). It envisioned a series of major problems of this public field: center - region relations, public services decentralization and de-concentration, improvement of the legislative frame governing the local public administration, extension of the field of local authorities, public officer training, etc. The three-step educational program means to improve the current public administration system in Moldova (by promoting administrative-territorial re-organization of the country, the adoption of a new package of laws, including the Law on public administration and a Law on local public finances), to provide legal assistance, training and expertise through a series of regional and international seminars, to produce educational TV and Radio programs on public administration, etc.

July - August 1996 - a group of VF experts were involved in a large program of training on public administration, initiated by TACIS, envisioning probation in Portugal, Belgium and Holland.

September 1996 - launching a Research Paper: *Towards a wished partnership between Citizens and Local Authorities*. A report was presented on behalf of the Viitorul Foundation at an International Conference in Chisinau, conducted by the Council of Europe (LODE) and the Parliament of Moldova.

December 1996 - organizing a Conference in Sofia, Bulgaria, in cooperation with the European Fund for the Freedom of Expression (France), and the Borrowed Nature (Bulgaria).

January - February 1997 - Foundation's experts conducted over 15 regional seminars on public administration reforms in 4 different regions of the country.

March 1997 - Publication of a first Guide of the Public Official in local administration, funded by LGI/OSI.

April 1997 - Organizing an International Conference "Public Administration in Transition", involving a wide participation of regional experts from Poland, Hungary, Romania, Ukraine and Moldova.

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Moldovan NGO Sector: Profile and Overview of Experience (continued)

May 1997 - July 1998 - Viitorul Foundation has initiated a new 15-months program, titled: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INNOVATIVE VILLAGES, funded by LGI/OSI. The main goal of this Project Proposal is invariably linked with local authorities, independent entrepreneurs and free peasants/independent farmers of three piloted villages, who will be assisted along 15 months to build up and to develop pivotal elements for the emergence of a new market-oriented economic infrastructure.

October 1997 – writing and publishing a White Book on Local Development in Moldova

December 1997 - Implementation of a Program, entitled: *Civic Education for youth*, in cooperation with the British Democracy International Ltd., funded by the British Know How Fund

December 1997 - January 1999 - Research contribution to the EU PHARE “Integration and Nation-Building in Bi-Cultural post-Soviet societies: the cases of Estonia and Moldova”, Study conducted by the Department of East European and Oriental Studies, Oslo University, Norway

February 1998 - Implementation of a Program of Training and Workshops for the politicians, press and campaigners, entitled: Election Techniques and Mass Media in Campaign, in cooperation with the British Democracy International Ltd. (Know How Fund)

March 1998 - Publication of a Book, entitled From Centralist to Decentralized State, funded by LGI/OSI

March 1998 - November 1999 - Implementation of a Project, entitled: Promoting Transparency for Citizens, funded by Eurasia Foundation

March 1998 - March 1999 - Implementation of a Project, entitled - Citizen's Participation in the local decision-making mechanisms, in cooperation with the European Foundation for the Freedom of Expression, within 3 neighboring countries: Moldova, Bulgaria and Romania, funded by the European Union

September 1998 - September 1999 - Foundation expert's participation within an EU PHARE “Democratic Security Building in the Black Sea Region”, Aberdeen University, UK (September 1998 - September 1999)

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Moldovan NGO Sector: Profile and Overview of Experience (continued)

December 1998 - August 1999 - Research contribution to the UNDP Research Paper on "Case Studies of Best Practices in Civil Service Reforms", Project GLO/97/625, UNDP/UNOPS

April 1999 - September 2000 - Research contribution to an EU PHARE "Training for CEI countries in transition", L'Europa Centro Orientale e Balcanica, Bologna University, Italy (April 1999 - April 2000)

April 1999 – April 2000 - Implementation of a Project, entitled - Building Up Responsible Local Government in Moldova, funded by LGI/OSI (Hungary) and Soros Foundation, funded by LGI/OSI and Soros Foundation. The aims of the program are the following: training of concillors and local government officers; consultancy and advisory services for municipalities; publication of books and studies on local government reform in Moldova; supporting local initiatives and social development of municipalities; involving citizens in the life of their communities; legal consultancy providing to the state and local authorities.

March 1999 – Citizen's Handbook was printed for NGOs and active citizens in Moldova

Since May 18, 1999 - Viitorul Foundation was accepted for the institutional membership of NISPAcee - the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (where Viitorul Foundation is the sole organization representing Republic of Moldova). The Program can be summarized as a transfer of knowledge and best practices to the newly emerging local government, aimed to research and strengthen the structural transformations experienced by the regional and local (communal) tiers, to initiate a professional Training Curricula, to disseminate research outputs throughout the country.

April - October 2000 – Implementation of a series of regional seminars "Initiative for training and education for local public officials in Moldova", financially supported by Soros Foundation.

October - November, 2000 – New publications released at the Viitorul Foundation: "The ABC of the Local Development" (Liubomir Chiriac), "Local Council reinterpreted" (Victor Popa), and "Public Services" (Victor Mocanu)

May - November 2000 – Specific Training Curricula Developed and Implemented financially supported by the Westminster Foundation (UK).

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Moldovan NGO Sector: Profile and Overview of Experience (continued)

June 15, 16 2000 – International Conference on “Democratic Control over the Moldavian Armed Forces”, in cooperation with the Conflict Studies Research Center of the Royal Military Academy (Sandburs) and the Scottish Center for International Relations (Aberdeen).

May 2000 - May 2001 – Dissemination of an electronic newsletter on Moldova’s European integration and the publication of a written bulletin on civil-military relations in the Republic of Moldova financially supported by the Westminster Foundation (UK).

May - December 2000 – Implementation of a joint-program on Rural Tourism Promotion and Development in the Republic of Moldova financially assisted by the World Bank and Soros-Moldova Foundation.

June – July 2000 - New publications released at the Viitorul Foundation: “Regional Development in Moldova” (Igor Munteanu), Local Public Finances (Tatiana Manole) and White Book on Local Governance in Moldova (cooperative work).

June – December 2000 – Viitorul Foundation is conducting a comprehensive study on local government reform in the Commonwealth of Independent States (former USSR), working with 11 teams of experts from the CIS area, which will be finalized as an Anthology of Papers on Local Government in CIS.

August – December 2000 – National and Regional Workshops on Strategy Planning, Legislative Reform and TOT for the elected officials of the local government in Moldova, in cooperation with the Urban Institute Experts (USAID Program on Strengthening Local Public Authorities in the Republic of Moldova).

November 2000 - December 2001 – Fighting Political Corruption Project, financially supported by COLPI and Soros Foundation

October 10 – December 31, 2000 – Exchange visit supported in Moldova/and Georgia and Joint-Study on “Territorial Conflicts and Strategies in bi-cultural divided societies” in cooperation with Caucasian Institute for Peace, Development and Democracy (Tbilisi)

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Moldovan NGO Sector: Profile and Overview of Experience (continued)

April 3 – December 30, 2001 – Local and Regional Government Support – Pilot Project conducted by the Viitorul Foundation in Consortium with the Human Dynamics Gmb (Vienna) with funding from the UNDP and the Dutch Government. The Project is aimed at developing a comprehensive modern system of local administration in a pilot-county – Ungheni Judet, to design and implement under the supervision of SLG-II Project staff a development strategy for the Ungheni County in the following five areas: (1) Development of new organizational structure of the County and commune authorities and relationship among them; (2) Designing policies in promoting of local economic development and restructuring; (3) Strengthening financial and fiscal management; (4) Improving provision of social services; and (5) Providing measures for environmental protection.

December 2001 – September 2002 - Strengthening decentralization and financial autonomy in Moldova, Project conducted by the Viitorul Foundation with support from Soros Foundation and LGI/OSI (Budapest). The aim of the Project was accomplish a series of area studies, followed by public policies recommendations, increasing the level of knowledge dissemination amongst local authorities in Moldova and help contribute to the institutional development of municipal governments. A collateral goal of the Project is to consolidate awareness within the civil society and professional groups about the role of administrative decentralisation and local financial autonomy that is directly related to the democracy and economical and political freedoms in a state of law.

Middle Eastern Update

The International Management and Training Institute (IMTI) from Lebanon has been involved in the deliberative democracy methodology on several levels, according to Jean Dib Hajj, Managing Director.

These levels are the following:

- a. Building the capacities for non-governmental organizations in Lebanon and the Arab world through a contribution to public policy analysis and formulation. This has been carried out through the development of action guides and training manuals and through the implementation of training sessions, workshops, and conferences.
- b. Implementing pilot-programs that aim at impacting public policies in Lebanon through the implementation of action-oriented research on the Public Benefit Legislation, and the invitation of deliberative consultation sessions all over Lebanon, and finally the formulation of a draft amendment of the Public Benefit Legislation.

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- c. Establishing work relationships with the legislative body in Lebanon (parliamentarians, parliamentary committees and the parliament administration) through the Forum for Parliamentary Dialogue.
- d. IMTI has integrated the deliberation methodology into their training programs after making certain amendments to it in order to better suit the local and regional context.

Asian Update

According to a quite detailed report received from Parichart Sthapitanonda from Thailand, she and her colleagues have been very successful at applying the knowledge they have gained about deliberation throughout their work. Parichart was invited to talk about deliberative democracy and dialogue processes at the Faculty of Political Sciences, Chulalongkorn University. Both the students and the faculty members enjoyed learning about its approach a lot since they have found the difference from the old type of politics and their new role in joining the political process. She applied the concept of people participation to her lecture at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Office of Civil Services on how to build community relations. Also, she held a class about the method of “Naming and Framing” to the graduate students on classes of communication and social issues, and communication policy and planning class.

In terms of the civic groups, Parichart acted as a co-facilitator (with Chaiwat Thirapantun - also from CIVICNET) in a number of civic workshops run by CIVICNET. They also applied the “Naming and Framing” methodology to the curriculum of their workshop. Through this workshop, she found out that the way they framed and named the workshop had an effect on the reaction and the behavior of participants at the workshop. However, most of the workshops they run promoted the new environment for talks but didn’t solve the immediate social issues.

In terms of the general public, Chaiwat and Parichart re-wrote the second edition of their book “Creative Forum: the Art of Creating Power for Social Change”. The part on facilitator and facilitation techniques reflects the knowledge they gained through their previous participations in the international workshops organized by the Kettering Foundation in Dayton. Parichart also acted as the moderator on the Thai television program called “Ruam-Kit, Ruam Tam,” which means “Thinking Together, and Working Together,” and she indirectly applied the facilitation techniques to the way she framed the questions.

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Secondly, the process for organizing a Thai workshop similar to the international ones by the Kettering Foundation has been one of our Thai colleagues' priority. After talking with David Mathews about the possibility to organize a similar workshop in Thailand, Parichart and Chaiwat had stayed in touch with Randy Nielsen, Kettering Foundation program officer, about the design of the workshop and the way this could be put into practice. They decided to organize the deliberative democracy workshop for Thai civic groups between August 1st and the 4th, 2002, in Thailand.

Thirdly, the evaluation methodology. Parichart applied the evaluation methodology she was exposed to while attending the Kettering Foundation's international workshops. By now the Thai have been developing the evaluation form based on their workshops' participatanta. They have also analyzed the data they collected and tried to adapt the workshop so that it would be the best for the uses of their civic groups.

By the end of this year (2002), Chaiwat and I Parichart are planning to finish their book on "networking the people for making change." In this book, deliberative democracy becomes the main concept, and the principles for encouraging people to join the network. Also, this year, they seek to put into practice their project on healthier and lively cities in Thailand. They believe that by talking about their city or community this could encourage more people to join in the new style of politics.

The obstacles they have faced here include the following aspects:

- first, it is difficult for them to translate "deliberative democracy" into Thai. Therefore, they call it a process of people's politics and then describe it into details, in order to make people understand the concept;
- second, it is very difficult to organize the public forum on 'hot issues' here, since most people don't want to hear about the facts, they don't believe in the research data that have been found and presented, and don't trust the people who organize the forum. Also, there's a need to have more experience with the 'cool issues,' and future issues, before jumping into the 'hot issues.' At the same time, there's a stringent need for more time for the general public to know and trust a facilitator. Therefore, it takes times, perhaps a couple years or so.

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