



Nansen Network

Nansen Dialogue Centre - Skopje



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Inter – ethnic Relations, Education and  
Economic Perspectives of the  
Municipality of Jegunovce

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## Executive Summary

The municipality of Jegunovce<sup>1</sup> is located in the northwest part of the Republic of Macedonia. It is ethnically mixed municipality where most of the inhabitants belong to the two major nationalities present in the Republic of Macedonia i.e. the Macedonians and the Albanians. There are a number of villages within the municipality that are ethnically homogenous. However the number of ethnically mixed villages is also respectable. The biggest villages in this region are: Shemshovo, Jegunovce, Zhilche, Ratae, Preljubiste, Kopance, Tudence, Ozormiste, Siricino etc.

The root of the problem dates back to the ethnical conflict in Macedonia in 2001. Since all of these villages are close to Tetovo (the very core of the conflict in 2001), they were also involved in military activity on both sides. Namely, the village of Shemshovo (Albanians) was one of the biggest strongholds for the NLA (National Liberation Army) and one of the villages that have undergone heavy military anxiety. On the other hand, the villages of Zhilche and Ratae were the base for military activity of the Macedonian security forces as well as the controversial Macedonian security unit, the Lions. In the heavy clashes, there were several victims on both sides that made the situation sensitive even after the ending of the conflict by signing the Ohrid Framework Agreement in August, 2001.

The latest events show that the situation has not been calmed yet, since new developments occurred regarding the primary education in the region. Specifically, the village of Shemshovo has one of the biggest primary schools in the district, where a significant number of Macedonian pupils used to study, mostly from the surrounding villages where Macedonians live. However, after an

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<sup>1</sup> According to the new territorial organization of Macedonia from 2004 the municipality of Jegunovce merged with the municipality of Vratnica. In the analysis, the “municipality of Jegunovce” is used to mark the old borders i.e. the villages of Jegunovce, Siricino, Shemshovo, Ratae, Zhilche, Ozormiste, Tudence, Kopance, Preljubiste, Raotince and Janciste.

incident in 2003, the Macedonian parents decided to relocate their children and send them to other schools (in Jegunovce for example which is rather far away compared to Shemshovo). In the meantime, after the Macedonian children have left, the board of the school in Shemshovo changed the name of the school (from Dame Gruev – a Macedonian revolutionary to Jumni Junuzi – the first Albanian teacher from the region). This caused additional unrest among the Macedonians, since politically this was unacceptable for them<sup>2</sup>.

After these occurrences, the efforts of the Government, the International community as well as the Nansen Dialogue Center are directed towards the return of the Macedonian children in the school in Shemshovo. Although the local Albanians have made efforts in regards to meeting the requirements of the Macedonian parents (relocating the monument of Jumni Junuzi, renovating and renaming the school etc.) no real progress have been made.

In order to intensify the efforts in this direction, NDC needs a deeper insight in the situation in all of the major villages in the Jegunovce municipality. That is why NDC contracted the Institute for Democracy, Solidarity and Civil Society (IDSCS) in order to prepare a methodology that would give a thorough scan of the problems in the region and various modes for their solving. The methodology consists of 12 focus groups (group interviews with the citizens of the villages in the region) and a small survey based on a unified questionnaire implemented according to the ethnic structure of the villages.

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<sup>2</sup> There is a certain controversy around Jumni Jonusi, since the Macedonians pledge that he was an activist of the “Bali Kombtar” Albanian paramilitary group that cooperated with the fascists during the World War II.

## Methodology

The focus groups, as a method of research, present a qualitative method of exploration, where a certain phenomenon is analyzed through the eyeglass of its reasons, current developments and perspectives. In fact, it is a group interview guided by a trained moderator that directs the discussion towards extracting the desired facts, data or opinions of the participants. Every focus group has 8 – 15 participants and last approximately two hours. The discussion is being taped (audio or video) and narrative reports are made based on every group interview. Lastly, an overall analysis (with recommendations for further action) is made, based on all 12 narrative reports as well as a more thorough scan of the overall situation.

The moderators of the focus groups as well as the assistants are experts from IDSCS. The teams are ethnically mixed, so that the participants of the focus groups would feel more relaxed in front of the moderator that speaks their own language. Most of the focus groups were held in Macedonian language (8 of them) and 4 focus groups were held in Albanian language. The focus groups were held in three consecutive weekends (starting April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) in the afternoons, on the spot in every respective village.

After the completion of all the focus groups, all narrative reports as well as the situation analysis were incorporated into one overall report that includes recommendations for action.

The focus groups researches that are organized gravitate around the following villages that are territorially dispersed in the municipality of Jegunovce and cover the whole territory, with respect to the purposes of the research:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location (village)</b>
April 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Ratae
April 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Zhilche
April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Preljubiste
April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Siricino
April 9 <sup>th</sup>	Kopance
April 9 <sup>th</sup>	Tudence
April 10 <sup>th</sup>	Ozormiste
April 10 <sup>th</sup>	Jegunovce
April 16 <sup>th</sup>	Shemshovo
April 16 <sup>th</sup>	Jegunovce 2
April 17 <sup>th</sup>	Shemshovo 2
April 17 <sup>th</sup>	Kopance 2

Table 1: *Timetable for the focus groups research*

Participants to the focus groups are parents of the pupils from fifth to eight grades (primary school).

Each focus group is audio recorded, along with the notes that are taken during the interview. Individual reports on each focus group are made, and at the end an overall report summing the findings is prepared, concerning the common tendencies as well as the differing elements in the focus groups.

# FINAL REPORT

## Economy and Infrastructure

### General economic situation

The standard of living is probably the most important parameter in the overall societal satisfaction that also can be a catalyst in the improvement of different social and political aspects, especially in multi-ethnic communities such as the municipality of Jegunovce. The general economic situation in this region can not be described as satisfactory and this is the overall perception of the whole population regardless the ethnic, religious and social background.

Although the general satisfaction<sup>3</sup> with the living conditions can be interpreted as median (42.1%) in comparison with the present living standards in the country, a vast percentage of the population (21.5%) is not satisfied at all with their lifestyle often having radical perceptions describing their living as catastrophic. The predominant single economical problem of the municipality is the big unemployment rate. This problem is especially alarming for the young population that constitutes the work force, since most of them are not able to find any type of work. Regarding the gender aspect, the perception is that there is higher employment among the women, while a high percentage of men are job seekers. Most of the families in the municipality have only one member that is employed and this situation is even worsened with the gradual decreasing of the wages. In the villages where there is a predominant ethnic Albanian population there is a social security problem since there are a significant number of workers that are practically working without any type of social security.

The unemployment problem that has been gaining weight in the last 15 years has sparked another consequential problem - migration. The region has seen

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<sup>3</sup> Please refer to the overall results of the questionnaire.

rapid migration to other regional centers and especially to the countries of Western Europe and North America. This is a general trend for the younger population, although it is more stressed among the Albanian population. Among the Macedonians there is a clear commitment to stay and live in the region as opposed to migrating to other parts of Macedonia, since the general perception is that there are no conditions for prosperity nowhere in the country. However, the opportunity to migrate abroad is perceived as a good chance that shouldn't be missed. On the other hand, the ethnic Albanians who already have a high migration rate<sup>4</sup>, besides the option to migrate abroad, also focus on the option to move to the bigger cities in the country. This results with more than 30% of the younger Albanian population working abroad.

The bad economic situation in the municipality is also visible from the sectoral division of the local economy. The dominant economical sphere (especially among the Macedonians) is agriculture, which for some families is the only source of income. Although some of the villagers see the agricultural sector as a good base for future development mainly due to the quality of the arable land, the overall perception is that agriculture and cattle raising can not constitute a significant factor in the development of the municipality on a short, medium and long term. The farmers are having further difficulties due to the weak state regulation and the low buy-out prices of their products. However, this agricultural dominance is more typical for the Macedonian population in the region, while a vast number of Albanian families are producing agricultural goods only for their own purposes and not as a source for income. Hence, the majority of the Albanians are either working in small firms or are engaged in the construction business.

This situation can be perceived as a result of a reverse process in the past 15 years of transition. Opposite of the general economic trends, the municipality has shifted from a relatively industrialized region to a predominantly agricultural. This

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<sup>4</sup> According to the participants of the focus groups, at least member of each family is already working abroad.

change is directly connected with the working of the Silmak (previously Jugohrom) industrial capacity, which till the end of the eighties has been the major employer and biggest source of income in the municipality. The Jugohrom factory, which was the biggest producer of chromium and chromium products in the country, went under bankruptcy in the early nineties, leaving hundreds of workers without jobs and forcing them to seek employment in Tetovo. Recently in 2000 it has been privatized and restarted under the name Silmak. This has been a positive improvement in the overall economy of the municipality, but however the situation is still fragile due to the decreased number of workers and low wages. The most severely hit social group are the former workers of Jugohrom that migrated from other parts of Macedonia to the Jegunovce municipality, which are now without work and also without arable land properties and therefore they can not even count on agricultural activities as a source of income. The employment policy of the company is also generating minor inter-ethnic problems since the perception of both major ethnic communities (Macedonians and Albanians) are that the company favors the other ethnic group<sup>5</sup>.

These types of misperceptions and stereotyping concerning the employment discrimination due to ethnic reasons are spread also in other sectors as well. Such a case is the state policy of employment in the local administration, whereby the perception of the Macedonians is that the provisions of the Ohrid Framework Agreement are in favor of the Albanians who are being employed on the posts of the Macedonians who are rapidly losing their jobs. On the other hand the Albanians are blaming the municipality authorities (mainly the mayor who is an ethnic Macedonian) for negative discrimination in the local administration, but also for not investing into their villages. The general perception of the Albanians is that if the mayor has been an ethnic Albanian, there would have been more employment options for the Albanians. Furthermore, there are fears among some Macedonians that the Albanian

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<sup>5</sup> Statistics show that the percentage of Macedonians working in Silmak is around 60% and the percentage of Albanians is around 40%. The ethnic composition of the municipality of Jegunovce is: Macedonians – 56,5%; Albanians – around 40%.

businessman, that are according to them dominating the economy in the wider region, will not be willing to employ Macedonians.

However, when it comes to possible solutions to this economical decline there are no divisions on ethnic lines. Everybody agrees that the prospects of the economy of the region lie in the establishment and development of small and medium sized enterprises which will specialize in food and dairy processing. The further development of the chromium industry is also a valid option, while a huge majority agrees that there has to be a gradual shift from agriculture into other more productive sectors. Another bonus could be the restructuring of the present underutilized capacities. Some of the respondents, especially in the village of Jegunovce, see the Government's intention of creating a free economical zone in their village as one of the most promising solutions that will definitely generate growth.

Furthermore, there is a strong belief that the economical development and better standard of living will be very beneficial for the improvement of the inter-ethnic relations in the municipality. While the Albanians are more convinced in this thesis, some of the Macedonians are more reserved, while a small number of them (especially in the village of Ratae) tend to have a more radical approach.

### **Infrastructure/Roads and Transportation**

More than 60% of the respondents think that the state of the roads in the municipality of Jegunovce is not satisfactory<sup>6</sup>. In general, the road network is very bad with low quality asphalt and being too narrow at some sections. There haven't been any significant repairs in the last decade, contributing to a high level of amortization of vehicles. Furthermore, during the winter period, the roads are hardly maintained and some of them are practically not usable.

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<sup>6</sup> Please refer to the overall results of the questionnaire.

There is a widely accepted view that both the state and the local authorities need to increase their investments in road repairs. Also some of the respondents blame Silmak for continuous damaging of the road with its heavy vehicles and want some of the repairs to be sponsored by the company.

The other main problem is the rather weak passenger transport communication to Tetovo and Skopje. The connections are very bad and not frequent enough and they can not satisfy the needs of the citizens. While prior to the conflict in 2001 there has been a regular bus line to Tetovo passing through all of the villages, after the conflict that particular line has been canceled and now the whole transportation system is carried out with private vans. However, this type of transportation is perceived as disorganized and expensive. Due to increased competition, the transporters from one village don't let the other transporters from the other villages to operate in the domicile village further decreasing the frequency of the service. Occasionally some of the villagers in the municipality are using the factory bus of the Tetex textile company that takes the workers to Tetovo where the factory is based. Besides the weak transport communication with Tetovo and Skopje, another big problem is the connection between the villages in the municipality. Most severely struck with this problem are the more remote villages. The biggest problem is with the village of Kopance which is not connected with the villages of Zilche and Ratae. Exceptions from this problem are the villages of Siricino and Shemshovo who due to their geographical position don't have significant transportation problems and are relatively satisfied.

The second biggest transportation problem is the canceling of the railway lines after the conflict in 2001 due to increased attacks on train compositions. As a consequence, the villages from the Jegunovce municipality have lost the cheap railway connections to Skopje and the Western part of Macedonia.

## **Infrastructure/Water Supply**

Although most of the villages have water supply systems, their functioning is doubtful. The water supply is often inadequate and sometimes in some villages (mainly Ratae) there is no water supply at all. Another problem is also the quality of water, whereby the inhabitants of Zilche and Jegunovce are forced to drink clinically unclean water. The villages of Ozormishte and Kopance don't have water supply systems and are therefore forced to use water from wells.

Another problem which is compatible with the water supply is the sewers system which is practically inexistent. Therefore, during floods there are overflows of polluted water. The conditions of these infrastructural aspects are clearly portrayed in the results of the overall questionnaire<sup>7</sup>. While only 7.4% think that the water supply system is excellent, 47.9% think that the water supply system is in a terrible condition.

## **Infrastructure/Electricity Supply**

The opinion towards this section doesn't differ much from the previous parameters. The electricity supply is also perceived as very bad, especially in the village of Jegunovce, where there are serious problems with the supply system which often results with temporal losses of electricity. Another inconvenience is the electricity tension, which in some villages is 120 vats instead of normal voltage of 220 vats.

## **Infrastructure/Medical Facilities**

Although not among the infrastructural priorities, the state of medical facilities that are in disposal to the citizens of the Jegunovce municipality is not of minor

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<sup>7</sup> Please refer to the overall results of the questionnaire.

importance. The main problem within this sector is the existence of only one ambulance in the village of Jegunovce, which according to the respondents of the more remote villages can not satisfy their needs since it is too far away. An additional problem is the working hours of the Jegunovce ambulance. Since the ambulance closes at 3 p.m., in case of emergency the citizens are forced to go to Tetovo, which in some cases can be fatal.

### **Infrastructure/other issues**

The municipality in general has a number of needs which are related with inexistence of different types of facilities. All of the villages stress the necessity of sport and recreational facilities<sup>8</sup>. The weak state of the local and central schools is also a problem which needs to be considered. Among the important problems the municipality is facing is the spontaneous creation of illegal waste areas triggered by the inexistence of waste facilities and an organized litter disposal system.

Probably the core problem of the whole region in recent time is the overspill of the river Vardar. This situation results with serious flooding which causes deteriorating damages to the arable land and to the houses of the villages that are close to the river. Since the banks of the river are not regulated spillover regulatory system of the river banks should be a priority.

### **Decentralization**

The recent process of decentralization in the country can be viewed as a good opportunity for solving some of the above mentioned infrastructural problems. Therefore, one of the aims of this research was to scan the expectations and the

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<sup>8</sup> This problem is especially stressed in Jegunovce where the population is not satisfied with the decision to invest in a school gym in Shemshovo, while leaving their village without any recreational facility.

level of familiarity of the citizens of the Jegunovce municipality with the new law on decentralization. Although the initial results show great expectations with 50.4% of the respondents expecting positive changes, the overall conclusion should be more considerate. While there is optimism that the process of decentralization will bring new job opportunities, there is also skepticism on the political will to implement the process. Furthermore, most of the citizens are not informed enough and are not completely aware of the provisions of the new law on decentralization.

What is also characteristic is the clear division in opinions between the Macedonians and Albanians in terms of support of the process. While the ethnic Macedonians in general think that the decentralization process will eventually improve the overall economic and social situation, the Albanians with the exception of Ozormishte<sup>9</sup> (which have positive expectations) think that in reality nothing will be changed since the majority in the municipality council and the mayor remain to be ethnic Macedonians.

## **Recommendations**

- Providing small grants for establishment of small and medium sized enterprises
- Providing transparent information on the employment policies of Silmak and local administration
- Donations for improving the road infrastructure
- Set up a regular and frequent bus line to Tetovo transiting through every village in the municipality

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<sup>9</sup> Ozormishte is not a part of the municipality of Jegunovce. Although it is a part of the municipality of Zhelino, it was included in the research due to the fact that it gravitates around the Jegunovce municipality.

- Restart of the railway line to Skopje
- Donations for construction of a water supply system in the villages of Ozormishte and Kopance
- Donations for water filters
- Donations for construction of a sewers system in the municipality
- Donations for a power station that will provide electric tension of a higher voltage.
- Extend the working hours of the ambulance in Jegunovce.
- Establish a waste collecting facility
- Donations for canalization of the banks of Vardar river
- Provide more information on the provisions of the new law on decentralization and the overall decentralization process

## **Interethnic relations**

### **General situation**

The issue of interethnic relations is by far the most sensitive issue in the region, which is reflected in the findings in the focus groups. It is a topic that is closely connected to the other topics of the research (education, living conditions etc.) and is in a way an indicator and a sublimation of the overall problems that this environment faces.

When one speaks of the interethnic relations, the positioning of the problem follows the timeline of the political developments in Macedonia in the last decade or so (after gaining of the independence). There are several crucial moments in the relations between the two biggest ethnic groups (Albanians and Macedonians) with the focus primarily put on the very culmination of the interethnic tensions in Macedonia – the conflict in 2001. Being one of the heaviest crisis regions during the conflict, the municipality of Jegunovce went through an intensive military turmoil that completely undermined the interethnic relations. The consequences of the crisis in 2001 are still felt, although the intensity of the distrust decreases. This is the very reason because of which the interethnic relations can be evaluated from two different aspects: previously and after the conflict.

On the other hand, there are several other factors that influence (mostly negatively) the interethnic relations. One of the crucial topics in this sense is the problem with the primary school in Shemshovo that is more an interethnic problem than an educational one. Being a very delicate topic (if not the most delicate one) the fact that the Macedonian pupils are not studying any more in the primary school in Shemshovo only speaks in favor of the ethnic separation and troubled communication in the region.

A factor that should not be underestimated is also the structure of the villages within the municipality. As the focus groups research show, there is a very present trend of different standpoints between the ethnically mixed and ethnically homogenous environments. Namely, the ethnically homogenous villages show a bigger level of distrust and skepticism towards the other ethnic community than the villages where people live together in an ethnically mixed environment. In this sense the phobia of the “others” is mostly present in ethnically homogenous villages that are surrounded or border with villages that are consisted of an ethnic group different than the respective village. In the ethnically mixed environments the people tend to value the power of compromise and interethnic consensus, especially in the fields where both ethnic communities find their vital interests.

Additionally, the stereotypes that separate the two communities mostly follow the thread of the national stereotypes that are present in Macedonia among the two biggest ethnic groups. It is obvious that the stereotypes built among the two communities originate from the very low level of communication between them, especially on the lines of the homogenous environments.

Finally, one of the crucial moments in the interethnic relations is the economic situation. The general decline of the economic situation in the country reflects the municipality of Jegunovce on several levels. Being highly dependant on only one major industrial capacity (Silmak) the citizens of the region feel the decrease of the economic potentials in the most brutal ways – the rapid downfall of the living standards as well as loss of jobs. Since the economy of the region was additionally threatened by the conflict in 2001, the people of this region feel that the economy is one of the fields that will ultimately lead to interethnic dialogue and better the communication between the Macedonians and the Albanians.

If one adds the dissatisfaction of the citizens from the living conditions in the region<sup>10</sup> it is more than obvious why the interethnic relations are a sort of an “exhaust pipe” where all of the dissatisfaction is located and concentrated.

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<sup>10</sup> Please refer to the overall results of the questionnaire.

However there are certain positive examples in this respect that could be used to set an example of good neighborly relations. The solution of the problems that are the very source of the interethnic tensions, as well as enforcement of the “good examples” in the region, can become a very successful strategy for improvement of the interethnic relations in general.

### **Sources of tensions**

When it comes to the very reasons of disagreements between the two biggest ethnic communities there are several general essentials that should be pointed out before further analyzing the problem. First of all, as the overall research shows the interethnic relations in the region are perceived as follows<sup>11</sup>:

- 14,9% of the respondents think that the interethnic relations in the municipality are unsatisfying
- 27,3% gave the interethnic relations a 2 (1-unsatisfying, 5 – excellent)
- Additional 41,4% think that the interethnic relations are median
- 9,9% evaluate the relations as close to excellent (4)
- Only 6,6% think that the interethnic relations are excellent in the region

Having the above situation in mind there are several moments that should be taken in consideration if one wants to pinpoint the very reasons for the tensions, since it is obvious that the trend inclines towards a general impression of poor interethnic relations, rather than good relations. In this sense there are a number of problems that arise and contribute, in one way or another, towards the general development of the interethnic relations. The most influential topics are:

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<sup>11</sup> ibid

- The conflict in 2001
- Unemployment and poor living standards
- Ethnic stereotypes
- The recent developments regarding the primary school in Shemshovo<sup>12</sup>
- Unsolved infrastructural and communal problems
- Political manipulation and personal interests of individuals

*The conflict in 2001 (before and after)*

As mentioned before the ethnic conflict in Macedonia in 2001 is the breaking point in the relations between the Macedonians and the Albanians, not just in this region, but in general as well. The municipality of Jegunovce went through serious military activity, concerning both sides of the conflict. This was the determining factor in the inter-ethnic relations, since some of the villages were more severely influenced than others. The presence of military troops was high on both sides that additionally complicated the overall situation.

More precisely, there are very opposite examples when it comes to the villages in the region. On one hand, there are examples of radical conflict and confrontations, and on the other examples of solidarity and cooperation, even during the conflict.

The villages of Shemshovo and Zhilche seem to be the most radical manifestation of the interethnic troubles during the conflict. The reason for such an occurrence lies in the fact that both villages (that border) were strongholds for military forces in the peak of the military confrontations in 2001. Shemshovo was the base for the military operations of the NLA (National Liberation Army) in the region, and it enjoyed the support of the local population. The NLA held the

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<sup>12</sup> This problem is discussed in a separate chapter of the analysis.

village during the conflict and it remained a strong political influence (especially several high ranked officers of the NLA) even after it finished.

North of the village of Shemshovo, two Macedonian villages are located – Zhilche and Ratae. These villages were the stronghold of the Macedonian military unit called “Lions”. The military unit “Lions” was also widely supported by the local populace. However there is no political influence in the post-conflict period by this group since most of the members of the “Lions” originated from other parts of Macedonia. However, the confrontation remained.

Since Shemshovo and Zhilche were the bases for radical militant groups the situation during the conflict radicalized with the frequent clashes among these two groups. Although there were no severe damages in both villages, and only several victims on both sides (there is still not a precise number), the hostility between the two villages continued. The focus groups show that the Macedonians in Zhilche (not so much in Ratae) are the most vocal in holding responsible the Albanians for most of the problems that appear in the region. The level of distrust in this sense is very serious, since most of the parents in Zhilche do not even consider the option of returning their children to study in the primary school in Shemshovo. Similarly, the Albanians from Shemshovo (as well as from other villages populated by Albanians) consider the Macedonians from Zhilche as the most radical Macedonian element in the region, stressing that aside from them they do not have any problems communicating with the Macedonians from other villages. The communication between the two villages (Shemshovo and Zhilche) is lowered to a minimum, with mutual distrust and skepticism.

As a hope-giving example, one must point out the village of Kopance where there is a mixed ethnical constitution. During the crisis in 2001, there were daily consultations and dialogue between the Macedonians and the Albanians on topics concerning the conflict. The result was a mutual agreement not to let the situation in the other villages influence the atmosphere in Kopance. Furthermore, it was agreed that no military forces (on both ethnic sides) shall be let to enter the

village, since both the Albanians and the Macedonians did not want to influence the situation in any way. The agreement was fully respected and the situation between the two ethnic communities was more relaxed (and still is) than in the other villages.

Accordingly, the previous two examples speak in confirmation of the general thesis that the ethnically mixed environments handle the problems of interethnic nature better than the ethnically homogenous villages. However, from a more general point of view, the situation before the ethnic conflict in 2001 was much more relaxed than nowadays. Both Macedonians and Albanians agree that prior to the conflict there were almost no tensions, but that it all changed once the conflict started. The presence of the NLA and the “Lions” in the region additionally radicalized the situation that was “broken on the back” of the relations between Zhilche and Shemshovo mostly. Although there is a certain level of mistrust between the Albanians and the Macedonians in the region, the interethnic relations are becoming better as time passes. The conflict in 2001 was a huge setback in this sense. However it did not succeed completely to destroy the interethnic relations, especially in those villages where there was a real constructive communication among the Macedonians and the Albanians. Still, the relations between several villages remain uncertain, since the wounds of the conflict are still to be healed.

### *Unemployment and poor living standards*

Besides the ethnic conflict in 2001, the unemployment and the poor living standards is the second biggest influence on the interethnic relations in the municipality of Jegunovce. The rapid recession of the economy in the last decade and a half in Macedonia that culminated in the last five years, left an enormous impact on the western parts of Macedonia. The closing of many factories, the troubled privatization as well as the constant lay-off of workers had its impact on the atmosphere in the Jegunovce region as well. Most of the people

from both ethnic communities were (are) highly dependant on the industrial sector (Silmak mostly). On the other hand a vast percentage of the population works in Tetovo as the nearest big city (Tetovo is the third largest city in Macedonia). However, a small percent of people is also employed in the local administrative facilities such as hospitals, post-offices, organs of the local government etc. Alternative sources of income providing include agriculture, cattle raising as well as construction businesses, textile and small service enterprises.

Having in mind the highly limited amount of employments available as well as the desperate economic situation in the region, the possibilities for endangering the interethnic relations from this aspect are more than obvious. Since one of the basic fundamentals of the Ohrid Framework Agreement is the equitable representation, many local employments shifted in the hands of the local Albanians. The Macedonians are highly unsatisfied with these occurrences; since they lost the employments due to political decisions on higher level (consequently this leads to a resistance towards the state authority as well as disappointment in politics in general). On the other hand, the Albanians protest against the manner of employment in Silmak, since the perception is that they are not represented equally, especially after the factory continued its work. The Albanians also stress the constant negligence by the state in terms of employment and bettering the living standards previously to the conflict in 2001.

What is most concerning, a small percentage of people turn to alternative sources on income besides the employments provided by the state. Fewer villagers believe that agriculture and cattle raising are considerable options, since they do not provide large profits. Additionally, the low level of communication between the ethnic communities makes sure that the economic ambient is further traumatized.

The living standard of the region dropped rapidly in the last fifteen years. Since the citizens of the region are in a constant search for alternative sources of

income, many of them joined the NLA as well as the Macedonian defense forces out of lucrative reasons. This led to mutual mistrust that has its influence even nowadays. However, both ethnic groups agree that they must cooperate jointly, since the bad economic conditions affect everybody equally. Although a generator of crisis, the poor economic situation is, ironically, also a motive for cooperation and a starting position for mutual understanding and dialogue.

### *Ethnic stereotypes*

The ethnic stereotypes between the two biggest ethnic communities are more a result than a source of the ethnic tensions. However, it is indicative that on both sides of the ethnic divide the stereotypes are almost the same. The most commonly present stereotype is connected to the issue of political control of the local structures of power. Both the Macedonians and the Albanians think that the other ethnic group has more political power and has control over the political situation. Very frequently the ethnic groups are convinced that the “others” dictate and impose their political agenda which is often connected to the political agenda of the political parties, representatives of the respective ethnic interests (which is a proof that the political parties mostly exploit ethnic issues in their political programs).

Another very present ethnic stereotype is the one where the other ethnic community is seen as “more organized” and “better structured” regarding especially issues that have a political dimension. In this sense the Macedonians tend to believe that there is certain level of political organizing among the Albanians that gives them an evident degree of collective cohesion which consequently leads to better negotiating and bargaining positions when ethnic issues arise. On the other hand, the Albanians tend to think that the Macedonians offensively impose their political agenda in the political sphere, since they hold the major political positions in the state which once again leads to the perspective that the other ethnic community is in a better position.

When it comes to the educational problem regarding the primary school in Shemshovo, the stereotype is that “the other ethnic group is not cooperative” or “wants to gain political profit from politicizing the issue”. A number of the Macedonians are convinced that the Albanians are unwilling to negotiate and offer better security and conditions in the primary school since “the Macedonian children are not wanted in that school”. On the other hand the Albanians are convinced of the political opportunism of certain Macedonian structures since they “want to gain profit from the political dimension of the problem”.

The ethnic stereotypes are mostly emphasized in the ethnically homogenous villages regarding issues that are critical (economy, education, conflict in 2001).

#### *Unsolved infrastructural and communal problems*

There are many problems that increase the ethnic tensions in a rather indirect way. One of these problems tends to be the unsatisfactory lifestyle of the inhabitants of the municipality of Jegunovce<sup>13</sup>. Most of the people are not very satisfied with the lifestyle in their respective communities, with a special accent on the dissatisfaction regarding the water supply system, the medical facilities as well as the educational facilities. In these terms, the dissatisfaction that is generated from the poor living conditions is translated and projected in the interethnic sphere.

#### *Political manipulation<sup>14</sup> and personal interests of individuals*

Another acute problem that is often pinpointed as a source of interethnic tensions is the political manipulation that the citizens of this region are subjected to. In this sense both the Albanians and the Macedonians think that they are often “hostages” of the political parties that represent the interests of the respective

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<sup>13</sup> Please refer to the overall results of the questionnaire.

<sup>14</sup> The media are also very frequently blamed for political manipulation.

ethnic communities. Both ethnic groups are very critical towards their own political parties (as well as the parties of the other ethnic group) in terms of exploitation of the ethnic issues in gaining political points. Most of the citizens feel that this populist approach is becoming destructive and one of the main reasons for the conflict in 2001. The citizens in this sense feel misrepresented and actively lose their faith in the political parties. This kind of rising political awareness is certainly a positive trend.

The personal interests of particular groups of people also contribute to the radicalization of the interethnic relations regarding certain topics. The participants of the focus group pinpoint these kinds of problems especially in the topic of the school in Shemshovo, where specific groups appear to exaggerate the problem over its proportions for personal or political benefit. Aside from the school problem, the citizens do not seem to think that personal interests get in the way of the interethnic relations in the region.

## **Perspectives**

The perspectives of the interethnic relations in the region are slowly moving towards a positive trend. Although still endangered by numerous factors, the communication in the region is gradually moving in the direction of dialogue and decrease of the stereotypes and the distrust.

There are several factors that might endanger these positive trends, and several factors that work in favor of interethnic understanding. If one has to point out the first group of factors, most certainly the fundamental factor would be the situation with the primary school in Shemshovo. The postponing of the final solution of the problem might in time seriously spread the problem throughout the region which means that the polarization<sup>15</sup> might take considerable proportions. Although both

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<sup>15</sup> The polarization goes not just among ethnic lines, but also within them. One of the most atypical occurrences is that the ethnic Macedonians are highly divided when it comes to the question of the primary school in Shemshovo. Almost equally, half of the Macedonian parents

sides are willing to cooperate on the issue, the interethnic dialogue in this respect seems to be coming to a dead-end.

On the other hand, there are several factors that work in favor of the interethnic dialogue. In this sense the economic hardship that the region is going through is most certainly the issue that binds the people from both ethnic communities. Although a very unpleasant episode, the frequent overflows of the Vardar River in the region also help the interethnic dialogue, since the situation is becoming rather serious in several villages where both Macedonians and Albanians live. Additionally, the interethnic dialogue is definitely perceived as having a positive trend, because of the activity of several international organizations and governments of donating countries, which is widely supported by all ethnic groups.

Ultimately, the interethnic relations are moving on the verge of the positive tendency. The role of the common vital interests, as well as certain international factors, in a way balance the tension of the educational problem in Shemshovo that has its ethnic and political dimensions. However, the further support of multiethnic projects and projects that enforce mutual cooperation and dialogue is of a crucial importance.

## **Recommendations**

- Continuation of the interethnic dialogue between the two communities
- Prompt solving of the primary education problem in the village of Shemshovo
- Enforcing the positive examples such as the village of Kopance

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would send their children again to school there, while the other half does not even consider such an option.

- Multiethnic projects involving cooperation between the two groups - joint activities (sport facilities, internet cafes, various workshops and seminars) – with an accent to the relations between Zhilche and Shemshovo
- Donations in joint solving of the infrastructural and communal problems (roads, medical facilities, educational facilities etc.)
- Donations in joint solving of the critical problems (overspills of the Vardar River for example)
- Creating possibilities for multiethnic dialogue – meetings, round tables, debates on local issues

## Education

### General situation

The different ethnic groups from the villages in the municipality of Jegunovce have a long history of peaceful and cooperative coexistence. However, the conflict during the 2001 created a serious impact over the positive interethnic relations between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. The conflict led towards total distrusts and breaking of all links between the two ethnicities. The future however is brighter, since the current situation regarding the interethnic relations is going in the direction of normalization and reestablishment of the confidence and cooperation. Nevertheless, some obstacles are still present and education is one of the major issues of the dispute among the two communities.

### Infrastructure

In the municipality of Jegunovce, all villages have primary schools for the students in the first four years of education, but only Jegunovce and Shemshovo have facilities and personnel (teachers) for the next four<sup>16</sup>. Until the conflict in 2001, the students from fifth to eighth grades were attending their classes either in Shemshovo or Jegunovce, in dependence of the distance to the other villages.

Almost all schools in the villages were renovated (completely or partially), with the great help of foreign donations (German and American). However, the further reconstruction and modernization of those schools is a necessity, which has also emerged from the participants of the focus groups and it could be revealed in the next table:

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<sup>16</sup> In the Macedonian system of teaching, the primary education is completed after eight years of studies

<b>Please grade (from 1 to 5) the quality of the education facilities in your municipality?</b>	
<b>1 - unsatisfying</b>	24.0%
<b>2 - very poor</b>	22.3%
<b>3 - good</b>	35.5%
<b>4 - very good</b>	14.0%
<b>5 - excellent</b>	4.1%
<b>Total</b>	100.0%

Table 2: *Quality of the education facilities in the municipality of Jegunovce*

It can be noticed that almost half of the respondents (46.3%) are considering that the facilities are unsatisfactory or in very poor condition, even though that the other half believe that they are in “good” or in “very good” shape.

Besides the school infrastructure, a new problem has emerged as a consequence of the interethnic disputes during and after the conflict four years ago. Namely, since 2001 all Macedonian students (5-8 grades) were transferred to Jegunovce (ethnic Macedonian village), even though for some of the villages Shemshovo is by far closer<sup>17</sup>. The reason was that Shemshovo is predominantly populated with ethnic Albanians (around 90%).

### **The disputes regarding the school in Shemshovo**

When the conflict in 2001 ended, efforts were made for returning of the students with ethnic Macedonian origin to the school in Shemshovo. However, the parents have had several preconditions before they gave allowance to their children to continue with their education in Shemshovo:

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<sup>17</sup> Some of the students travel up to eight km. to reach Jegunovce while the distance to Shemshovo is only one or two km.

- guarantees for the children's security
- renaming of the school<sup>18</sup>
- relocation of the monument which was placed at the school's front gate<sup>19</sup>

After the relocation of the monument, renaming of the school into "Shemshovo" (same as the village) and offered guarantees by the ethnic Albanians for the children's security, ethnic Macedonian students went back to school in Shemshovo. Nonetheless, after a fight among students with different ethnic origin, the parent's council<sup>20</sup> decided to retrieve their children from this school and to send them in Jegunovce. They also initiated a new demand for building new school facilities in the village of Zhilche<sup>21</sup> since "they will not send their children again in Shemshovo".

With the deep screening of the present situation, using the focus groups, it several conclusions can be reached regarding this issue:

- Without any exceptions, the ethnic Albanians are convinced that the returning of the ethnic Macedonian students is a political and not a safety issue
- The people from Shemshovo (ethnic Albanians) are giving the full warranty for the children's security
- The majority of the ethnic Macedonians don't have any intention to give permission to their children for their return to school in Shemshovo since they fear for their security
- The only solution for the larger part of the ethnic Macedonians is building of new school facilities in an ethnic Macedonian village (mostly in favor of Zhilche)

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<sup>18</sup> The name of the school was "Dame Gruev" (ethnic Macedonian hero), but it was changed to "Jumni Jonuzi" (ethnic Albanian teacher from Shemshovo)

<sup>19</sup> The monument of Jumni Jonuzi

<sup>20</sup> Ethnic Macedonians who have children in the school in Shemshovo were organized in this council

<sup>21</sup> The village of Zhilche has school facilities that are sufficient only for students during their first four years of the primary school

## Further perspectives

The difficulties with the primary education in the municipality of Jegunovce are barely connected with the learning process. They are interethnic and primarily political.

From the conducted surveys in the villages in this region, it becomes obvious that all efforts for restoration of the conditions before 2001, i.e. return of the ethnic Macedonians in the school in Shemshovo, in this moment are almost in vain. Therefore, several future steps for the restitution of trust among the two ethnic communities seem necessary:

- Organization of meetings and seminars with participations of the representatives from all ethnic groups in the municipality of Jegunovce (which is already ongoing, organized by NDC-Macedonia)
- Introduction and preparation of several projects for the development of municipality with the participation of all villages
- Workshops for common solutions of the problems with the involvement of the local officials ( local self- government and heads of villages)
- Disclosure and discussion for the political pressures and personal interests from the both sides.
- Introduction of a common agreement for the resolution of all problems in education, which after its establishment can be supported by financial aid from the international community

## Recommendations for the local problems resolutions

### Foreign donations

After the screening of the conditions in the majority of villages in Jegunovce, it becomes obvious that the potential of the municipality for solving infrastructural problems is very low. Therefore, the participants of the focus groups when they were asked for the role of the international agencies that are active in the municipality in the solution of their problems had a very positive response, as it is presented in table 3.

<b>What is the role of the international agencies that are active in your municipality?</b>	
<b>positive</b>	63.6%
<b>negative</b>	6.6%
<b>I don't have an opinion</b>	29.8%
<b>Total</b>	100.0%

Table 3: *The role of the international agencies in the municipality of Jegunovce*

During the past several years many international agencies, organizations and national governments were involved in the improvement of the life quality in this region. In this sense, the Catholic Relief Service (CRS), USAID, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Department for international development (DFID) and the Norwegian Government could be mentioned.

Although the majority of the surveyed participants, as mentioned, have been and are satisfied, some serious complaints about the utilization of the foreign help occurred. Namely, during the focus groups and afterwards, many of the participants expressed their disappointment, since a great part of the foreign help

was manipulated and misused by the individuals who were in charge (mostly from the local community).<sup>22</sup>

### **Interethnic relations and international grants**

One of the most interesting topics during the focus groups was defining the correlation between the international donations and the improvement of the interethnic relations. The response from the participants was almost unanimous. The ethnic Macedonians and the ethnic Albanians are determined that the foreign assistance helps a lot for the reestablishment of the bridges among the two ethnicities.

It can be concluded that the financial aid from the international community, which will accelerate the economic development of the region, could be the main instrument for decreasing of tensions caused by the recent conflict between the two communities.

### **Future development**

The last part of the focus groups questionnaire was related with the future perspectives of the villagers and their children. They were asked: "Where do you see the future of your children and of the municipality in general?" Larger part of the participants was convinced that the perspectives of their children and their own perspectives are in the village.

Some of them said that they want their children to leave the country. This was mostly caused by the current economic situation in the region and in the whole country. It was interesting that no one wanted to leave the municipality because

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<sup>22</sup> There is a great number of cases in which some funds were misused. One of the examples which were mentioned by the participants is: "From 20.000€ only 2000€ were used for repairs in the local school" (Kopance).

of fears for their safety, as a result of the disturbed interethnic relations. The reasons are entirely economic.

## **Recommendations**

The summary of the different information collected from the last part of the focus groups, exposed a variety of problems and difficulties, but also, as a result of those data, some possible solutions emerged:

- As a result of a great number of cases of misusing of the funds by the local contractors, an overall control and supervision over financial donations by the international community becomes a necessity.
- Allocation of the funds only for projects from which all or majority of the villages will have benefit. This can be accomplished with preparation of priority lists for future projects
- A necessity of situation analysis before the beginning of the projects. The purpose of those researches is the evaluation of the project's outcomes and gains.
- Introduction of co-financed projects between local self-government and the international agencies.
- Intellectual and financial assistance for the promotion of the projects prepared and proposed by citizens from different ethnic groups
- Further investments in the education by the local government with financial aid and supervision by the foreign donors

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# **ANNEX I Focus group reports**

## FOCUS GROUP REPORT – VILLAGE OF RATAE

Location: Ratae  
Date and time: 02.04.2005  
Moderator: Trosanovski Marko  
Co-moderator: Misev Vladimir  
Number of participants: 13

On 02.04.2005 (Saturday) a focus group was held in the primary school in Ratae (village in the Tetovo region). The focus group entailed 13 participants. Three of the participants were women and 10 were male persons. All of the participants were from Macedonian nationality. The discussion in general was good, without tensions and well moderated by the moderator. Before the start of the focus group the participants filled in a questionnaire with the general questions for discussion.

There were several subjects of discussion:

- Economical situation and unemployment in the village and the region
- Infrastructural problems
- Inter- ethnical relations
- Educational situation in the village
- The role of the international organizations in the improvement of the general situation

After the introduction of the moderator and the co-moderator, the discussion started with the questions about the general situation in the village. In this part of discussion it was discussed about the economical situation in the village, infrastructural problems etc.

## FIRST PART: GENERAL SITUATION

The first question was “*How would you describe the life in your municipality in one word?*” The general conclusion of the participants was that life conditions in the municipality are very bad and they don’t have basic living conditions. They have problems with the plumbing and sewerage systems. Also there is great unemployment in the area, according to some of the participants of the focus group, around 80% unemployment. This especially refers to the male population, because some of the women are employed in the confection industry. Men usually are unemployed or work in agriculture. However, they still managed to keep the good communication between them. Some of the statements are:

- We have very bad conditions for living
- The unemployment is great, it is around 80%
- We have problems with plumbing and sewerage system

The second question for discussion was “*What are the basic economical branches in your municipality?*” As it was mentioned before, the participants said that they don’t have work. Mostly, they work in the fields as agricultural workers. They used to produce milk before, but now they have restriction on the sale. Also they produced agricultural products.

- We used to produce a lot of milk, but now with the restriction we have a lot of milk left
- The only way out is to work in the fields, but it is difficult to sell the products

On the questions “*How many citizens are there in your village?*” and “*What is the ethnic structure of your village?*”, they said that there are 405 people who live permanently in the village and there are 100 people who live abroad. And on the second question they said that the village is purely Macedonian.

The next few questions were very similar to the first question but more specific: “*Are you satisfied with the living conditions in your community?*”, “*What are the*

*basic infrastructural problems that your municipality is faced with?” and “What is the communication net (the connection) with the neighboring villages and the bigger towns (Skopje, Tetovo)?”*. The participants of the focus group stated and repeated that they are not satisfied with the living conditions in their community. They repeated again problems with the water, saying that the water is of low quality and that they sometimes don't have water at all. Also, they mentioned that the road in the village is awful. They said that after the crisis, they basically are secluded. As an infrastructural problem, was also mentioned the problem with the plumbing and sewerage systems although there was a donation for building a plumbing system. Regarding to the communication with other villages and towns, the participants were unanimous that they have very bad communication. The local roads to Ratae and Lesok are in bad condition- there is no asphalt. But with the other villages and Tetovo they have good communication. Some of the quotations are:

- We have connection with all the neighboring villages, but the road inside the village is awful
- After crisis we feel that we are isolated
- The local road Ratae- Lesok is in a very bad condition- there is no asphalt

*“Which of the neighboring villages, do you feel your municipality need to be connected with?”* was the next question for discussion. The old road Ratae-Zhilche- Neprostenno was mentioned as a priority for reconstruction because of the busses. The participants also said that the old railway tracks are only used for freight trains, not for passenger trains. Also, there are no buses to other villages. There is only one bus that goes to Teteks (big confection factory in Tetovo), twice a day. Sometimes they are using this bus to go to Tetovo, but the problem with the students is still present. They don't have transport to school, and they manage on their own, using private vans.

- We don't have bus relations with other villages. There is only one bus which is relating to Teteks twice a day, around 5 o'clock in the morning

and 2.30 in the afternoon. There is no bus to Jugohrom<sup>23</sup>. The students don't have transportation to the school and this is a very big problem.

The following questions, for discussion were related to the economical situation in the village, perspectives for economical development of the community etc. The questions were: *“What is the economical situation in your village?”*, *“What are the chances/ perspectives for economical growth of your municipality?”*, *“In which measure the economical situation in the village has an influence on the inter- ethnic relations?”*. In general the economical situation in the village was evaluated as very bad. The unemployment and the isolation from other villages were mentioned as bigger problems with which the community is facing with. The participants announced that they don't have basic life-conditions, meaning: they don't have ambulance; there is no post office, their children are studying in Zhilche, not in their own village. There are only two small enterprises which are working with agriculture, and the people from Ratae see their employment perspective in Tetovo. The participants said that they need to look for job opportunities at Macedonian businessmen, instead of the Albanian. They also said that for Ratae nothing has been ever done. There have been some donations from the Norwegian government for plumbing, but the problem with the water is still present. There is no sewerage and sluiceway. The participants were not satisfied from OSCE and NATO that were present there in the time of crisis in Macedonia and Kosovo. *“OSCE and NATO have destroyed us. They destroyed the road. They promised us that they will donate something but in vain. Until now nothing has been done.”* They mentioned that there was a donation from the German government for the school. They donated two computers and a ceiling to the school in the village. Several years ago, there was at least one member from each family employed in Jugohrom, but now there are only eight from the whole village. The participants stated that it is best to invest into building a plant for production of dairy and agricultural products. Some of the quotations were:

- The unemployment and the transport are the biggest problems

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<sup>23</sup> Jugohrom (now SILMAK) is a factory in Jegunovce where a lot of people from this region were employed

- We don't have ambulance, we don't have a post office, we don't even have a school, our children go to school in Zhilche
- The economical situation is very bad, the only way out is to seek employment in Tetovo, but we only can apply for jobs in Macedonian firms, not Albanian
- There are only two agricultural firms
- Nothing has ever been done for Ratae
- There has only been one donation from Norway for the plumbing, but the water quality hasn't improved
- There was a donation from the German government for this school. They donated two computers and a ceiling
- There is no sluiceway and the waste waters mix
- There are no businessmen who can employ us here, in this region.
- In the past there was at least one employed from each family but today there are only eight from the whole village
- I think that it would be very good if a plant for production of dairy and agricultural products was built

On the questions *"In which measure the economical situation in the village has an influence on the inter- ethnic relations?"* and *"How will the solving of the vital economical problems in the municipality reflect on the inter- ethnic relations?"*, the participants said that this region has become an Albanian protectorate. They said that from patriotic reasons they will not allow their women to work for Albanians even if they are on the edge of the existence. The participants said that there are not multi- ethnic enterprises in Ratae, but in Tearce there is. In this part of the discussion a big radicalism was detected about the inter - ethnic relations between Macedonians and Albanians. Later, during the discussion part of the participants said that they have contacts with Albanians, but mostly business contacts.

- This is an Albanian protectorate

- Here, in Ratae there are no multi- ethnic enterprises. There are some In Zhilche, but not here. I would not let my wife work there. I will suffer for bread but I will not allow that. My patriotism will not allow that.
- We have only business contacts

On the next question, *“Do you think that, you would live better if you migrated to another place?”*, the participants were categorically unified that are no chances for them to go to live in other place. Some of them said that, maybe, they could migrate abroad but not in Macedonia. They also said that in Ratae there are a lot of young people living and there is no migration now and there wasn't any during the war.

The last two questions for discussion, of this part of the focus group were: *“What is your opinion about the process of decentralization (your expectations and needs)?”* and *“In which measure you are familiarized with the new law for local government (for ex. Purview of the primary and secondary schools, etc)?”*. The participants said that they have big expectations from the decentralization process, but they are not satisfied with the human resources. They said that usually the employments are based according to the ethnic background. Also, they were skeptic about the local budget and tax payment of the Albanian population. During the discussion it was mentioned that from Vratnica to Debar there is only one Macedonian mayor. The participant said that they are not familiarized with the new law for local government. Some of the quotations were:

- We are hoping for a better life after the decentralization and we hope that there will be more employments
- I am skeptic about the capacities of the local administration. It could be that with the new laws, the local administration may not have the capacities to face with the new legislation, duties and responsibilities.

Also in this part of the discussion participants said that there isn't perspective for the young people. They don't have any kind of amusement and recreation. Life is

hard for the young people, was the final conclusions for the youngsters there.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSIONS FOR THE FIRST PART OF THE DISCUSSION**

In this part of the discussion the general situation in the village was evaluated as very bad. There is no perspective for the children and for the young people. In one word, the people there are not satisfied with the basic life conditions. The biggest problems in the village are the problems with the plumbing and sewerage systems and with the transportation. They have some infrastructural problems but they are not as big as the unemployment. About the new process of decentralization, the participants have great expectations, but they are not acquainted with the new decentralization law.

## **SECOND PART: INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS**

The second part of the discussion on the focus group was about inter- ethnic relations between Macedonians and Albanians. There were several questions for discussion about this topic. Considering the fact that this village is a one national village (only Macedonians) the general conclusion is that they have not any inter-ethnic tensions.

On the first question *“What is the level of communication between the different ethnic communities in your village (region)?”* the participants stated that in the past they used to have more communication with the Albanians, than today.

- In the past we had more communication with the Albanians, but now...
- This is an Albanian protectorate. We don't have any rights here

On the next question *“Is there a question at the moment on which there are some disagreements between the ethnic communities in the region?”* the participants were not very responsive for discussion. They only mentioned that they have problems with the institutions from the aspect of the employment. The participants said that during the 2001 conflict and after the conflict all

Macedonian employers from Shemshovo who used to work in the public institutions like schools and ambulances were sacked.

- In 2002 all Macedonians were sacked. After that they employed only Albanians. They did it in the school and in the ambulance.
- Macedonians are dying out in this region

On the third question *“According to you in what measure the distrust from the conflict in 2001 has been exceeded?”* the participants were unified that they must live together with the Albanians no matter of the other circumstances. They said that their needs forced them to live together. On the next question *“To what extend the personal interests influence inter- ethnic relations?”* the participants specified only the case with the petrol station in Lesok. Some of the quotations were:

- Maybe the distrust is not exceeded, but the joined needs make us live together

## **GENERAL CONCLUSIONS FOR THE SECOND PART OF THE DISCUSSION**

The general conclusion for this part of discussion is that the participants don't have bigger communication with Albanians now. In the past they communicated with them only for business but now they don't communicate at all. However, they stated that they must renew the communication with Albanians because they live together in the same region and they have collective public needs.

## **THIRD PART: EDUCATION**

This part of the discussion was focused on the educational issues. There were several questions for discussion:

- Where do your children go to study?
- Are you satisfied with the studying conditions and what are the things that you are not satisfied from?
- Where do you locate the reason for the events in Shemshovo?

- Do you think that with the returning of the students in the school in Shemshovo, the problems that the students are facing with will be overthrown?
- Do you think that with the returning of the students from Macedonian nationality in the school in Shemshovo inter ethnic relations will be improved?
- What are the basic preconditions for returning of the students in the school in Shemshovo?

In this part participants said that their children study in Zhilche. Their children used to study in Shemshovo but after the problems there, they are going to Zhilche. They said that they are satisfied with the conditions for studying in the school in Zhilche. They mentioned that they have some problems with transportation to Zhilche because the students have to travel very long. But in general it can be concluded that the participants of the focus group are satisfied with the conditions for studying there. Some of the participants don't even think of returning their children to their old school but some of them do. The participants locate the main reason for the events in Shemshovo in the Albanian provocations. The problem with the statue is not the primary problem for returning of the students. The real problem is the security of the students in Shemshovo. The participants stated that if the state or the respective institutions do ensure security in the school they are willing to return the students there. They stated that they were sending the kids in Shemshovo with fear. The participants said that the Ministry for Education together with US Embassy donated sport hall in the school in Shemshovo, but one of the conditions for building the hall was returning the Macedonian students. Some of the quotations were:

- We used to live in fear when our kids were going to school in Shemshovo
- It is better today, because our kids are studying in Zhilche
- There are no chances for returning our kids in Shemshovo
- Security is priority in the school in Shemshovo

## FOURTH PART: RECOMMENDATIONS

The final part of the discussion on the focus group was focused on the international organizations, the future of the municipality and the perspectives for the young people in the village. The topics for this part of discussion were:

- *Do you think that for solving the ethnic conflicts there is a need for help from the international organisations?*
- *According to you in which measure the international organisations can help in solving the ethnic tensions?*
- *Where do you see the future of your children and of the municipality in general?*

As it was said before, the participants said that they are not satisfied by the international organizations. They repeated the things that happened with the roads with OSCE and NATO vehicles few years ago. But also they said they received some donations for the school and for the water system. They said that the international organizations can help only if they have some concrete donations like these. But if they are trying to invest in inter ethnic relations they will not have success. From the foreign donations the participants mentioned the Germany Army, Norway Government and some other donations.

About the perspective of their children and the perspective of their municipality, the participants said that they will stay in the village. Some of them said they want their children to live the country. But in one word the most of the participants want to stay in Ratae.

## FOCUS GROUP REPORT- VILLAGE OF ZHILCHE

Location: Zhilche  
Date and time: 02.04.2005 (19.00pm - 21.00pm)  
Moderator: Gorast Stojmenovski - IDSCS  
Co-moderator: Miša Popović - IDSCS  
Number of participants: 16

The focus group discussion was organized in five phases:

1. Introduction
2. General part
3. Multiethnic relations
4. Education
5. Recommendation for local problems resolution

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The first part of the discussion referred to the personal introduction of the people participating in the focus group (their names, professions etc.). The moderator explained the project goals, background of the organizations involved and the relevance of the opinions that will be given in the further discussion. In every focus group before opening the group discussion, participants were asked to complete simple questionnaire composed of six questions referring to their life standard, infrastructure, multiethnic disputes and the role of international organizations.

## 2. GENERAL PART

The general part of the discussion aimed to obtain general information on life in the village of Zhilche. The purpose was to gather information about the participants' occupation, their perception of the quality of life in the village, the economic situation and the possibilities of economic development. Other issues talked about in this phase were those of demography, such as population number and ethnic structure. In addition to this part, there was a focus on questions of infrastructure (roads, traffic communication, sewer, water supply system and medical facilities) and the decentralization process.

The first question brought up on the focus group was: *How would you describe the life in your municipality/village?* The participants unanimously described the life as being difficult, mostly due to the problematic economical situation.

- "We have a hard life. The conditions are very difficult"

On the questionnaire, given to the participants as an introduction to the focus group interview, 62,5% of the respondents labeled their life quality as "so, so" (representing the median evaluation).

The main occupation of the community is agriculture and life stock raising. There are 800 inhabitants in the village of Zhilche. It has a relatively homogeneous ethnic structure with a vast majority of Macedonians.

The next questions asked the respondents to describe the current life conditions and the infrastructure. There was a high level of dissatisfaction present in the opinions of the participants. There was a focus on three areas: roads, water supply and medical facilities. The issues of water supply were described as terrible emphasizing the pollution and contamination of the water with feces. Some of the participants regarded the water as unusable, noting that they have no other choice than to use it. At the same time, related to the health issues, the lack of primary medical facilities was seen as a problematic, since the

participants felt that Zhilche needs such facility. If in need, the nearest one is in Tetovo, which according to the participants is far away. At the end, the road network was evaluated as being in poor condition and needed a reconstruction. In addition, some participants mentioned the lack of educational facilities when talking about infrastructure.

- "The water supply is a disaster"
- "The water is polluted and it cant be used for anything"
- "We don't have a medical facility. The nearest one is in Tetovo"
- "We have a bad transportation"
- "After the conflict in 2001 the transportation is even worse"
- "The way out of the bad situation is in developing and building new roads, water supply systems, new primary medical care and new educational facilities"

On the pre-FDI questionnaire, the respondents were asked to grade the conditions of the infrastructure with grades from 1 to 5 (with 1 being the worst and 5 being the highest). The results show a high level of dissatisfaction with: roads scoring 1 from the majority; 81% evaluating the water supply with 1; 56% giving the grade 1. The grades increased regarding the educational facilities with about 30% choosing 2 and 3 as their choice grades.

The next questions intended to gather information on the economical situation and the prospects for development. There was an agreement between the participants that the state of economy is poor and that the most important issues regarding the economy was the high level of unemployment. This is supported with a majority of 81% naming the unemployment as a single most important problem on the preliminary questionnaire. The hard living conditions result in a migration of the youth, trying to find their way to better life.

In addition to these questions, the participants were asked about the influence of the economical situation to the inter-ethnic relations. The respondents agreed about the existence of this influence and its importance but not many of them felt

that the resolution of the economic issues will result in the improvement of the relations.

The last questions in this part referred to the processes of decentralization and the laws that shape it. There was an expressed enthusiasm among the participants regarding the decentralization. On the preliminary questionnaire, 50% of the respondents had positive opinion about it. They were assured that it would improve the situation in the area. But they were misinformed that it would solve the problem with the school in Shemshovo. No one knew that authority over elementary education was still in the central government thus keeping the present hierarchy in the decision making. All of the participants stated that they felt not sufficiently informed about the legal details of the decentralization.

- “Yes, the decentralization will bring potential for solving local problems. We think that with this new laws the municipality will have authority over elementary school education and will resolve the local problem”

### **3. INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS**

The third part aimed at gathering information about issues of multi-ethnic coexistence, communication problems and questions about consequences of the 2001 crisis. At the end of the third session questions about normalization of relations and starting a dialogue were also asked in order to locate the perception on the prerequisites for initiating a discussion.

The respondents rated the inter-ethnic relations as poor on the preliminary questionnaire with a majority of them ranking them with 1 and 2 (50% chose 2).

The level of communication between the ethnic groups is defined as problematic. There has always been a certain amount of tensions, and as said, there has always been a division and uncertainty in the other ethnic group, but the intensities varied and were rather low in the past. But, there was an opposite

opinion, expressed in the focus group claiming that mixed communities, at least by personal experience (of the participant), did not live in mutual suspicion.

- “There have always been ethnic related fights”
- “I’ve been raised in a mixed ethnic community and I’ve never felt suspicion existing between the people”

When the respondents were asked to point out the ethnic-related disputes, there were three main problems mentioned. The most significantly emphasized one was the dispute about the school in Shemshovo. The other two are related to other areas of the everyday life, mainly the dissatisfaction of Macedonians about losing jobs for the employment of Albanians. Moreover, the participants felt that the blockades that Albanians set and the way they treat Macedonians passing the blockades is inappropriate and causes further problems.

- “Yes, the main problem is the dispute about the school in Shemshovo”
- “The Macedonians working in the village of Shemshovo were fired”
- “Every time some one from the NLA is arrested, the Albanians put blockades and harass the Macedonians”

When they were asked to locate the reasons for such conflicts, most of the participants pointed out the economy as a generator of the dissatisfaction resulting in inter-ethnic conflicts. In spite of that, few participants felt that the conduct of the Albanians as being the majority is the main reason for the problems.

- “I think that the economic situation is the main reason for ethnic distrust”
- “The most important reason is the politics. There is quarrel in every poor house”
- “Where does the minority have so much power over the majority in the state”

*According to you, in which degree is the suspicion, created in the conflict in 2001, surpassed?* The answers on this question were pessimistic. There was an

agreement among the participants that the situation is still difficult and that the problem with security overshadows the situation.

- “The distrust isn’t surpassed”
- “Nothing improved after the conflict in 2001. I still feel unsafe passing thru Shemshovo at night”
- “There are hostage situations frequently, when we wait for someone from the NLA to be released” (the participant explained that they were being stopped on the road by someone and not permitted to go home until the release)

The last question on these issues was about the necessary conditions for establishing a dialogue. The prevailing request was that of establishing secure living conditions in order to establish a dialogue. There was also a certain doubt in the Albanians motives and skepticism that there is a willingness for dialogue on the other side.

- “There is no chance for dialogue”
- “The security must be improved in order to start dialogue”
- “The Macedonians are ready for dialogue, but I doubt that the Albanians are”
- “We also have problems with the police. They don’t respond to our calls”

#### **4. EDUCATION**

The part of the education was meant to analyze the local perspective of the problem. This part inspected psychography of the group regarding preconditions for returning of the pupils in their previous school in Shemshovo, as major problem in the region and as an event that received significant publicity. The levels of satisfaction from current resolutions, quality of the lessons etc. were other topics of discussion.

The Macedonian pupils study in Zhilche. There are also pupils from Ratae and one pupil from Shemshovo.

When asked about the conditions in which the pupils study, the answers described them as difficult. They are facing mainly technical problems, significantly due to the overcrowded school. In addition, the school is not well equipped and cannot provide decent training and education.

- “The conditions are very bad”
- “We have approximately 130 pupils, but we don’t have adequate conditions”
- “We don’t have enough space, the classrooms are not well equipped and there is no informatics lab”
- “The Ministry of Education never considered our opinions and needs”
- “During the conflict in 2001, every Macedonian pupil studied here in Zhilche, but now the Ministry has forgotten us”

The other questions in this part addressed the reasons for the emerged problem, eventual benefits of the pupils’ return as well as the necessary conditions for the return. The main reasons for the events in Shemshovo were seen as being generated by the behavior of the Albanians. Some of the expressed opinions explained that Macedonians are no longer welcome in the Albanian populated areas. Acts such as: the placement of the statue of Jumni Junuzi and the molesting of the Macedonian children are seen as proves of these statements. In addition to that, the construction of the school’s sport gym in Shemshovo is regarded as a support for such conduct. At the end the respondents proposed that only if their conditions are fulfilled there will be a possibility for further discussion.

- “The major reason about the events in Shemshovo is the feeling that we are not welcome there”
- “The beginning of the problem was the statue of Jumni Junuzi”
- “The final decision for withdrawal of the children was when they beat them up at the school in front of our eyes”

- “I would rather sent my child to study in Tetovo then in Shemshovo”
- “If they return Macedonian workers on their jobs in Shemshovo, return the old name of the school, then the dialogue can be started”

## **5. RECOMMENDATION OF LOCAL PROBLEMS RESOLUTION**

The last part was aimed to detect the role of the international organizations present in the region as well as the different ways of support that they are and should be giving (providing). In addition participants were asked about their future and the future of the municipality in general.

The purpose of these questions was to help and assist the participants in finding a solution to their problems.

In this part, the respondents were welcoming foreign help in resolution of the current problems. 62,5% of the respondents evaluated the role as positive. The focus points in their suggestions were the problems of infrastructure. The priority was given to the solution of the schooling issues, but the water and power supply as well as the roads and the primary medical care were also mentioned in their suggestions.

## **FOCUS GROUP REPORT – VILLAGE OF PRELJUBISTE**

Location:	Preljubiste
Date and time:	03.04.2005 (19.00pm-21.00pm)
Moderator:	Vladimir Misev - IDSCS
Co-moderator:	Marko Trosanovski - IDSCS
Number of participants:	9
Structure of the group:	Three unemployed, president of the village community, one medical nurse, housewife, two farmers and local school secretary.

The focus group discussion was organized in five phases:

1. Introduction
2. General part
3. Multiethnic relations
4. Education
5. Recommendation for local problems resolution

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The first part of the discussion referred to the personal introduction of the people participating in the focus group (their names, professions etc.). The moderator explained the project goals, background of the organizations involved and the relevance of the opinions that will be given in the further discussion. In every focus group before opening the group discussion, participants were asked to complete simple questionnaire composed of six questions referring to their life standard, infrastructure, multiethnic disputes and the role of international organizations.

## 2. GENERAL PART

This part aimed to obtain general information on the village. The opinions of the participants regarding the life quality in their surrounding i.e. Preljubiste. Also its purpose was to gather data on the economic situation, perspectives for future economic development, village demography (participants' occupation, population, ethnic structure), migration tendencies and ethnic tensions. Moreover, questions concerning infrastructure (roads, sewer and water supply system) and decentralization issues were raised. On the first question *How would you describe the life in your municipality/village?* The opinions of the participants vary from very bad to median, focusing on the unemployment:

- "Very bad"
- "So-so"
- "Demoralizing unemployment rate "
- "There are more unemployed then pension holders"
- "Low wages" (average monthly wage is between 4-5000 den/ 65-80 €)
- "Isolation from big events, universities, cultural events etc."
- "Interference of the political parties"

In the second question participants were asked *Which are the basic economic sectors in the village?* Agriculture is primal occupation of the population, although due to the insufficient wholesale the profit rate is very low. It was stressed that agriculture is imposed as a vital economic sector because there are no other production facilities in the region to stimulate employment. Small part of the population is employed in the nearby textile factories and in the factory for heavy industry "Silmak". Very few people (around 13) are working in the public administration (health care, education) because their places were "taken by the ethnic Albanians due to the obligations from the framework agreement".

The next questions focused on demography (population and ethnic structure). There are approximately 470 inhabitants out of which around 80% are Macedonians and the rest are Albanian and Roma population.

*Are you satisfied with the life conditions in your community?* There was unanimous respond that there is very high level of dissatisfaction.

- " The conditions can't be worst then this"
- "There are no entertainment and recreation facilities for our youth"
- "There is no library, no education centre (computers and foreign languages), game yards"
- "Water supply system is dysfunctional". Good water quality but occasional supply.
- "No cable TV"
- "No sewer network " This was emphasized as a major problem for the municipality.

On the questionnaire the participants gave expected answers correlating with the opinion expressed in the discussion afterwards. In the question "*To which extents are they satisfied with the life quality in the municipality?*" 5 available options were given:

1. Totally satisfied
2. Partly satisfied
3. "So - so"
4. Partly unsatisfied
5. Totally unsatisfied

40 % of the participants answered both that they are partly satisfied and that they are totally unsatisfied.

On the general question from the questionnaire *What is the main economic problem in your municipality?* 70% answered that it is unemployment.

The problems that are significantly decreasing the level of life quality are mainly of infrastructural nature and anticipated the next question *Which basic infrastructure problems your municipality faces?*

On the question regarding the regional transport network the participants pinpointed that after the 2001 conflict regular bus lines with Lesok, Tearce and Zilce were cancelled. Private transporters are covering only profitable roads (whereby there is need of workers transport) and mainly once in a day between 13-14 hour. In the further discussion they stressed the need for regular transport connection with Vratnica, Lesok and Zilce.

The next two questions evaluated the economical situation in the village- *How is the economical situation in your village and where do you see potential for economic development?*

- "From 1-5 I would grade the situation with 2"
- "The expenditures are very high, everything is expensive"
- "There is no way out of this situation"

Opinions stressed were also acknowledged from the answers in the questionnaire to the second question *"Grade (from 1/unsatisfied to 5/excellent) the quality of the infrastructure in your municipality?* The first option:

- A) roads- half of the respondents graded with 3
- B) water supply system- 50 % graded with 1 and the rest were disputing over the quality. However none gave 5.
- C) Medical institution- 60% think that this option deserves grade 3
- D) Educational institution – the results were even every grade was given by 25% of the participants

Asked about the potential and economic sectors that will provide development and progress several ideas were mentioned:

- "Agriculture is not an alternative"
- "Cattle farming"
- "Factory for milk products"
- "Textile production lines "(loan production)
- " The government should provide new jobs for us, we are paying taxes for this"

*Do you think that by migrating to other place your standard would be improved?* was the following question. As output from this discussion we detected high level of willingness towards emigration. Although few participants hesitated on this question, bigger cities in Macedonia (preferably Skopje and Tetovo) and leaving abroad were mentioned as final destinations:

- "I would instantly leave my village and settle down in Skopje"
- "I would like to stay here, where I am born"
- "If I had financial precondition I would leave immediately"
- " I would like to leave this place, there is no future form me nor for my children here"

The next question tended to analyze how much people are informed on the effects of the decentralization process, its advantages and disadvantages, their expectations and requirements. We have detected insufficient knowledge on this issues and distrust for the capacity of the local authorities, however various opinions were articulated. Questions were - *What is your opinion on the decentralization process* and *To which extent you are informed with the new law on local self government:*

- "If the decentralization is going to be implemented properly then we could expect some improvements"
- "The politicians will ruin everything at the end"
- " I'm not informed at all on this issue but lots of promises came out of the Pandora box and only hope left"
- "If there are strategies for economic development, maybe they will be helpful"
- " You can't be employed if you are not a member of a political party"
- " The reforms introduced in the new law will not change anything, we heed investments in new economic sectors"

The data gathered from the questionnaire on "*What is your opinion on the new law for local self government (decentralization)?*" showed that 70% pf the respondents have no opinion on this issue. Available answers were"

1. Positive (it will improve our lives)
2. Negative (it will worsen our lives)
3. No opinion

### 3. MULTIETHNIC RELATIONS

The third part tended to locate the participants attitudes towards issues of multiethnic coexistence, common values, communication problems in everyday life that they are facing. Also question on the 2001 conflict were being raised concerning prerequisites for normalization of the relations, whether the conflict distorted mutual trust and cooperation between ethnic communities etc. This part was used as a introduction and initiation of discussion for problems with the education (part 4) in the municipality which were generating ethnic tensions.

On the first question in this part *What is the level of communication between ethnic communities in your village (region) we got contradictory answers varying from very bad to normal? Considering the fact that the majority (more then 80%) are Macedonians we received the following answers:*

- "Very weak communication with Albanians"
- "The communication was normal before the conflict, during the war it was interrupted and after that it is normal again"
- "It depends"
- "There are trends of normalization".

Communication between different ethnicities is conditioned by the two factors:

- Whether they are neighbors
  - Whether the conversation inevitable
- 
- "My neighbor is Albanian I must communicate whether I like it or not"
  - "I'm medical nurse and I work in the regional hospital my communication with different ethnicities is on daily bases and I don't have any problems, although it was decreased during the conflict period ".

*Currently, are there any particular disputes on certain issues between ethnic communities in the region?*

Mainly there were no disputes over any question concerning problems of the village. This is because all ethnic communities are equally participating in the decision making process as the president of local community stressed out. It must be noted that the participants from Albanian ethnic background left the discussion earlier and it was not possible to hear their opinion.

*Where do you locate the reasons for multiethnic differences on particular questions in your community?* This next question was conditioned with affirmative answers to the previous one, therefore it was not an issue for discussion.

*According to you, in what extent did you overcome the mistrust produced by the conflict in 2001?*

This village was not directly influenced by the conflict in 2001. There were no particular warfare activities and there was damage on the infrastructure and other facilities. As it was noted earlier the mistrust in the village is normalising, but the level of trust is very low regarding neighbouring villages with majority of Albanian population.

Asked whether individual interest are influencing multiethnic relations the group was unanimous that in within small sized village as Preljubiste is everybody knows each other. Therefore it is not possible someone to take advantage or manipulate multiethnic relations with others not knowing that.

Opinions noted during the discussion were acknowledged by the results from the questionnaire.

*Grade the multiethnic relation in your municipality (from 1 to 5)*

Significant 40 % graded the multiethnic relation with the highest grade 5 while only 20% gave 1.

#### 4. EDUCATION

This part inspected psychography of the group regarding preconditions for returning of the pupils in their previous school in Shemshovo, as major problem in the region and as an event that received significant publicity. The levels of satisfaction from current resolutions, quality of the lessons etc. were other topics of discussion.

*Where you children attend classes?*

Before the conflict they have studied in Shemshovo. Now there is organized transport to Jegunovce where they were transferred after the conflict. Students from first to fourth grade study in Jegunovce and the others from fifth to eighth grade attend lectures in Zilce.

*Are you satisfied with the condition and if not from what in particular?*

- "They are safer now than they were in Shemsovo"
- "They must travel longer to school but it is price worth paying."
- "We are generally satisfied"
- "Children need gym or a football court to practice sports."

*Where do you locate the reasons for the events in Shemshovo?*

- "They firstly changed the name from Dame Gruev to Jumni Junuzi".
- "Junuzi is not Macedonian hero , he was fascist and balist".
- "He also was teacher here but his background is rather disputable"
- "The problem occurred because the name was changed irregularly and violently the responsible institutions were ignored"

"Because of the political pressure they reached compromise and changed the name of the school again in to Shemshovo which was acceptable both for the Macedonians and the Albanians. Afterwards the Albanian community have build monument of Junuzi in the Scholl yard that provoked the other side. After the visit

of the minister for education it was agreed that the monument should be dislocated from the schoolyard but only 5 meters away. The lessons due to these events were prolonged for a long period of time and on the first day of the school year fight broke up. Macedonian students were withdrawn from the classes and transferred into nearby schools."

- "Macedonian children were always attacked by the Albanian students"
- "We were traveling to school with fear"
- "The problem is in local and state authorities that are manipulating the situation"

*Do you think retrieval of the Macedonian students in Shemshovo will solve the current problems that they are facing (long travel, exhaustion, inappropriate conditions for study etc.)?*

- "Students don't need retrieval?"
- "They are fine where they are?"
- "For us Shemshovo case is closed"
- "The conditions for attending lectures in Jegunovce are much better"
- "They are feeling insecure in Shemshovo"

*Do you think that by retrieval of Macedonian students in Shemshovo inter human relations between both communities will be improved?*

- "Older people in Shemshovo (ethnic Albanians) are teaching their grandchildren to hate Macedonian children."
- "This will not make any changes"
- "State authorities can not guarantee our security and protection"
- "The principal of the school in Shemshovo stated that he can not guarantee anything"

## **5. RECOMMENDATION OF LOCAL PROBLEMS RESOLUTION**

The last part analyzed the potential of the municipality for solving infrastructural problems. In addition participants were asked whether international organization

are helping the communities, whether there is need for any projects financed by international organizations, modules for solving the problems.

*Is there any need for assistance by international organization in solving your local problems?*

- "They are more than welcome"
- "They have already helped in numerous ways: there was restoration of the schools, they have constructed water supply system"
- "Due to lack of public investments by the state financial help by foreign donators is a necessity."

*To which extent they would contribute in facilitating the tensions?*

- "Sewer system is urgent infrastructural problems"
- "By solving infrastructural problems our living standard will be significantly improved, consequently people will defocus from the ethnic question"

The last question from the questionnaire addressed the role of international organizations in the municipality.

None of the respondents answered negative. The answers were divided i.e. 50 % answered positive (they contribute to the improvement of the life in our municipality) and 50 % answered that they have no opinion on this issue.

## **FOCUS GROUP REPORT- VILLAGE OF SIRICINO**

Location: Siricino  
Date and time: 03.04.2005 (19.00pm - 21.00pm)  
Moderator: Gorast Stojmenovski - IDSCS  
Co-moderator: Miša Popović - IDSCS  
Number of participants: 11

The focus group discussion was organized in five phases:

6. Introduction
7. General part
8. Multiethnic relations
9. Education
10. Recommendation for local problems resolution

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The first part of the discussion referred to the personal introduction of the people participating in the focus group (their names, professions etc.). The moderator explained the project goals, background of the organizations involved and the relevance of the opinions that will be given in the further discussion. In every focus group before opening the group discussion, participants were asked to complete simple questionnaire composed of six questions referring to their life standard, infrastructure, multiethnic disputes and the role of international organizations.

### **2. GENERAL PART**

The general part of the discussion was aimed to obtain general information on life in the village of Siricino. The purpose was to gather information about the

participants' occupation, their perception of the quality of life in the village, the economic situation and the possibilities of economic development. Other issues talked about in this phase were those of demography, such as population number and ethnic structure. In addition to this part, there was a focus on questions of infrastructure (roads, traffic communication, sewer, water supply system and medical facilities) and the decentralization process.

The first question brought up on the focus group was: *How would you describe the life in your municipality/village?*

The opinions of the participants varied from bad to median. The main focus was on the financial difficulties they are facing and how this results in the everyday life. The large scale of unemployment and the difficulties earning from farming tend to reflect on other areas of everyday life resulting in bad image for the life conditions.

- “The life is hard”
- “We work the whole day and there is no survival”
- “These times are very difficult for us”

The second question was: *Which are the basic economic sectors in the village?*

The participants explained that the main occupation of the village was farming. According to them, they are forced to be farmers since they lost their previous employment.

- Farming
- Some work / used to work in Silmak

The next questions focused on *demography (population and ethnic structure)*.

There are approximately 530 inhabitants and all of them are Macedonians.

*Are you satisfied with the life conditions in your community?* On this question there were a lot of answers portraying the life as difficult with hard living conditions. This results with a very high level of dissatisfaction. Among the many, there was an emphasis on the unemployment and the limited opportunities for pursuing a decent living. On the questionnaire given to the respondents

before the FGI, regarding the question *“To which extent are you satisfied with the life quality in the municipality?”* 36.4% of the participants labeled it as *“totally unsatisfied”*, with a same number choosing the *“so, so”* alternative.

The next questions aimed in gathering opinions about the state of the present infrastructure in the village and in the nearby area. The given responses described the situation as being problematic since several aspects of the infrastructure were seen in an improper state. Although the participants felt that they were satisfied with the connections to other villages in the area, many of them described the road condition as being bad. At the same time, the bad condition of the sewage system and the lack of primary medical care result in dissatisfaction. Among the others, the vulnerability of flooding was seen as one of the infrastructural problems.

- “The roads are very bad”
- “The water supply is good, but the sewage creates serious problems”
- “There is no primary medical care”
- “The river of Vardar can inflict some damage”
- “Our village is well connected in general”
- “The geographical position of the village is excellent, but the condition of the roads is bad. They are ruined”
- “Since we are well connected with the other villages, we think that there is no need for broadening the traffic network”

On the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to rate the infrastructure from 1 to 5 (with 5 being the highest). The overall grade was 2. The majority rated the roads with 2; water supply with 3; medical facilities with 2; educational institutions with 2.

The next questions evaluated the economic situation in the village - *How is the economical situation in your village and where do you see potential for economic development?* Two points were made. First of all, they expressed a view that the situation is difficult due to the current large number of unemployed. Their view of

“Silmak” is that it is very important and the survival depends of the prosperity of the factory. At the same time, there was a present fear of the inter-ethnic relations reflecting on the economical situation of the Macedonians since the Albanians are viewed as owning numerous businesses in the area. Their opinion is that the Albanians are not interested in hiring Macedonians, and as they will broaden their business it would have negative implication on the current, already poor number of employed Macedonians. The participants view the industry, as a potential for economic development, mostly in opening production facilities and foreign small and medium enterprises.

- “The survival of the Macedonians is in question. And the perspective also”
- “The Albanians own all the business”
- “Where will our children be employed”
- “Because of obscure future people don’t get married any more”
- “New production facilities should be opened”
- “Foreign small and medium enterprises”

The results from the questionnaire follow the opinions in the FGI, with a vast majority 72% pointing to the unemployment as a single most important issue.

In addition to this the participants were asked: *How would the resolution of the economic problems reflect on the inter-ethnic relations?* Apart from one participant, there was a prevailing skepticism concerning the issue. The overall response was that it would not change the situation significantly.

- “If we find jobs we wouldn’t have any time to be busy with the ethnic issues”
- “We have to find employment “
- “We feel like a minority, like unprivileged citizens”
- “The Albanians should lend their hand”

When the participants were asked if they thought that it would be better for them if they migrate, the answers were negative. Although the condition was described as bad, the respondents explained their position from two aspects. Some,

because they were feeling pessimistic about the possibility of a better life anywhere in the state, while the others stated that they would not like to move since they felt connected to their place of birth.

At the end of the first part, the respondents were asked questions about the processes of decentralization and its legal background. There was a general statement that they were not well informed and did not know what those processes would bring. This was also suggested in the questionnaire with 54,4% saying that they have no opinion on the new law of decentralization.

### **3. INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS**

The third part aimed at gathering information about issues of multi-ethnic coexistence, communication problems and questions about consequences of the 2001 crisis. At the end of the third session questions about normalization of relations and starting a dialogue were also asked in order to locate the perception on the prerequisites for initiating a discussion.

On the questionnaire the respondents rated the inter-ethnic relations as bad, with 36.4% choosing the grade 2 and the same number chose the grade 3.

The first two questions in this part aimed to evaluate the level of communication among the different ethnic communities and to point out some disputes that are related to the inter-ethnic relations. At the beginning, it was pointed out that the level of communication is low, or that was decreasing. The situation before the conflict was described as better than the present but the overall issue was being portrayed as problematic, since there has always been this division between the two ethnic groups. The main problems and disputes related to the ethnic relations were located in the lack of confidence in the Albanian community. It seems that all the other disputes are emerging for that reason. Among the others, the problem with Macedonian pupils in Shemshovo was mentioned, together with several everyday problems caused by the ethnic related tensions.

- “The level of communication is decreasing rapidly”
- “It was better before the conflict”
- “There has always been different ethnic identity in the area”
- “The general problem is the lack of confidence in the Albanians”
- “The problem of Macedonian pupils attending the school in Shemshovo”
- “The Albanian children are not well mannered, they often curse when they see Macedonians”
- “They are shooting with fire arms on festivities. The ricochet bullet does not chose the victim and can hurt anyone”

*According to you, how much is the suspicion generated by the conflict in 2001 surpassed?* On this question, the responses described the situation as unimproved. The feeling of uncertainty prevails and reflects on the opinions, shaping them into suspicion and fear. The prevailing image is that of being unwelcome in the area, and the dissatisfaction rises when the lack of police service and protection is taken into consideration.

- “The confidence between the two ethnic groups hasn’t improved”
- “The police aren’t doing their job. They don’t provide security”

On the question about involvements of personal interests into the inter-ethnic relations, there were many responses putting the Albanian interests into focus.

- “There are no personal interests, there are only strategic interests”
- “We see personal interests of the Albanians”

The last question in this part was about the possibilities of establishing a dialogue that would enable resolution of the ethnic related disputes. The answers were affirmative, with an emphasis of the condition of equality in negotiation and more important – in the everyday life. Putting some intensity in interaction was also mentioned as a good starting point.

- “Yes, we are ready to talk with them on every issue”

- “We are ready to discuss if the problem with the pupils is resolved. The children should be friends. The Albanian children should come in Macedonian villages, in order to build friendship and trust”
- “Yes. If we discuss as equals”
- “The Albanian parents should teach their children some manners”
- “If we are economically safe we will start a dialogue”
- “Even if there are no conflicts, if there is no employment there would still be some problems”

#### **4. EDUCATION**

The part of the education was meant to analyze the local perspective of the problem. This part inspected psychography of the group regarding preconditions for returning of the pupils in their previous school in Shemshovo, as major problem in the region and as an event that received significant publicity. The levels of satisfaction from current resolutions, quality of the lessons etc. were other topics of discussion.

The pupils from Siricino attend classes in the school in Jegunovce.

The second question in this part asked the respondents to evaluate the educational conditions in the school. The given answers did not portray the technical conditions as bad, except for the note that there is no gym. In spite of that, the respondents addressed the corruption in the school as the biggest problem.

- “The conditions in the school are decent. Our children have everything that they need, but the corruption is very present. The teachers and the director are asking for gifts and favors.”
- “They have no gym in Jegunovce”

When the respondents were asked to locate the reasons for the events in the school in Shemshovo, the answers were grouped in two statements. The first one was that the suspicion and uncertainty were the biggest reasons for the events, while some participant suspected that there might have been some personal interests. All in all there was a conclusion that the Government's reaction was inappropriate.

- “This problem should have been solved by the Government much earlier”

On the questions: *Do you think that with the return of the Macedonian pupils to the school in Shemshovo, the current problems and difficulties of the children would be resolved?* and *What are the necessary conditions in which the pupils would return?* The main response was that it is far more easier for the pupils to go to school in Shemshovo, but they felt that there is no safety guarantee and saw it as the most important precondition for the eventual return.

- “Yes it would be much easier for the pupils to study in Shemshovo than any were else, but only if they are safe there”
- “The biggest losers were the children losing a big and important part of their education”
- “After the conflict, it is very difficult for us to decide and sent our children back to Shemshovo”

When the respondents were asked about the effect of the eventual return of the pupils on the entire human relations between the two communities, the answers were optimistic. They emphasized the importance of communication between the younger generations as a necessity for a long-term resolution of the issues.

- “Yes we think it will”
- “The school connected the Macedonians and Albanians in a certain way. The previous generations knew each other because of that school resulting in mutual respect. The younger generations know each other much less. It is far more easier to create a dispute between them”

## 5. RECOMMENDATION OF RESOLUTION OF LOCAL PROBLEMS

The last part intended to detect the role of the international organizations working presently in the region as well as the different ways of support that they are and should be providing. In addition, participants were asked about their views on the future and the future of the municipality in general.

The purpose of these questions was to help and assist the participants in finding a solution to their problems.

On the pre-FDI questionnaire, the majority 54% of the participants described the role of international organizations working in the area as positive.

There was no clear advice in what should the international organizations do in the community, but any help was regarded as welcome. But, all responses never failed to mention the difficult economic situation and the need of solution. Among the different opinions there were suggestions about organizing mutual activities with the Albanians and mediation sessions. There were also advices in providing help in order to facilitate the communication between the different ethnic communities.

- “Studying of a common language in purpose of improving communication even if the language would be a foreign one “
- One participant said that she regards the knowledge of Albanian language as a way of improving the inter-ethnic relations (they would better understand the Albanians then). Her opinion was opposed by the majority of participants

## **FOCUS GROUP REPORT – VILLAGE OF KOPANCE**

Location:	Kopance, Municipality of Jegunovce
Date and time:	09.04.2005 (19.00pm – 21.00pm)
Moderator:	Bashkim Bakiu
Co-moderator:	Artan Krivenjeva
Number of participants:	9
Structure of the group:	Five unemployed, member of the village council, construction worker, school employee. They are all parents.

The focus group discussion was organized in five phases:

1. Introduction
2. General part
3. Multiethnic relation
4. Education
5. Recommendation for local problems resolution

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the first part we made an introduction, and we asked them to do a personal introduction (names, professions etc.). We informed them with the purpose of our visit and explained the relevance of the answers we expect from them in order to have a clear view with the life conditions in their village and problems they are facing in their community. Every one was asked to answer a simple questionnaire concerning life standard, infrastructure, multiethnic disputes, and the role of international organization.

## 2. GENERAL PART

This part aimed to collect more information on the village in general, on the economic situation, living conditions in their municipality, ethnic structure, migration and ethnic tensions. The biggest problem that they were facing was unemployment, migration due to bad life standard, infrastructure, mishandling the donations given for their village etc. On the first question *how would you describe the life in you municipality?* There was a unanimous respond that the life in their village is very bad due to:

- “High rate of unemployment”
- “Bad communication,”
- “The local ambulance is far from the village, during winter we have difficulties getting there”
- “Lack of local transportation”
- “Lack of investment in their village from state institutions and international organization”

On the next question the participants were asked - *Which are the basic economic sectors in the village?* Most of the villager’s occupation is agriculture, even though they have low profit from their work. Some of them are construction workers, and it was stressed out many times, that most of them are unemployed and as a result many of them have migrated to third country. They think, “This would have not happened if the factories that are in their municipality had employed more Albanians”.

The third question focused on demography (population and ethnic structure). There are 1150 inhabitants out of whom 73% are Albanians and the rest are Macedonians.

*Are you satisfied with the life conditions in your community?* All of them responded that the living conditions are unsatisfactory. The opinions of the participants vary from no conditions to median.

- “There is not a single economical facility that can offer prosperity for us”

- “This municipality will not exist”
- “Lack of professional staff in the local administration”
- “Lack of investments”
- “There is no playground for the children”

*Which basic infrastructure problems your municipality faces?* All of the participants said that most of the problems are as a result of the bad infrastructure in their village.

- “The roads are in a very bad condition”
- “Problem with the electricity supply”
- “The water supply system is not functioning in our village and in Tudence for four years now. Bad quality of the water.”
- “The municipality is responsible for this problem.”
- “No sewers network – one of the biggest problem that the villages are facing”

Asked about the need for regional transportation, the participants said that local transportation is not functioning, even though the need for transportation within the municipality and outside of municipality is high.

*In the next question participants were asked about the economical situation in their village?* It was pointed out that the economic situation is very bad and as a result many youngsters from the village have migrated to third countries. Another reason they see is the double standard in the society imposed by the Macedonians in the government:

- Every one wants to work
- From 20 policeman only 2 are Albanians
- From 40 workers in Silmak only 4 are Albanians
- If the president of the municipality was Albanian, there would be more Albanians employed in Silmak factory
- Working for private firm with no social security is not a solution

*How will the solution of economic problems reflect on interethnic relation?* There was unanimous respond that ethnic tensions wouldn't be so high:

- Poverty causes conflict
- If I'm economically strong I will not have any thing to worry about
- We all want to have better life conditions

*Do you think that by migrating to other places your life standard would be improved?* We have detected high level of willingness toward emigration. They think that bigger cities can offer more to them and their family, as well as leaving to third countries. Most of them worked abroad since no body from their family is employed,

- Each family has one member abroad
- In the cities you have more chances getting employed
- If there would have been a firm opened, no one would have left the village

*What do you think about the process of decentralization?* We have detected that there is insufficient knowledge on this issue: what are the benefits from this process. Asked about the new law on local self-government:

- They all said that nobody has informed them with the process of decentralization
- The local government has more responsibility
- The unemployment causes many problems, so we can't feel benefits from this new law
- We don't have high expectations
- Our village is going to be neglected as in the past

## **MULTIETHNIC RELATIONS**

In the third part of the discussion we wanted to find out about their attitude towards issues of interethnic relations, common values, communication problem in every day life etc. during this part of the discussion question on the 2001 conflict were raised.

On the question *what is the level of communication between ethnic communities in your village (region)* we got positive answer:

- The relations are same as ever and improving
- Even during the conflict we communicated regularly
- Its not the same as before the conflict but its all right

Currently, are there any particular disputes on certain issues between ethnic communities in the region?

No we don't have any kind of problem considering the regular communication between us. Even during the conflict we didn't have lots of disputes considering the situation back than.

In order to resolve the problems at that time we formed a body (council) from members of our village (Albanians and Macedonians). The role of this body was to resolve problems that occurred during that time. We came to an agreement that problems from other nearby villages will not be used from any one for worsening the situation. Now the body is not functioning.

As mentioned before the biggest problem is unemployment, which causes problem in the municipality, and the way of employment of new workers, only because they belong to one ethnic group causes distrust.

*Where do you locate the reasons for multiethnic differences on particular questions in your community?* Most of them locate the problem to nationalism. We are not asked about anything. The majority of the council is Macedonian.

*According to you, in what extent did you overcome the mistrust produced by the conflict in 2001?*

Every one said that the mistrust has begun to decline from the period of the conflict and it's in a good way of normalizing:

- Dialogue has no alternative
- There are cases during floods, fires; Macedonians and Albanians have helped each other.

- There is no ethnically clean state

*How do individual interests influence the interethnic relations?*

They said that there are individuals that want to have some kind of profit by causing problems in interethnic relation. This served for continuing the discussion for the part that had to do with education.

- Problem caused in Shemshovo
- 5 – 6 persons caused this problem

## **EDUCATION**

This part of the discussion had the purpose to see their opinion regarding the problem in Shemshovo and the preconditions for returning the pupils in their school.

*Where do you children attend school?*

Students from first till fourth grade attend school in the local school in the village and from fifth till eighth in Shemshovo.

*Are you satisfied with the conditions and if not from what in particular?*

Every one expressed that the conditions in their local school are not satisfactory or some said that the conditions are very bad (local school in Kopanica).

- “The toilets in our school are in worst condition then ever.”
- The conditions during winter are difficult due to the distance from the village.

*Where do you locate the reasons for the events in Shemshovo?*

After naming the school in Jumni Junuzi the Macedonians protested so that they would change the name. Together with the name there was a monument of Jonuzi build in front of the school. “We reached an agreement to dislocate the monument in the schoolyard and change the name to Shemshovo Central

School. Another request was made now; the Macedonians came to a request to build a wall that will separate the monument from the school. They were continually demanding requests so they wouldn't let their children back in Shemshovo. It was unanimous respond from every one that Macedonians don't want to let their children back to the school.

- Their plan is to build a new school in another Macedonian village (Zhilce, Ratae or Jegunovce)."
- The president of the municipality together with the village community of Tudence have initiated the problem in Shemshovo
- They are always finding reasons for stopping the retrieval of the students
- Even if all conditions are meet, they will not leave their children back to that school
- Nobody until now has done any harm to the Macedonian children
- "Baci" interfered only to defend the name of the school. He never interfered in other problems. He never wanted to stop the children from attending the school.
- One part of Macedonians wants their children to attend school back in Shemshovo but are afraid to admit. They fear from the respond they may get.
- Persons from other villages have interests for their businesses.

*Do you think that by retrieval of Macedonian students in Shemshovo inter human relation will improve?*

It was unanimously responded that inter human relations will get better. They will improve.

*What are necessary precondition for retrieval of children in the school?* There aren't any preconditions for the retrieval of the students. They are free to come back whenever they want.

- Only they can tell what the preconditions are
- Building of the new gym can be a good reason for retrieval.

## RECOMMENDATION OF LOCAL PROBLEMS RESOLUTION

This part has to do with the potential of the municipality for solving infrastructure problems. They were asked whether international organization have helped them in resolving these problems and if there is a need for financing projects in their municipality

*Is there any need for assistance by international organization in solving your local problems?*

All of them unanimously responded that in the past most of the financial aid was manipulated from individuals that were in charge of managing projects in their village.

- Yes, its welcomed but not like in the past
- From 20.000 Euro only 2000 were used for repairmen's in the local school (Kopanica). There is no significant repairmen's made in the school.
- The money was stolen
- We have never been asked about anything.
- The water supply system is not functioning because of the manipulations with the funds
- Money didn't come to the village community.
- They also mentioned that other villages are declaring as multiethnic so that their project would be financed. They gave some ideas so that the donation would be used in a good way:
- To form a body (council) which will have the job to supervise the donations given for different projects in the village.
- Also many Macedonian villages have declared that are multiethnic, just to be financing projects in their village (Tudence was mentioned)

*To what extend they would contribute in lowing the tensions?*

- Tensions will get higher if there are manipulations with the funds
- To improve the water supply system as an urgent problem
- Investments are needed in opening new jobs

*Where do you see the future of your children and the municipality in general?*

Most of them were skeptical about this issue. They think that there is no future for their child, that's why most of the youngsters go abroad. Those that will continue their education will have problems finding a job.

- I'm afraid about the future of my children, the state is not functioning, the law are not respected, corruption
- If you have faculty diploma you cant get a job
- A Macedonian with high school education was appointed director of a firm even though there was an Albanian with university degree that applied for the job (SILMAK).

## **FOCUS GROUP – VILLAGE OF TUDENCE**

Location:	Tudence, Jegunovce municipality
Date and time:	09/04/2005 from 19.20-21.00
Moderator:	Vladimir Misev -IDSCS
Co- moderator:	Marko Trosanovski-IDSCS
Number of participants:	13
Participants structure:	farmer, 4 machinists, shoemaker, one employee in Silmak, economic technician, 3 employees in the textile factory "Teteks", housewife, retailer.

The focus group discussion was organized in five phases:

1. Introduction
2. General part
3. Multiethnic relations
4. Education
5. Recommendation for local problems resolution

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The first part of the discussion referred to the personal introduction of the people participating in the focus group (their names, professions etc.). The moderator explained the project goals, background of the organizations involved and the relevance of the opinions that will be given in the further discussion. In every focus group before opening the group discussion, participants were asked to complete simple questionnaire composed of six questions referring to their life standard, infrastructure, multiethnic disputes and the role of international organizations.

## 2. GENERAL PART

The first question from the second part was *How would you describe in one word the life in your municipality?* The answers were:

- "It depends whether you are employed or not"
- "The government is very ignorant towards employment"
- "Life standard is average"
- "Poorly"
- "There are neither entertainment facilities, nor library"
- "Basic rights of the women are endangered"

The second question referred to the vital economic sectors of the village". Mainly economic activities are centered towards agriculture. Despite this, few people are engaged in cattle farming (cows in particular) although this is not profitable due to very low price of the milk. Few people are employed in regional textile factory "Teteks" but amount of the wages is extremely dissatisfactory (around 55€ per month). Several households are also involved in bees breeding and honey production.

The ethnic structure in the village is very homogeneous. There are around 450 inhabitants with Macedonian ethnic origin.

Every village is facing problems with infrastructure. Asked *what are the basic infrastructural problems in their village/municipality?* the participants attitudes towards this issue were undisputed.

- "The biggest problem is the lack of sewer system."
- "There is neither organized litter disposal, nor appropriate facility"
- "The school building will fall apart without donations"
- "Maintenance of the local roads is dissatisfactory, they are not functional during the winter period due to high snow falls"
- "Urgent need for canalization of Vardar river valley due to frequent flows which are devastating the arable areas."

The next question tended to locate the problems with the road communication network between the villages in the municipality as well as with the near cities (Skopje and Tetovo).

- "The transport collapsed after the conflict"
- "There are only ten private transport vans in the municipality. Because of this the public transport company canceled the regular lines with the villages."
- "Every village has its own transport van"

Regarding this question there was extensive discussion that can be summarised in the following conclusion. Because of the strong competition private transport van from one village is not allowed to take passengers from other villages. This makes this segment of the transport market very unprofitable. Often, there are physical conflicts between drivers. This situation produced very reduced transport schedule, therefore the communication with other villages is very limited. Although, the village of Jegunovce is municipal center and frequent communication is vital for the people in Tudence, they are complaining that there are only two vans per day. The first one is at 13.30 and the other in 01.30, but this are mainly for the workers in "Silmak" factory located in Jegunovce.

Anticipating the next question referring to which place is a priority regarding more frequent transport connection the overall demand focuses on the municipal center of Jegunovce. There is 18 km distance from Tudence to Tetovo and this is the second graded priority, since if there is a urgent need to travel to Tetovo (medical reasons for example) people can only prop on their cars (if they have one).

Next question were focusing both on the economic situation in the village and in the region, tending to pinpoint concrete proposals and projects that will improve the living standard. The questions were *How is the economic situation in your surrounding?* and *Eventually, are there any chances for economic development in your municipality?*. The participants gave very specific answers:

- "There are several underutilized facilities in the village, that can as a initial capital for starting new business.
- "Small production lines for textile confection can contribute to the improvement of the economical situation, more over there are infrastructural and human resources available: underutilized facilities and skilled work force."
- "Small factories for processing of agricultural products, honey, potatoes, and pepper."
- " There is sufficient quantity of milk that can be processed in various milk products."

*Do you think that by migrating from the village your economic standard will be improved?*

There were no migration tendencies noted. This was not a consequence of the high satisfaction from the current situation, but rather disbelieve that by migrating they will change something.

- "Nothing will change If we stay here or we migrate abroad ."

*What is your opinion on the decentralization process (expectations, needs etc.)?*

- "If they implement 50 % of what they have promised it is going to be all right."
- "There will be more efficient redistribution of the income from taxes".
- "We need local e-governance in order to facilitate the administrative procedures".
- "Although the major will have competencies to decide on the executive officers in the public institutions (schools for example), he will be strongly influenced by the political parties. Again it wont be a matter of personal qualifications, but a political fare".

Although there were some very particular proposal and competent expectations from the process of decentralization the participants very little informed on the new law for local self-government.

### 3. MULTIETHNIC RELATIONS

The third part tended to locate the participants attitudes towards issues of multiethnic coexistence, common values, communication problems in everyday life that they are facing. Also questions on the 2001 conflict were being raised concerning prerequisites for normalization of the relations, whether the conflict distorted mutual trust and cooperation between ethnic communities etc. This part was used as a introduction and initiation of discussion for problems with the education (part 4) in the municipality which were generating ethnic tensions.

The first question of this part was *What is the level of communication between ethnic communities in your village (region)?*

Considering the fact that 100% of the population in the village is with Macedonian ethnic origin there are no communication obstacles within the village. From another side regarding the level of communication with the neighboring villages they declared themselves as very isolated. Older generations with different ethnic background are communicating more or less, but youth is very ethnically divided.

- "I have old Albanian friends from Shemshovo, we use to go together in elementary school"
- "It is much different with the young generations, they are not used to interact between themselves."
- "The children were the main reasons we were communicating with the Albanian neighbours from Shemshovo, now when they are studying in Jegunovce there is no need for communication".

*Currently, are there any particular disputes on certain issues between ethnic communities in the region?*

Mainly there were no disputes over any question concerning problems of the village. This is because the village is ethnically homogeneous. This excluded the

next question since it was conditioned with affirmative answer on the previous one.

*According to you, in what extent did you overcome the mistrust produced by the conflict in 2001?*

The discussants stressed that interethnic mistrust and cooperation were restored after the conflict particularly in the field of cattle and agricultural products exchange.

- "It is not as it was"
- "In general it is back in normal"

#### **4. EDUCATION**

*Where you children attend classes?*

The student use to attend lectures in the primary school in Shemshovo. That was before the conflict. After the disputes that have derived from the problems with the name of the school, physical confrontation between the students etc. those with Macedonian ethnic background were withdrawn from Shemshovo and transferred in Jegunovce primary school. Now they are attending lectures there.

*Are you satisfied with the conditions and if not from what in particular?*

Opinions in this part of the debate were undivided and they referred on the quality of the teaching staff, available school facilities, security and transport issues etc. In addition debate was being raised on whether the school in Shemshovo is better alternative then the one in Jegunovce and are there any dispositions for returning of the students.

The transport was emphasized as the biggest problem. Students must wake up very early in order to catch up with the schedule of the private vans. Afterwards they are not capable for nothing they are too much exhausted.

- " One additional transport van or school bus is needed"
- " Classes schedule is very inaccurate and unorganized and this is a very big problem for our children."

- "Teaching staff and the lectures are of high quality."
- "Bus tickets are very expensive"

There was only exemption from the discussion on the quality of education and that are the information science and foreign languages. Although there are several computers available as a donation in the school in Jegunovce , due to the lack of skilled teaching staff there are neither IT lectures nor lectures in foreign languages. These problems are considered as a priority since they are necessity for shaping academic profiles of students, competitive on the modern labor market. Aside demand for this teaching staff, additional four computers are needed according to the focus group participants.

The next question intention was to locate the reasons for the problems that occurred in Shemshovo. Therefore the following question was set on for discussion. *Where do you locate the reasons for the events in Shemshovo?*

- "The problem is in the conflict that lasted more then three months and at the end it is a matter of personal security of the children."
- "The parents from the villages within the municipality (Preljubishte, Sirichino and Tudence) won't let their children to study in Shemshovo again."
- "The children have already adjusted on the condition in Jegunovce, they don't regret leaving Shemshovo and they wont come back" (This was also acknowledged by the children that were present on the discussion).
- "The government officials didn't had the capacity to solve the problem"
- "Before the conflict there were tensions as well, but now it is very dangerous and even the police can not guarantee security."
- "When we don't have security there are no prerequisites for further interaction".

The next two questions were:

*Do you think that the retrieval of the Macedonian students in Shemshovo will solve the current problems that they are facing (long travel, exhaustion, inappropriate conditions for study etc.)?*

*Do you think that by retrieval of Macedonian students in Shemshovo inter human relations between both communities will be improved?*

Summarizing the discussion on this issues unanimous attitude towards retrieval was stressed. There are no chances that Macedonian students will return in Shemshovo. Therefore retrieval can not be a basic for restoration of dialog and communication between the two ethnic communities.

## **6. RECOMMENDATION FOR LOCAL PROBLEMS RESOLUTION**

This part was focused on the role of international organizations, the perception of the local population of their activities and the modalities in which they can contribute to the improvement of the situation in general.

*Is there any need for assistance by international organization in solving your local problems?*

- "Foreign donations are welcomed, but only when they intervene with financial contribution, other wise they are not efficient."
- "We can solve interethnic relations only among ourselves, none international organization can do this for us."

Consequently, the participants said that international assistance should be focused mainly on infrastructural projects as well as creating new business opportunities.

The last question purpose was to analyze future plans and expectations of the participants in general.

*Where do you see the future of your children as well as your municipality?*

- "I would like to stay here but, migration seems like a good option in this conditions"
- "If there are job opportunities for the young people everybody would stay".

## FOCUS GROUP REPORT – VILLAGE OF OZORMISHTE

Location:	Ozormishte, Municipality of Zhelino
Date and time:	10.04.2005 (19.00pm – 21.00pm)
Moderator:	Bashkim Bakiu
Co-moderator:	Artan Krivenjeva
Number of participants:	9
	Structure of the group: four unemployed, president of the village council, merchandiser, school employee. They are all parents.

The focus group discussion was organized in five phases:

6. Introduction
7. General part
8. Multiethnic relation
9. Education
10. Recommendation for local problems resolution

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the first part we introduced our self, and asked them to do a personal introduction (names, professions etc.). We informed them with the purpose of our visit and explained the relevance of the answers we expect from them in order to have a clear view with the life conditions in their village and problems they are facing in their community. Every one was asked to answer a simple questioner concerning life standard, infrastructure, multiethnic disputes, and the role of international organization.

## 2. GENERAL PART

This part aimed to collect more information on the village in general, on the economic situation, living conditions in their municipality, ethnic structure, migration and ethnic tensions. Biggest problem that they were facing was unemployment, migration due to bad life standard, infrastructure, mishandling the donations given for their village etc. On the first question *how would you describe the life in your municipality?* Their responses vary from bad to medium:

- “Unemployment”
- There is no agriculture,”
- There are private firms that are opened in the village
- Many persons have gone abroad to find a job

On the next question the participants were asked - *Which are the basic economic sectors in the village?* Thirty percent of the villagers have private firms. Some of them are construction workers, and it was stressed out many times, there are a lot of persons that have left the village to work abroad because the village has never had help from the state in opening new jobs.

The third question focused on demography (population and ethnic structure). There are 730 inhabitants, all Albanians.

*Are you satisfied with the life conditions in your community?* All of them responded that the living conditions in the village are good, but in general they are not satisfied with the conditions in their municipality. The opinions of the participants vary from no conditions to median.

- The situation is bad considering the economic situation in the state
- “Water supply system needs to be built in our village
- “Lack of investments from the state in the local economy”
- “There is no entertainment facility for the children”

*Which basic infrastructure problems your municipality faces?* All of the participants said that most of the problems are as a result of the bad infrastructure in their village.

- “Water supply system is not functioning in our village. Bad quality of the water.
- “No Sewer network – as a global problem for our municipality and other.” This needs to be done in coordination with the municipality of Jegunovce as a result of the finances that are needed.
- Roads are in good condition

Asked about the need for regional transportation, the participants said that local transportation is not functioning, even though the need for transportation within the municipality and out is high.

*In the next question participants were asked about the economical situation in their village?* It was pointed out that the economic situation is bad even though 30% of the inhabitants work in private firms.

- Our fields are one of the most fruitful in this region
- The state has not invested in agriculture.
- Our municipality has been neglected from the state during the past
- There are no donations for economic development

*How will the solution of economic problems reflect on interethnic relation?* There was unanimous respond that ethnic tensions would decline:

- Cooperation is needed in order to have economic prosperity
- We cooperate with Macedonians through business

*Do you think that by migrating to other places your life standard would be improved?* Those that have private business don't think leaving their village. Those that are not employed have little option, that's why most of them go abroad,

- Each family has one member abroad

- If the state would have invested in our village they would have stayed here
- I will stay here where I was born

*What do you think about the process of decentralization?* We wanted to know their opinion for this process. We had contradictory answers. Some of them had positive opinion; others were worried with the new responsibilities that will be given. They were not satisfied with the financing of the municipalities. Asked about the new law on local self-government:

- Everything looks good on paper, but in reality its completely different
- Major problem is going to be the economic development of this municipality
- The new responsibilities in primary education and health care will be a problem to handle in the rural municipalities
- 3% of the value added tax and 1.3% of the personal income tax and other taxes are not nearly enough for financing primary education, health care and the municipality in general
- This will bring positive changes in our municipality
- Investments are needed in order to have a prosperous municipality.
- We will be closer to the municipality

## **MULTIETHNIC RELATION**

In the third part of the discussion we wanted to find out about their attitude towards issues of interethnic relations, common values, communication problem in every day life etc. during this part of the discussion question on the 2001 conflict were raised.

On the question *what is the level of communication between ethnic communities in your village (region):*

We only communicate through our representatives in the municipality.

- We don't have any communication with our neighbor villages

- Only when a problem occurs that's when we communicate with them (Shemshovo case)
- We don't have any problem with other villages (Macedonian) except during the conflict.
- A major problem during the conflict was the police check point out side our village. That caused distrust between Macedonians from Zhilce and us. The Police unit "Lavovi" was stationed there and was supported by them.
- Its not the same as before the conflict but its normalizing;

Currently, are there any particular disputes on certain issues between ethnic communities in the region? *They think that the only problem is the demand for building a new school in a Macedonian village. We have had meetings only when the problem occurred in the Central School in Shemshovo.*

- *Macedonians initiate problems when they want to achieve something. For example, the case in Siricino with the transport.*
- *We need to become more persistent in our demands as the Macedonians.*

Where do you locate the reasons for multiethnic differences on particular questions in your community?

- Macedonians from Zhilce and Ratae are more extreme than others.
- They are not used to share the local government with us.

*According to you, in what extent did you overcome the mistrust produced by the conflict in 2001?* Every one said that the mistrust has begun to decline from the period of the conflict, even though they don't trust Macedonians from Zhilce:

- We need to cooperate because only with dialogue we can resolve our differences
- There are cases during floods when we have to cooperate
- Our working fields are side by side
- We have never caused problems
- For sixty years there was no problem in this region

*How does individual interests influence interethnic relation?*

They said that there are individuals from Macedonian side that want to have some kind of profit by causing interethnic relation. They mentioned the group led by Zorica and the president of the municipality of Jegunovce:

- Problem caused in Shemshovo
- Their intention is to influence building a new school
- 5 – 6 persons caused this problem

## **EDUCATION**

This part of the discussion had the purpose to see their opinion regarding the problem in Shemshovo and the preconditions for returning the pupils in their school.

*Where do you children attend school?* Students from first till fourth grade attend school in the local school in the village and from fifth till eighth in Shemshovo.

*Are you satisfied with the conditions and if not from what in particular?*

Every one expressed that the conditions in their local school are very bad. The local school in the village is old and in very poor condition. It was said that the barrack where their children attend school was build in 1977 and had to be used only for 11 years. They are still attending school in the same building.

- The building is in a very bad condition
- Our children learn in combined classes (first and third class)
- Conditions in our school are not describable
- During winter time its very cold

*Where do you locate the reasons for the events in Shemshovo?*

The problem started naming the school Jumni Junuzi even though this was not the real reason. We reached a compromise to change the name in central school Shemshovo and we agreed to dislocate the monument. This was not enough for

them. Their intention was not to let in any way their children to continue education in that school. We didn't initiate the problem. The real reason for the problem in Shemshovo is the plan for building a new school in a Macedonian village, which will be financed by World Bank. It was said that the ministry of finances has chosen to prioritize the project for the new school from a list of project given by the village councils. They blame the ministry of finances for prioritizing this project when there are more important problems that need to be solved (sewer system, water supply system). A group led by Zorica was involved in this problem, which was also the president of the parent's council.

- In the past the school in Shemshovo was named with Albanian name. After wards it was changed in Dame Gruev.
- The school condition in Jegunovce are better then in Shemshovo
- Even if all conditions are meet, they will not leave their children back to that school
- "Baci" interfered only to defend the name of the school. He never interfered in other problems. He was used as a reason for not letting their children back to Shemshovo.
- It's fact that Macedonian children were attending school in Shemshovo till June 2002.
- Persons from other villages have interests for their businesses.
- The security of their children is guaranteed
- No body has harmed them in any possible way
- Jumni Junuzi was the first teacher in the village

*Do you think that by retrieval of Macedonian students in Shemshevo inter human relation will improve?* It was unanimously responded that inter human relations will get better. They will improve.

*What are necessary precondition for retrieval of children in the school?* There aren't any preconditions for the retrieval of the students.

- They are free to come back whenever they want
- They know that no one is going to harm their children

- Parents from Tudence and Siricino are willing to let their children back in Shemshovo but they are afraid of the reaction of others.

## **RECOMMENDATION OF LOCAL PROBLEMS RESOLUTION**

This part has to do with the potential of the municipality for solving infrastructure problems. They were asked whether international organization have helped them in resolving these problems and if there is a need for financing projects in their municipality

*Is there any need for assistance by international organization in solving your local problems?* All of them unanimously responded that there is need of donation from international organization. They have expressed their irritation since most of the international organizations have addressed their help in the Jegunovce municipality. There is a need for repairmen's in the local school.

- Yes, they are more then welcomed
- Better conditions in the school, better education
- We have never been asked about anything.
- International organizations are making discrimination because they are donating only in Macedonian village.
- International organization have to assure that the contractors wont manipulate donation given for repairman's or investments
- They finance projects only in Macedonian villages
- The water supply system is not functioning because of the manipulations with the funds
- Many Macedonian village have manipulated with international organization by declaring that they are multiethnic (case in Llukovice)

*To what extend they would contribute in lowing the tensions?*

- Tensions will be lower
- To improve the water supply system as an urgent problem
- Investments are needed in opening new jobs

*Where do you see the future of your children and the municipality in general?*

Most of them were skeptical about this issue. That's why most of the youngsters go abroad. They think that the future of their children depends from decentralization process, lack of educational facilities and other infrastructure, lack of investments.

- If the state invests here there is future for our children
- They think that it will be very difficult
- That depends from other factor
- Investments will initiate economy prosperity and better future for all
- Another problem they see at the combined classes. They think that most of the children are not showing good results as a result of this kind of classes.
- There is always a risk of going abroad as a result of no investments

## FOCUS GROUP REPORT – VILLAGE OF JEGUNOVCE

Location: Jegunovce  
Date and time: 10.04.2005 from 19.00-20.30  
Moderator: Trosanovski Marko  
Co-moderator: Misev Vladimir  
Number of participants: 13

On 10.04.2005 (Sunday) a focus group was held in the primary school in Jegunovce (village in the Tetovo region, municipality of Jegunovce). The room, in which the discussion took place, was adequate for conducting focus groups. The focus group entailed 13 participants. Nine of the participants were female and 4 were male persons. 11 participants were from Macedonian nationality and two were Roma. The discussion was good, without tensions and well moderated by the moderator. Before the start of the discussion the participants filled in a questionnaire with general question for the discussion.

There were several subjects of discussion:

- The economical situation and the unemployment in the village and the region
- The infrastructural problems
- The inter- ethnical relations
- The educational situation in the village
- The role of the international organizations in the improvement of the general situation

After the introduction of the moderator and the co-moderator, the discussion started with the questions about the general situation in the village. In this part of the discussion the economical situation in the village as well as the infrastructural problems were discussed.

## FIRST PART: GENERAL SITUATION

The first question was “*How would you describe the life in your municipality in one word?*” The participants were unanimous that they used to live better than now. They said that 10 years ago the quality of life has been on a higher level. They used to have cultural associations and life conditions in general were much better. They are hoping that with the restarting of Silmak (Jugohrom), life in general will be better. They also said that there is no perspective for the youngsters, because of the unemployment.

- 10 years ago we used to live better
- Today it is very hard to live here
- With the restarting of the Silmak factory there will be hope for us
- It is very hard for the young people here, they don't have any perspective here
- The unemployment is one of the greatest problems in the village

Also in this part of the discussion some of the ecological problems were mentioned. They said that there are a lot of illegal dumps and the Ministry of Ecology as a responsible ministry must find a way to solve this problem.

The second question for discussion was “*What are the basic economical branches in your municipality?*”. As it was mentioned before, the participants said that they are not employed. Few years ago, 80% of the citizens in the village are used to work in Silmak factory. Also they are working on the field but that isn't the main economical branch in this village. There are several private enterprises but they are very small and the number of the employers is not very big. The participants stated that one of the biggest problems in the village is the citizens that are not born in the village of Jegunovce, but they used to live and work there. They don't have land in the village and now they don't work in Silmak. In the past in Silmak 2 persons from one family used to work, but now there is only one employed person per family. Some of the quotations were:

- We used to work in Silmak. 80% of the citizens worked there
- We are agricultural workers, but some of us don't have their own land
- There are some private businesses but they are very small

On the questions *“How many citizens are there in your village?”* and *“What is the ethnic structure of your village?”*, they said that there were 1000 citizens in the village. 860 of the citizens have the right to vote. And on the second question the participants said that the majorities in the village are Macedonians, but also there are Romas (2%) and Serbs (2%).

The next few questions were very similar to the first question but more specific: *“Are you satisfied with the living conditions in your community?”*, *“What are the basic infrastructural problems that your municipality is faced with?”* and *“What is the communication net (the connection) with the neighboring villages and the bigger towns (Skopje, Tetovo)?”*. The participants of the focus group stated in general that they are not satisfied with the living conditions in their community. They have problems with the health service. There is health service only until 3 p.m., but after that they must go in Tetovo. There is an ambulance office in Silmak, but the citizens can only get basic aid medical service. One of the problems in the village is the problem with the roads. In the centre of the village the road is terrible. The project for building the plumbing system started several years ago, but it isn't finished yet. There are only 18 families who are connected with the plumbing system. From the infrastructural problems there the problems with the public lamps and the problems with electricity were also mentioned. There are times when the electricity voltage drops to 120V instead of 220V. They also said that they don't have electricity every third day.

Regarding the communication net with the neighboring villages and the bigger towns the participants stated that they have very bad communications. They said that they are well connected with Tearce, but with other villages the communication is terrible. The roads through the other villages are very bad. The participants said that the problem is that from the two sides of the road there is

water way and the road could not be extended. Jugohrom used to do the service for the roads in the past but now nobody is doing that.

*“Which of the neighboring villages, do you feel your municipality needs to be connected with?”* was the next question for discussion. Regarding this question, the participants said that priority road for reconstruction is the road to Tudence and Kopance. They said that sometimes in the winter they are waiting for three hours for the road to be cleaned. Also the participants stated that the road to Tudence is very narrow. It can be concluded from the discussion that in general the communication net with other villages is very bad. The participants said that the main transportation enterprise doesn't work now. There are only private vans, but they don't frequently relate to Tetovo and to other villages.

- The road to Tudence should be the priority road for reconstruction
- We are waiting for three hours at the roads

The following questions, for discussion were related to the economical situation in the village, perspectives for economical development of the community etc. The questions were: *“What is the economical situation in your village?”*, *“What are the chances/ perspectives for economical growth of your municipality?”*, *“In which measure the economical situation in the village has an influence on the inter- ethnic relations?”*. In general the economical situation in the village was evaluated as very bad. The participants stated that there is either only one member or neither one from one family who works today. The fact that a 100% of the young people don't work should be on the top of the priority scale of the problems in the village. Part of the participants on the focus group said that the people who are fit for work and are over 55 years old are the most threatened generation. About the chances for economical development, the participants mentioned that they have a program for free economical zone. This project is at the moment in the Government of the RM and the citizens from this municipality expect that it will be approved from the Government. Also they said that they expect that with this project new chances for employment will be opened. They also said that with the new regularities it would be easier for the local government

to convey the procedure for opening new businesses. The participants said that it would be of great importance the opening of the factory for dairy products. They also recommended opening a green garden plant. But the general conclusion of the participants was that the biggest problem would be the negotiation of the products. On the next question from this part of the discussion, *“In which measure the economical situation in the village has an influence on the inter-ethnic relations?”* the participants were not very responsive. They just mentioned that they have good communication with all ethnical communities in the region including the Albanians. They specified that the communication with Neraste, a village with Albanian citizens is on a top level. The general conclusion of the participants of the focus group was that they don't have any problems. Some of the quotations were:

- The economical situation in the village is a catastrophe
- All young people from the village don't work
- We are waiting for an approval from the Government for opening free economical zone. With this project we are hoping that there will be new employment
- It would be good for the economical situation in the village if a dairy and green garden plant was opened
- We have good communication with all ethnic communities in the region, especially with Neraste.

*“How will the solving of the vital economical problems in the municipality reflect on the inter- ethnic relations?”*, was the next question for discussion. The participants said that if they succeed to make consensus in the Council of municipality with all representatives from the ethnic communities from the municipality of Jegunovce, there wouldn't be any problems between the inter ethnic communities.

On the next question, *“Do you think that, you would live better if you migrated to another place?”*, the participants said that the general situation in the country is very bad and there is not place in Macedonia were they could live. If they are

forced to migrate they will probably go abroad but not in Macedonia. Some of the participants said that there are some chances for migrating in Skopje but if they have more money. Most of the participants want their kids to leave the country. Some of the reasons for this way of thinking are:

- The young people don't have perspective here
- There are no language and computer courses
- The local library is very poor

The last two questions for discussion, of this part of the focus group were: *“What is your opinion about the process of decentralization (your expectations and needs)?”* and *“In which measure you are familiarized with the new law for local government (for ex. Purview of the primary and secondary schools, etc)?”*. The participants were not familiarized with the new law for local government and the only thing that they know is that the mayor of the municipality will have bigger responsibilities. They are hoping that with this process of decentralization new jobs would be opened. They are also hoping that some of the ecological and infrastructure problems will be solved.

For the end of this part of the discussion, the participants mentioned some of the problems in the village that were not mentioned before. Some of them were:

- *We don't have sport equipment in the village*
- *There is no public lightening*
- *There is no football club in the village*
- *We don't have any cultural associations in the village*

## **GENERAL CONCLUSIONS FOR THE FIRST PART OF THE DISCUSSION**

In this part of the discussion the general situation in the village was evaluated as very bad. There is no perspective for the children and for the young people. The participants were unified that with the collapse of the factory Jugohrom, the whole life in the village collapsed. They have some infrastructure problems (mostly with the roads) but the social communication with other villages and

nationalities in the region was evaluated as very good. About the new process of decentralization, the participants have great expectations, but they are not acquainted with the new decentralization law.

## **SECOND PART: INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS**

The second part of the discussion on the focus group was focused on inter-ethnic relations in the municipality. There were several questions about this topic for discussion. Considering the fact that this village is a one national village (only Macedonians) the general conclusion is that they have not any inter-ethnic tensions.

On the first question *“What is the level of communication between the different ethnical communities in your village (region)?”* the participants said that they have good communication with other ethnic communities.

- *We have an excellent communication with Albanians*

On the next question *“Is there a question at the moment on which there are some disagreements between the ethnic communities in the region?”* the participants were not very responsive for discussion. They said that Macedonians are not unique unlike Albanians. The reason for this separation between Macedonians is that they are politically divided. They said that there is not a problem which causes disagreements between Macedonians and Albanians.

On the third question *“According to you in what measure the distrust from the conflict in 2001 has been surpassed?”* the participants said that the distrust is surpassed 100%. Today they are communicating quite normally with Albanians.

On the next question *“To what extend the personal interests influence inter-ethnic relations?”* the participants said that they don't know of such a case. Some of the quotations for this part of the discussion were:

- We haven't got any problems

- We don't have a sports hall
- In Semsevo they are building a sports hall but not here
- Macedonians are not unique but Albanians are. That is the reason for the biggest success of the Albanians instead of the Macedonians
- Macedonians are usually divided by the political parties
- Most of the donations are for the Albanians
- The two biggest parties in Macedonia SDSM and VMRO are responsible for this situation. It is their fault for such a great unemployment. Today in Jugohrom 60% of the employers are Macedonians and 40% are Albanians.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSIONS FOR THE SECOND PART OF THE DISCUSSION**

The general conclusions for this part of the discussion are that the participants have good communication with the Albanians. There are not any ethnical problems in this region and in their village. According to them the distrust from the 2001 conflict is surpassed 100%. The basic assumption for establishing a dialogue between the ethnic communities in the municipality is supplementing a consensus in the council of the municipality between Macedonian and Albanian councilors.

## **THIRD PART: EDUCATION**

The third part of the discussion of the focus group was focused on the educational problems and issues. As a centre of the municipality of Jegunovce, the village of Jegunovce has a big school building in which a lot of students from the neighbouring villages are studying. In this part of the discussion, the director of the school also took participation, and according to him he had the main role in accepting the students from other villages in the school in Jegunovce. The participants said that the school has the capacities to accept all students from the neighbouring villages to study in this school. The participants stated that they are satisfied with the conditions for studying in the school, but it is necessary for

them new classrooms and a sports hall to be built. In general, the school has capacities for conducting the tuition. The students from the other villages have transportation to the school in Jegunovce and back and they are pleased of the studying conditions.

#### **FOURTH PART: RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the final part of the discussion, the moderator of the focus group asked for some recommendations for improvement of the general situation in the village.

*The discussion of the focus group was focused on these several questions:*

- *Do you think that for solving of the ethnic conflicts there is a need for help from the international organisations?*
- *According to you in which measure the international organisations can help in solving the ethnic tensions?*
- *Where do you see the future of your children and of the municipality in general?*

The participants said that their municipality had and still has a good cooperation with the international organisations. They had a lot of international donations in their municipality and they are pleased with the international community in every aspect. They mentioned that they got donation for reconstruction of the school and the water system. From the international organisations which had donated in Jegunovce the participants mentioned the Department for international development, the Catholic Relief Service, USAID, IOM and the Norway Government. The participants also said that the donations from the international organisations depend on the ethnic structure in the village. The participants stated that most of the foreign donations went to Albanian or in the villages with mixed nationality. The participants also said that their village has some projects that could be implemented but they don't have funds to help them with their realisation. As potential donations the participants recommended a building of a new or reconstruction of the old kindergarten. In general the participants of the focus group are satisfied with the cooperation with international organisations.

## FOCUS GROUP REPORT – VILLAGE OF SHEMSHOVO

Location:	Shemshovo, Municipality of Jegunovce
Date and time:	16.04.2005 (19.00pm – 21.00pm)
Moderator:	Artan Krivenjeva
Co-moderator:	Bashkim Bakiu
Number of participants:	8
Structure of the group:	Five unemployed, businessman, construction worker and school employee.

The focus group discussion was organized in five phases:

1. Introduction
2. General part
3. Multiethnic relation
4. Education
5. Recommendation for local problems resolution

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the first part we made an introduction, and we asked them to do a personal introduction (names, professions etc.). We informed them with the purpose of our visit and explained the relevance of the answers we expect from them in order to have a clear view with the life conditions in their village and problems they are facing in their community. Every one was asked to answer a simple questioner concerning life standard, infrastructure, multiethnic disputes, and the role of international organization.

## 2. GENERAL PART

This part aimed to collect more information on the village in general, on the economic situation, living conditions in their municipality, ethnic structure, migration and ethnic tensions. Biggest problem that they were facing was unemployment, migration due to bad life standard, infrastructure, mishandling the donations given for their village etc. On the first question *how would you describe the life in your municipality?* Their response varied from bad to medium. The biggest problem that they are facing is unemployment:

- Working without social security
- Most of them work in private firm
- Most of them see their future in the construction business as construction workers

On the next question the participants were asked - *Which are the basic economic sectors in the village?* Some of them are construction workers; others have gone to third countries. It's true that after the changes that came with the Ohrid Agreement a small number was employed in the state administration but that's not enough considering the high rate of unemployment in our village. No one works in agriculture because there is no real price for our products.

- We work our land only for our needs
- Our fields are neglected as a result of the small prices

The third question focused on demography (population and ethnic structure). There are 2500 – 2600 inhabitants out of whom 90% are Albanians and the rest are Macedonians.

*Are you satisfied with the life conditions in your community?* All of them responded that the living conditions are unsatisfactory. The opinions of the participants vary from no conditions to median.

- Lack of investments

- Lack of entertainment facility
- Interference of political parties

Which basic infrastructure problems your municipality faces? All of the participants said that most of the problems are as a result of the bad infrastructure in their village.

- “Roads are built with our own contribution”
- The municipality has never shown interest for us
- “Problem with electricity supplies”
- The school conditions for our children during the winter are bad. There is no central heat; the windows have never been changed (the classes are drafty).
- “No Sewer network
- The gym needs to be build immediately
- We don’t have space for our office of local community

Asked about the need for regional transportation, the participants said that local transportation is functioning, thanking the private transporters.

*In the next question participants were asked about the economical situation in their village?* They all responded that the economical situation in their village is not promising. Most of them say that the municipality has neglected these two villages (Shemshovo and Kopanica) and as a result many of our youth are unemployed. Most of them see no option than to work abroad. Others work as construction workers.

*They were asked about the potential and economic sectors that will provide development and progress?*

- Investments in Small and Medium Corporation could improve the economic situation

*How will the solution of economic problems reflect on interethnic relation?* The tensions wont be so high:

- If the economic situation is better there wont be any place for interethnic tensions
- Its very easy to manipulate in environment were the rate of unemployment is high.

*Do you think that by migrating to other places your life standard would be improved?* We have detected high level of willingness toward emigration. They think that bigger cities can offer more to them and their family, as well as leaving to third countries. Most of them worked abroad since no body from their family is employed,

- Each family has one member abroad
- They are convinced that cities don't offer better prosperity to them

*What do you think about the process of decentralization?* We have detected that there is insufficient knowledge on this issue; Asked about the new law on local self-government:

- The local government has more responsibility
- We have been informed from the media
- Our lives won't change a bit since Macedonians are majority in the council. We don't think that the policy will change when it comes to Albanians. We will not find jobs in future.
- We don't think that the economic situation will improve
- It all depends on the new president of the municipality

## **MULTIETHNIC RELATION**

In the third part of the discussion we wanted to find out about their attitude towards issues of interethnic relations, common values, communication problem in every day life etc. during this part of the discussion question on the 2001 conflict were raised.

On the question *what is the level of communication between ethnic communities in your village (region)*:

- The relations are not good because the distrust is still high
- During the conflict we had a lot of problems
- Its not the same as before the conflict but its all right

They also gave some ideas how to initiate mutual cooperation:

- Organizing round tables, cultural manifestation and other activities so that in future we don't have these kind of problems
- The president of the municipality together with political parties represented in the council should take the first step in organizing these activities
- Sport tournaments

*Currently, are there any particular disputes on certain issues between ethnic communities in the region?* They all responded that there are not any kinds of disputes in their village.

*Where do you locate the reasons for multiethnic differences on particular questions in your community?* The next questioned was conditioned with affirmative answer to the previous one, therefore it was not an issue for discussion.

*According to you, in what extent did you overcome the mistrust produced by the conflict in 2001?* Every one said that the mistrust has begun to decline from the period of the conflict even though the distrust is high:

- Time is needed for wounds to be healed
- Albanians that worked in the factories in Jegunovce weren't returned back to their jobs after the privatization.
- There are cases during floods when we have to cooperate (Sllatina river is a good remainder)
- Dialogue has no alternative

*How does individual interests influence interethnic relation?*

There are individual that want to cause problems for their personal economic interest.

- The group led by Zorica from Zhilce

## **EDUCATION**

This part of the discussion had the purpose to see their opinion regarding the problem in Shemshovo and the preconditions for returning the pupils in their school.

*Where do you children attend school?* They attend school in Shemshovo.

*Are you satisfied with the conditions and if not from what in particular?* Every one expressed that the conditions in their local school are not satisfactory or some said that the conditions are very bad (local school in Kopanica).

- It's very cold during winter since there is no central heat, and the windows are in bad condition.

*Where do you locate the reasons for the events in Shemshovo?*

We reached compromise with them to change the name in central school Shemshovo and we made the second compromise, we dislocate the monument of Jonuzi. Individuals that have participated in the parent's council caused this problem and it was said that most of them didn't have any children attending school here. They initiated this for political reason so that they could transfer them somewhere else. Their true intention was to influence change of the status of the school and make another center where they would have control. Now we are convinced that they have problems between themselves. (Zhilce and those from Siricino) They cant agree on the location of the new school. Those from Siricino and other villages don't want to send their children in Zhilce.

- Their plan is to build a new school in another Macedonian village (Zhilce, Ratae or Jegunovce)."

- The principal of the school and most of the administrative staff member are Albanians
- All the representatives from our village went to talk with them in order to return their children back to the school
- Nobody until now has done any harm to the Macedonian children
- “Baci” interfered only to defend the name of the school.
- It’s fact that Macedonian children were attending school in Shemshovo till June 2002.
- One part of Macedonians wants their children to attend school back in Shemshova but are afraid to admit. They fear from the respond they may get.

*Do you think that by retrieval of Macedonian students in Shemshevo inter human relation will improve?* It was unanimously responded that inter human relations will get better. They will improve.

*What are necessary precondition for retrieval of children in the school?* There aren’t any preconditions for the retrieval of the students.

- They are free to come back whenever they want

## **RECOMMENDATION OF LOCAL PROBLEMS RESOLUTION**

This part has to do with the potential of the municipality for solving infrastructure problems. They were asked whether international organization have helped them in resolving these problems and if there is a need for financing projects in their municipality

*Is there any need for assistance by international organization in solving your local problems?* They all responded that help is needed from international organization.

- Yes, its welcomed
- There have been done some repairmen’s in the ceiling of the school

- The new gym needs to be finished
- Education center,
- Sewer network as the biggest problem

*To what extent they would contribute in lowering the tensions?*

- It will low the tensions
- Macedonian villages have declared that are multiethnic, so that they would be financed (Tudence was mentioned)
- Investments are needed in opening new jobs

*Where do you see the future of your children and the municipality in general?*

We see the future of our children here in our village. Our state has to improve the economic situation, in terms of finding new jobs for us, so that our youth will not go abroad.

- If the situation remains like this most of our youth will not have any alternative but to go abroad.
- Our hope is strong that the future of our children will get better. It all depends on the state.
- Those that go to faculty will have a brighter future. It will be easier for them to find jobs.

## FOCUS GROUP REPORT – VILLAGE OF JEGUNOVCE

Location:	Jegunovce
Date and time:	16.04.2005 (19.00pm - 21.00pm)
Moderator:	Miša Popović - IDSCS
Co-moderator:	Gorast Stojmenovski - IDSCS
Number of participants:	9
Structure of the group:	The group consisted of people of various professions of which 3 of them are farmers, other 3 working in the local factory “Silmak”, a teacher, journalist and the last is employed in a trade company.

The focus group discussion was organized in five phases:

11. Introduction
12. General part
13. Multiethnic relations
14. Education
15. Recommendation for local problems resolution

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The first part of the discussion referred to the personal introduction of the people participating in the focus group (their names, professions etc.). The moderator explained the project goals, background of the organizations involved and the relevance of the opinions that will be given in the further discussion. In every focus group before opening the group discussion, participants were asked to complete simple questionnaire composed of six questions referring to their life standard, infrastructure, multiethnic disputes and the role of international organizations.

## 2. GENERAL PART

The general part of the discussion was aimed to obtain general information on life in the village of Jegunovce. The purpose was to gather information about the participants' occupation, their perception of the quality of life in the village, the economic situation and the possibilities of economic development. Other issues talked about in this phase were those of demography, such as population number and ethnic structure. In addition to this part, there was a focus on questions of infrastructure (roads, traffic communication, sewer, water supply system and medical facilities) and the decentralization process.

The first question was *How would you describe the life in your municipality/village?*

The opinions of the participants vary from bad to median, focusing on the unemployment and the underdevelopment of the community:

- "The life is typically village-like"
- "There is no recreation for the youngsters, no café, just one playground"
- "Large scale unemployment"
- "Bad roads"

The second question was *Which are the basic economic sectors in the village?* Agriculture is the primary occupation of the population in Jegunovce. Until recently, the local metallurgical factory "Jugohrom" (now "Silmak") was the main employer for the people in the village. As a result of the collapse of the factory, many workers were laid off and were forced to work as farmers. With the privatization, some of the workers returned to the factory, but the village is still facing the problems of unemployment (largely caused by the collapse).

The next questions focused on *demography (population and ethnic structure)*. There are approximately 800 inhabitants. The population is Macedonian with a small percentage of Romas and Serbs.

*Are you satisfied with the life conditions in your community?* On this question there were a lot of answers that implied to a very high level of dissatisfaction. As follows:

- "The conditions are bad"
- "No adequate water supply. The used water is mainly from local wells "
- "Bad roads"
- "Air pollution mostly caused by the working factory near by"
- "There are no entertainment and recreation facilities. No cultural life"
- "Water supply system is dysfunctional"
- "The ambulance is working until 3 pm. If emergency occurs we are supposed to go to Tetovo"

In regards of the previous statements, the participants gave these answers on the questionnaire given before the focus group.

In the question *"To which extent are you satisfied with the life quality in the municipality?"* five available options were given:

- Totally satisfied
- Partly satisfied
- "So – so"
- Partly unsatisfied
- Totally unsatisfied

33 % of the participants answered both that they are partly satisfied and that they are partly unsatisfied.

The problems that are significantly decreasing the level of life quality are mainly of infrastructural nature and anticipated in the next question: *Which are the basic infrastructure problems that your municipality is facing ?*

The number of responses/answers on this question was large and diverse. They started with the very bad condition of the kinder garden and prep-school, and continued with the bad condition of the roads. Here, they mentioned the average traffic connections with other villages in the municipality and the lack of

connections with the village of Vratnica. Concerning the bigger cities, such as Tetovo and Skopje, the regular bus lines are not available after 4pm. Because of the crisis in 2001, the railway connecting Skopje and Jegunovce was closed which made the traffic communication more difficult. This fact also influenced the higher education of the young people from the Jegunovce municipality, because they were dependent on this railway line to Skopje.

Regarding the questionnaire, on the questions of infrastructure (roads, medical and educational facilities), the opinions were basically the same and the given grade varied from “1” to “3”, but on the sewer and water supply issue, most of the responses were “1”.

The next questions evaluated the economic situation in the village - *How is the economical situation in your village and where do you see potential for economic development?* The responses were in line with the previously expressed opinion in the questionnaire resulting in 77% of the respondents focusing on the unemployment rate as the most important problem marking it as an image for the economic situation itself. The participants in the focus group expressed views on agriculture as a source of development but at the same time portrayed “Silmak” as a single most important employer.

- "It's not very good"
- "Large number of unemployed"
- "We should be working on improvement of the agriculture"
- "Our region had the biggest number of cattle in the past"
- "Our main problem is the access to the market"
- "We need a safe buyout of the products or a food processing industry "
- "The factory Silmak could employ everybody"

In addition to the questions about economy, the respondents were asked: “How would the resolution of the economical problems affect the inter-ethnic relations?” Their expressed opinions implied that there would be no change in the relations, since they are “not so bad”. Among the replies there were opinions stating that:

- “The relations are not changed”;
- [the economy] “...is not a main reason for the state of inter-ethnic relations. During the crisis we took care of the escaped cattle of the Albanians in neighboring village”.

When asked if they would migrate to other place, would their standard be improved, the respondents answered negatively.

- “Everywhere is the same in Macedonia”;
- “Only if we move abroad”.

At the end of the general part, participants of the focus group were asked two questions concerning the processes of decentralization. The first question was about their opinion about the process of decentralization while the other was about the knowledge of the new laws. The respondents were feeling optimistic about the decentralization, but there was skepticism about the implementation of new policies. The results of the questionnaire support this notion showing that, there is a slightly positive trend present in their opinion.

## • INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

The third part aimed at gathering information about issues of multi-ethnic coexistence, communication problems and questions about consequences of the 2001 crisis. At the end of the third session questions about normalization of relations and starting a dialogue were also asked in order to locate the perception on the prerequisites for initiating a discussion.

The first question was about the *level of local inter-ethnic communication*. The respondents described the communication as normal without any problems. They communicate with the Albanians in situation of mutual interest, namely on the working places.

- “There are no problems in the village”
- “There are no interruptions in the communication”

- “In Silmak the half of the employees are Albanians and we are doing just fine”

The second question regarding the inter-ethnic relations was: *“Is there any misunderstanding on certain issues among the ethnic communities in the region?”*

On this question the respondents pointed out two main issues. One was the dispute concerning the school in Shemshovo, while the other was the insecurity after the crisis in 2001.

- “The problem of the pupils in Shemshovo, who now study in Jegunovce”
- “Currently there are no problems, but if I go to Tetovo I would not feel secure”
- “I felt secure, but after 2001 that was changed”
- “Everywhere is the same”

Next question asked the participants to locate the reasons for emerging of the inter-ethnic problem. Here they mentioned the politicians, parties and their interest as primary source of the troubled inter-ethnic relations. But there was one point and that was that the part of the responsibility carries the individual itself. Their responses were:

- “From “above”, politicians and the parties”
- “The reasons are materialistic and economic”
- “We should educate the children in a different way. The children communicate despite the ethnic background. We as parents should be good examples of tolerance and friendship and in that way influence their further development”
- “After the conflict in 2001 we feel insecure and uncertain”
- “It became common to stay at home after it gets dark”
- “We should discuss more openly for our fears because they are mutual”
- “The children communicate easier (through friendship, sport, chitchat)”
- “There are always two sides of the story”

*According to you, in what extent did you overcome the mistrust produced by the conflict in 2001?* Most of the opinions here were that the communication between the two ethnic groups is getting wider, but there is a certain amount of distrust.

When asked about the influence of personal interests on the inter-ethnic relations, the group unanimously agreed that those interests are significant.

At the end of this part the participants were asked about the preconditions for setting up dialogue resulting in inter-ethnic problem resolution. The answers were spread in two different lines. The first acknowledge the responsibility of the locals and the power of their own initiative, saying that “time should pass”, but “we should arrange meetings, gatherings and happenings with the others”. But on contrary some of the participants expressed an opinion that the situation of inter-ethnic relations does not depend on them and should be “backed up by foreign help”.

#### **4. EDUCATION**

The part of the education was meant to analyze the local perspective of the problem. The level of the quality of the education process was pointed as satisfactory, but on the infrastructure issues there was a vast debate.

The children from Jegunovce are attending school in their own village.

When asked about the conditions that the school is providing, the participants addressed the infrastructure as very problematic, while they were satisfied with the teaching staff.

- “The playground is not illuminated and the windows are old and broken”

Regarding the infrastructure, they noted lack of cabinets for specific subjects (science and technology), no gym and no space for school plays or other extra-curricular activities.

- “Our children are eager to participate in every school activity”

In addition to this, the group pointed that “a small investment is needed to improve the condition of the local school and the life of the average pupil”.

## **5. RECOMMENDATION OF LOCAL PROBLEMS RESOLUTION**

The last part was aimed to detect the role of the international organizations working present in the region as well as the different ways of support that they are and should be giving (providing). In addition participants were asked about their views about the future and the future of the municipality in general.

The purpose of these questions was to help and assist the participants in finding a solution to their problems.

*Is there any need for assistance by international organization in solving your local problems?*

- "Of course, they are more than welcome"
- "They are already helping"

Here, they also mentioned that this kind of meetings, helps them to point out the biggest problems they are facing at the moment.

On the questions of *ways* and *kind* of help the answers were more than understandable. Most of the responses were:

- "Donations"
- “Investments, but after we point out the main goals ”
- “Improve the cooperation in the region”
- “New employments would bring an end to the migration of the young people. They should stay here and encourage the development of our community”
- “Participation of the local population in the decision making. This would bring as closer”

- “We don’t need financial aid only. Any kind of help is more than welcome”

The last question was aimed at *their views of their future and the future of their municipality in general.*

At this point there was a slight disappointment noticeable in the opinions of the participants. They said that their expected future will turn out to be not so well.

- “If there is only one employed per family you can plan something”
- “Because of the financial problem there is a large number of unmarried people”
- “I have an idea about the future, but the present situation is altering our goals constantly”
- “We as parents can’t provide the future that the children are hoping for”
- “Without finances we can’t provide the young people with university education”
- “Everybody is facing unemployment”

As an additional question we asked *What is the first thing that you would change?*

- “The standard”
- “New employments”
- “Better roads and water supply”
- “Better future for the children”
- “Healthy water and clean air”
- “At least one employed per family”
- “The reconstruction of the school and the infrastructure of the village”

## FOCUS GROUP REPORT – VILLAGE OF SHEMSHOVO

Location:	Shemshovo, Municipality of Jegunovce
Date and time:	16.04.2005 (19.00pm – 21.00pm)
Moderator:	Bashkim Bakiu
Co-moderator:	Artan Krivenjeva
Number of participants:	12
Structure of the group:	three teachers, professor of Albanian language and literature, economist unemployed, Silmak employee, five unemployed and one school employee.

The focus group discussion was organized in five phases:

6. Introduction
7. General part
8. Multiethnic relation
9. Education
10. Recommendation for local problems resolution

### 3. INTRODUCTION

In the first part we made a introduction, and we asked them to do a personal introduction (names, professions etc.). We informed them with the purpose of our visit and explained the relevance of the answers we expect from them in order to have a clear view with the life conditions in their village and problems they are facing in their community. Every one was asked to answer a simple questioner concerning life standard, infrastructure, multiethnic disputes, and the role of international organization.

#### 4. GENERAL PART

This part aimed to collect more information on the village in general, on the economic situation, living conditions in their municipality, ethnic structure, migration and ethnic tensions. Biggest problem that they were facing was unemployment, migration due to bad life standard, infrastructure, mishandling the donations given for their village etc. On the first question *how would you describe the life in your municipality?* There was a unanimous response that the life in their village is very bad due to:

- “High unemployment”
- “Our youth is unemployed,”
- Only those that are members of political parties can hope for employment
- “It’s very difficult. There is nothing to be said”
- “There is no social security for those that work in private firms”
- “The municipality hasn’t offered jobs to anybody from our village”

On the next question the participants were asked - *Which are the basic economic sectors in the village?*

Most of them work in agriculture but they stressed out that they are not working for selling their products, because it’s not worth it. Other thing is that most of the youth are not employed, that’s why they see their solution in working abroad.

- It’s not reasonable to work in agriculture
- Most of the young people work as construction workers
- 30 % of our youth work abroad
- Working only for two months per year as a construction worker, is not a way out for us.
- No entertainment facility for our children

The third question focused on demography (population and ethnic structure). There are 2500 – 2600 inhabitants out of whom 90% are Albanians and the rest are Macedonians.

*Are you satisfied with the life conditions in your community?* All of them unanimously responded that the living conditions are very bad due to unemployment.

- The president of municipality is responsible for this bad economic situation.
- The water system is still not functioning
- No sewer network
- The school conditions for our children during the winter are bad. There is no central heat; the windows have never been changed (the classes are drafty).
- The gym is going to be ruined if its not finished.
- Lack of educational center (language and computer)
- Lack of investments from state institution.

*Which basic infrastructure problems your municipality faces?* All of the participants said that most of the problems are as a result of the bad infrastructure in their village and the lack of investments from the municipality. Our municipality has never invested in the building any roads, their responses vary from bad to medium:

- The municipality has never invested or has ever built something in our village
- All these roads have been build with our own contribution,
- Roads are in very bad condition.
- We face great difficulties with the electricity supplies here.
- Main obstacle of their village is the president of the municipality
- “What’s the sense of having water system without a sewer network”?
- During floods we face difficulties with the polluted water as a lack of sewer network.

Asked about the need for regional transportation, the participants said that private transporters cover the bus lines, even though before 2001 this was

covered by the city bus transportation. But in the end they say that they are satisfied because they have transportation for all the villages they need to visit.

*In the next question participants were asked about the economical situation in their village?* There was unanimous respond that the economic situation is bad as a result of the unemployment in the village.

- From 300 houses in the village only 10 – 15 houses are with Macedonians. Each Macedonian family has more than two persons employed
- Nearly every Macedonian from their village is employed in Jugohrom and Silmak.
- Only ten to twenty Albanians are employed in Jugohrom and Silmak
- Discrimination in employment
- After privatizing Jugohrom factory from three Albanians that worked there only one remained employed. The others were fired from their employer.

They were asked about the potential and economic sectors that will provide development and progress? Some ideas were mentioned:

- Milk factory, since most of the families in our village have cattle's
- Small Textile factory that will employ woman from the village
- Loans that will initiate opening small and middle companies
- Agriculture is not an alternative

*How will the solution of economic problems reflect on interethnic relation?* There was unanimous respond that ethnic tensions will decline:

- If most of us have jobs no body would have to worry about anything

*Do you think that by migrating to other places your life standard would be improved?* Most of them are sure that cities can't offer them more, that's why they don't see an alterative in migrating from their village. The bad economic situation on the other hand has made more than 30% of the youngsters go and

work abroad. Most of them worked abroad since no body from their family is employed,

- Each family has one member abroad
- If the policy of employment were different from the beginning, our youngsters would have not gone abroad in this big numbers.
- No body would liked to work abroad with his own will, the unemployment is the reason for this problem

*What do you think about the process of decentralization; what are the benefits from this process and disadvantages that come with this process?* Most of them said that they have been informed from the media; Asked about the new law on local self-government:

- The benefits of this new law are going to be felt only in the Macedonian side
- Even if the decentralization is implemented, most of the members of the council are Macedonians
- Our school will be neglected from the local government
- We will face great difficulties in primary education and in health.
- Even Tetovo as a city will have problems with financing the primary education
- The new president of our municipality has inherited a depth worth 200.000 denars from the former president of the municipality.

## **MULTIETHNIC RELATION**

In the third part of the discussion we wanted to find out about their attitude towards issues of interethnic relations, common values, communication problem in every day life etc. during this part of the discussion question on the 2001 conflict were raised.

On the question *what is the level of communication between ethnic communities in your village (region)*: their answer varied from no communication to medium.

- Our relations are not the same as they were before 2001
- The national television “Sitell” has increased the distrust after the problem in our school.
- They are responsible for tensioning the situation in our municipality
- During the conflict of 2001 our village was attacked from Zhilce. We didn’t have considerable damages but that broke our trust. Now they are causing the biggest problems in our municipality.
- Considering the situation back then, we are communicating with Macedonians from other villages. We don’t communicate only with Macedonians from Zhilce.
- Macedonians, with whom I used to talk, didn’t want to communicate with me since they were afraid that someone would see them. This happened couple days ago in Siricino.

Currently, are there any particular disputes on certain issues between ethnic communities in the region?

The biggest dispute that remains to be solved is the problem with the school and the unemployment. They responded unanimously that the employment policy is discriminatory towards Albanians.

*According to you, in what extent did you overcome the mistrust produced by the conflict in 2001?* Every one said that the distrust has begun to decline from the period of the conflict, but its still high:

- Dialogue is needed so that problems could be solved
- The problems have political background
- The distrust is high but dialogue has no alternative
- We have problem only with Zhilce

*How do individual interests influence interethnic relation?*

They said that there are individuals that want to have some kind of profit by causing problems in interethnic relation. It was pointed out the case in

Shemshovo were individuals wanted to use this interethnic dispute for individual interest.

- The group led by Zorica and Trpko from Tudence.
- The president of the municipality has also interest to make problems with the school.

## **EDUCATION**

This part of the discussion had the purpose to see their opinion regarding the problem in Shemshovo and the preconditions for returning the pupils in their school. Our intention was to gather as much information considering the fact the problem occurred here.

*Where do you children attend school?* They attend school in Shemshovo.

*Are you satisfied with the conditions and if not from what in particular?*

Every one expressed that the conditions in their local school are not satisfactory or some said that the conditions are bad.

- The conditions in this school were bad for all (Albanians and Macedonians)
- Thirty years ago I have attended school in the same class, nothing has changed since then.
- Thirty pupils learn in one classroom
- The conditions are bad if they are compared with other schools in Macedonian villages. (Preljubishte only 13 pupils)
- It's very cold during winter since there is no central heat, and the windows are in bad condition.
- The bathrooms are in bad condition
- We need more technical support for some educational subjects.
- The gym is not finished yet.

*Where do you locate the reasons for the events in Shemshovo?*

In September 2002 we took an initiative to change the name of the school in Jumni Junuzi and build a monument honoring him as the first teacher in this school. Macedonians protested so we made a compromise in changing the name from Jumni Junuzi to Central School Shemshovo. We also agreed to dislocate the monument. Even then they found arguments so that they would stop the retrieval of the children. They were convinced that Macedonians have some other plans. Their ultimate goal was to build a new school and low the number of the children in Shemshovo. "In that way our school will lose its status as a central school". It was pointed out that a problem between the Macedonians has occurred now, Macedonians from Zhilce insist on bringing the children in their school and the others prefer Jegunovce. They can't decide about the place where the new school would have to be built.

- Their plan is to build a new school in another Macedonian village (Zhilce, Ratae or Jegunovce)."
- This problem was organized in advance
- Macedonians from other villages have declared that Zhilce caused this problem.
- We made great efforts in making the conditions better for them
- We changed the terms of the school so that Macedonian could come to school only in the afternoon.
- For three months the classes were empty waiting for them to return
- We had problems among our self because these changes affected our work
- The problem is within them. Children have quarreled during the past too, but no body has used that for political reason.
- They were never at any kind of risk
- Zorica was the president of the parent's council even though she didn't have any children attending school.
- She interfered in this problem because of her personal interests. (She's the owner of three local stores in Zhilce)

- One part of Macedonians wants their children to attend school back in Shemshova but are afraid to admit. They fear from the respond they may get.

*Do you think that by retrieval of Macedonian students in Shemshevo inter human relation will improve?*

It was unanimously responded that inter human relations will get better. They will improve.

*What are necessary precondition for retrieval of children in the school?*

- There aren't any preconditions for the retrieval of the students.
- We want them to come back
- They are free to come back whenever they want.

## **RECOMMENDATION OF LOCAL PROBLEMS RESOLUTION**

This part has to do with the potential of the municipality for solving infrastructure problems. They were asked whether international organization have helped them in resolving these problems and if there is a need for financing projects in their municipality

*Is there any need for assistance by international organization in solving your local problems?*

All of them unanimously responded that there is a need for donations in their village. Almost everything that has been built in our village is from private donation. The municipality has never financed a project for our village out of the project for water supply system.

- Yes, they are welcomed
- Our state has neglected us in the past and now
- The state and international organization have to invest in programs that will gather Macedonians and Albanians joint project
- Organizing sport activities

- Financing the new gym that needs to be finished
- Open a small factory for textile were Macedonian and Albanian woman will work
- Help the school in opening classes for foreign languages
- All donation are given in smaller schools in the Macedonian villages even though the number of the pupils is small
- Also many Macedonian villages have declared that are multiethnic, so that they would be financed (Tudence was mentioned)

*To what extend they would contribute in lowing the tensions?*

- Tensions will get higher if there are manipulations with the funds
- Tensions will decline
- To improve the employment in our village
- Investments are needed in opening new jobs

*Where do you see the future of your children and the municipality in general?*

Most of them see the future of their children in their village. They are convinced that if the economic situation gets better the number of the people that go abroad will decline. But they emphasize that the employment policy has to be changed so that those who will continue their education will find a job.

- If the situation doesn't improve there is no hope for us
- The municipality has to take care for all of us

## FOCUS GROUP REPORT- VILLAGE OF KOPANCE

Location:	Kopance, Municipality of Jegunovce
Date and time:	17.04.2005 (19.00pm - 21.00pm)
Moderator:	Miša Popović - IDSCS
Co-moderator:	Gorast Stojmenovski - IDSCS
Number of participants:	12
Structure of the group:	The group consisted of people of various professions of which 4 of them are farmers, other 2 working in the local factory "Silmak", 2 are unemployed, a housewife, a pensioner, one is employed in a trade company and the last one is working in a private security agency.

The focus group discussion was organized in five phases:

- Introduction
- General part
- Multiethnic relations
- Education
- Recommendation for local problems resolution

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The first part of the discussion referred to the personal introduction of the people participating in the focus group (their names, professions etc.). The moderator explained the project goals, background of the organizations involved and the relevance of the opinions that will be given in the further discussion. In every focus group before opening the group discussion, participants were asked to complete simple questionnaire composed of six questions referring to their life

standard, infrastructure, multiethnic disputes and the role of international organizations.

## 2. GENERAL PART

The general part of the discussion aimed at obtaining general information on life in the village of Kopance. The purpose was to gather information about the participants' occupation, their perception of the quality of life in the village, the economic situation and the possibilities of economic development. Other issues talked about in this phase were those of demography, such as population number and ethnic structure. In addition to this part, there was a focus on questions of infrastructure (roads, traffic communication, sewer, water supply system and medical facilities) and the decentralization process.

The first question brought up on the focus group was: *How would you describe the life in your municipality/village?*

The opinions of the participants varied from bad to median. They focused on the financial difficulties they are facing and how this results in the everyday life. The image that one gets from their opinions is that of a community with low quality of life in several aspects, such as unemployment, bad living conditions, no recreational and cultural life. All in all, their view of their village is as of underdeveloped.

- "The life is hard at the moment"
- "No recreation for the young people. The gym is ruined"
- "There is a large number of unemployed"
- "We have only one employed per family or even none. Family of four can not survive with an income of 8 to 10 thousand denars"
- "No cultural centre, no cafés"
- "There is only one school on the edge of becoming a ruin"
- "There is no kinder garden"
- "We don't have a water supply system, the roads and the electricity are a disaster"

The second question was: *Which are the basic economic sectors in the village?*

The participants explained that the main occupation of the village was farming due to the favorable conditions in the area, but the participants noted that economic situation and the large scale of unemployment drove them to occupy with agriculture.

The next questions focused on *demography (population and ethnic structure)*.

There are approximately 1200 inhabitants. The population is divided between Macedonians and Albanians in a 3 : 7 % ratio.

*Are you satisfied with the life conditions in your community?* On this question there were a lot of answers that implied a very high level of dissatisfaction. The participants stressed that they have difficult times and because of the recent flooding they emphasized the problems concerning the river of Vardar. In addition to that, the lack of a primary medical care facility was seen as an important mark of the current living conditions in Kopance.

- "The conditions are difficult"
- "The river of Vardar often floods the area. The bank of the river is not arranged for such events"
- "The agriculture is not feasible because of the flooding"
- "The waste disposal is a problem"
- "There is no medical facility. And because of that we have to go to Tetovo"
- "No adequate water supply and electricity"

On the preliminary questionnaire the respondents showed biased opinions. 33% of the participants had median evaluation with the answer "so, so". At the same time equal number of respondents chose the alternative rating the life quality as worst.

The next three questions were intended to gather evaluation about the infrastructure of the village and the area, as well as, the traffic networks connecting them with the nearby places. The impression was that the inhabitants

have problems with traffic because of several factors. First of all, they regard the condition of the road as very bad and see them as being too narrow for a proper transport. Second, there are no more bus lines and that creates problematic transport for the inhabitants. At the same time the minivans that offer services are viewed as not organized and not always accessible for a good traffic communication. Third, the railway lines that were important means of transport for the inhabitants is not in use since the conflict in 2001. This fact means that the single most important inexpensive connection to Skopje is replaced with more expensive means of transport. This represents a problem having in mind the financial situation of the people in Kopance.

- “Bad roads”
- “The road connections are good”
- “The quality of the roads is bad and they are too narrow”
- “There are minivans for transport, but they don’t have a driving schedule. When the busses were active there were no problems”
- “The lack of railway transport, that existed before the conflict in 2001, creates difficulties. Now we have to pay twice the price then we used to”
- “There should be a better connection with Tetovo”
- “There is no organized transport to Zhilche and Rataje”

The results from the preliminary survey express a high level of dissatisfaction. The respondents were asked to give grades of quality, from 1 to 5 (5 being the highest), to items regarding the infrastructure. The roads, water supply and educational facilities scored under the medium grade. More than 80% gave 1 to the water supply and 67% of the respondents evaluated the educational facilities with the worst grade. At the same time 67% of the respondents gave the medium 3 to the medical facilities.

The next two questions focused on the economic situation and the perspectives of economic development. The responses on the question of the current economic situation were contradictory. While part of the group described the situation as bad, the other part of the group viewed the economic standard as average in comparison to the rest of the country. The respondents regard

agriculture as important potential of economic development when they take into consideration the advantages of the area. At the same time they felt that production facilities will further improve the potentials and development of the area. Either way, 83% of the respondents labeled the unemployment as a most important economic problem.

- “Economic situation in the village is bad. The standard is low”
- “In comparison to Macedonia the standard is average (it’s not so bad, every family has one car)”

“How would the resolution of the economical problems affect the inter-ethnic relations?” The participants in the focus group agreed that the economic troubles are very important reason for the existence of inter-ethnic conflict. Not all of them thought that the resolution of those problems would improve the relations directly, but rather indirectly, through general improvement of the quality of life. This opinion exists largely because of the fact that the inter-ethnic relations in Kopance are positive, when compared with the area. Their responses to the question were in line with explanation of the everyday life and their communication with the Albanians. Some of them noted that the communication “is not as it used to be”, but they put that into broader (not exclusively inter-ethnic) perspective. This is in line with the evaluation in the preliminary survey. The results show that the respondents graded the inter-ethnic relations with bad grades with 25% choosing 1 and 2 and 47% grading them with 3.

- “When everybody would have a job there will be no inter-ethnic conflict. People would not have time for that”

When asked if they would migrate to other place, would their standard be improved, the respondents answered negatively.

- “Where would we go?”
- “If there is a chance for a better life I would move”
- “No, our homes are here, our children should here”
- “The problems are not so big. There is a need for small investments to make the life better”

At the end of the general part, participants of the focus group were asked two questions concerning the processes of decentralization and the laws regarding it. The answers expressed pessimism about the decentralization, significantly due to their experience of being marginalized as a village in the municipality's decision making. Even the optimists in the group were feeling skeptic about the issue. The results show that 75% had no particular standpoints on the issues of decentralization.

- “According to the experience we don't believe the decentralization would make things better”
- “I think it will be better, but will this turn out as sad”
- “We are not informed enough on the new law of decentralization”

#### **4. INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS**

The third part aimed at gathering information about issues of multi-ethnic coexistence, communication problems and questions about consequences of the 2001 crisis. At the end of the third session questions about normalization of relations and starting a dialogue were also asked in order to locate the perception on the prerequisites for initiating a discussion.

The first two questions in this part aimed to evaluate the level of communication among the different ethnic communities and to point out some disputes that are related to the inter-ethnic relations. The respondents evaluated the level of communication as being good. They further explained their good communication as being understandable, since they live together with the Albanians, share the everyday life and have mutual problems. However, they feel like they had better relations in the past and saw the break-up of Yugoslavia and the conflict in 2001 as facts that influenced certain decline in the level of good relations. The most important fact that is in line with the good evaluation of the level of communication was their co-operation with their Albanian neighbors in preventing the paramilitary forces to enter the village.

- “There are no problems”
- “The everyday life leads us to communicate”
- “The level of communication is not as it used to be”
- “The level of communication decreased with the change of the political system in 1991 (introducing the multi-party system) and with the conflict in 2001”
- “We live side by side”
- “The bad financial situation, poverty and other factors lead to colder relations”
- “Good relations in general. During the conflict, together with the Albanians, we didn’t let any paramilitary force to enter the village”

The next question asked the respondents to locate the reasons for the emerged inter-ethnic disputes on certain issues in their community. They located the politicians as being responsible for such a situation, creating it for their own interests. One of the participants added that certain international influence interferes in the inter-ethnic relations, broadening the gap.

- “Above, among the politicians”
- “The international influence ... artificially created conflicts. Why? Profits“
- “We are toys in the hands of the politicians, while they are in the hands of the international community”
- “No foreigner can bring us peace. We should try and achieve it by ourselves”

In addition to these questions, there was a question concerning the suspicion in Albanians, created in 2001 and was it surpassed. The conclusion taken from the answers was that they regarded the problematic communication as normal after a conflict. It is important so note that they described the confidence among the older generations as significantly increased, while they saw a problematic situation in younger generations, where the suspicion has not been decreased.

- “There is a confidence among the elders (it has increased significantly), but among the youngsters the doubt is still present”

- “It is normal after a conflict to have problems in communication”

At the end of this part the respondents were asked about the interference of personal interests in the relations among the ethnic groups. The participants agreed on the existence of those influences feeling that they (mainly the people in the area) were being manipulated by certain individual, mostly because of material interests.

- “It’s a fight for survival, nobody cares about the others”

The last question was about the conditions in which a dialogue can be established. Having in mind the special conditions in Kopance, the answers were oriented in broadening and improving mutual social life. The respondents were oriented towards the future and thought that solving the economical problems and improving the relations among the youth would help and make things better.

- “What happened, happened, we can not go back in time”
- “The economic problems have to be solved. They are the main reasons for the problems”
- “Education. With dialogue we can solve any problem”
- “We should focus on the youth. The elderly respect each other, but the youth does not communicate as the should”
- “If we had a playground, the Macedonians and the Albanians will use it together for sure”

#### **4. EDUCATION**

The part of the education was meant to analyze the local perspective of the problem. This part inspected psychography of the group regarding preconditions for returning of the pupils in their previous school in Shemshovo, as a major problem in the region and as an event that received significant publicity. The levels of satisfaction from current resolutions, quality of the lessons etc. were other topics of discussion.

The Macedonian pupils from the village of Kopance are studying in Jegunovce, while the Albanian in Shemshovo. The pupils of Kopance were not involved in the dispute about the school in Shemshovo since they have always attended classes in Jegunovce.

On the question about the conditions in which their children study, the participants were not entirely satisfied. They proposed that certain technical aspects have to be improved in order to obtain proper education. It should be noted that the school in Kopance (teaching pupils until 4<sup>th</sup> grade elementary), had no adequate conditions too, and reflected on some opinions.

- “We are satisfied to some extent”
- “We regard the knowledge of English language and informatics as very important for the future of our children but the school in Jegunovce can not provide conditions for appropriate training”

The next question asked the respondents to locate the reasons for the events in Shemshovo. One participant pointed certain individual interests as being source of the problem.

- “In certain individuals who created the problem for their own profit “
- “The main reason was the conflict in 2001”
- “Because of certain interests in opening a school in Zhilche (school from fifth to eight grade)”

Next two questions were aimed at gathering opinions about the results of eventual return of the Macedonian pupils in Shemshovo. The answers were diverse. While some were skeptical and thought that situation would not improve, others felt that by increasing contact between the two groups there will be positive results.

- “Everything is interest”
- “If they return to the school the communication will get better, they will become friends again”
- “The politicians and the political parties should find a solution”

- “No, never”

The last question asked the respondents about the conditions under which, they think, the pupils would return. Reflecting previous attitudes about the whole thing being a manipulation, expressed its view that a simple decision not to allow the Macedonian pupils from the school in Shemshovo to study in Jegunovce would bring them back.

- “Agreement between the principals, to bring the children back to their originating school”
- “With minority of Macedonians, the Albanians can (have the right) choose the name of the school. It is normal because they are majority”

## 5. RECOMENDATIONS

The last part intended to detect the role of the international organizations working presently in the region as well as the different ways of support that they are and should be providing. In addition, participants were asked about their views on the future and the future of the municipality in general.

The purpose of these questions was to help and assist the participants in finding a solution to their problems.

The results from the preliminary survey showed a divided stances towards the international organizations with 25% saying the role is positive, 33% negative and 42% had no opinion whatsoever.

*Is there any need for assistance by international organization in solving your local problems?*

- “We should solve the problem ourselves”
- “If they decide to help, it’s more than welcome”

On the questions of *ways* and *kind* of help the answers were in line with the previous said. Most of the responses were:

- “Entertainment for the young people”
- “Employment”
- “Donations”
- “If they give a little help, it will be enough for us (for example: buy-out of our products”
- “The thing is that time should pass”
- “The friendship is lost. In general the human relations are grey”

The respondents emphasized the importance of receiving help and advice that would enable them to improvement human relations in general. They remembered the times when their life was happier and their communication with the others was on a friendly basis. They expressed that the new times have brought them worse relations with all their neighbors, no matter the ethnic background.

The response on the question about their views of the future was:

- “In Europe”
- “There is no future for us. For the children – it’s even worse. No money no school, no employment”
- “Men are never satisfied”

We asked an additional question: *What is the first thing that you would do/change if you had some power?* The response was:

- “I’ll buy myself a good car”
- “Solve bribe and corruption”
- “Improve the agriculture”
- “Employment”
- “We are cut off from all events. We only have couple of TV channels and receive limited information”

# **ANNEX II General result of the preliminary survey**

## General results

### Question 1

Table 1

How satisfied are you with the lifestyle in your municipality?			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	very satisfied	1	0,8
	partially satisfied	30	24,8
	"so -so"	51	42,1
	partially not satisfied	13	10,7
	not satisfied at all	26	21,5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100</b>

Chart 1

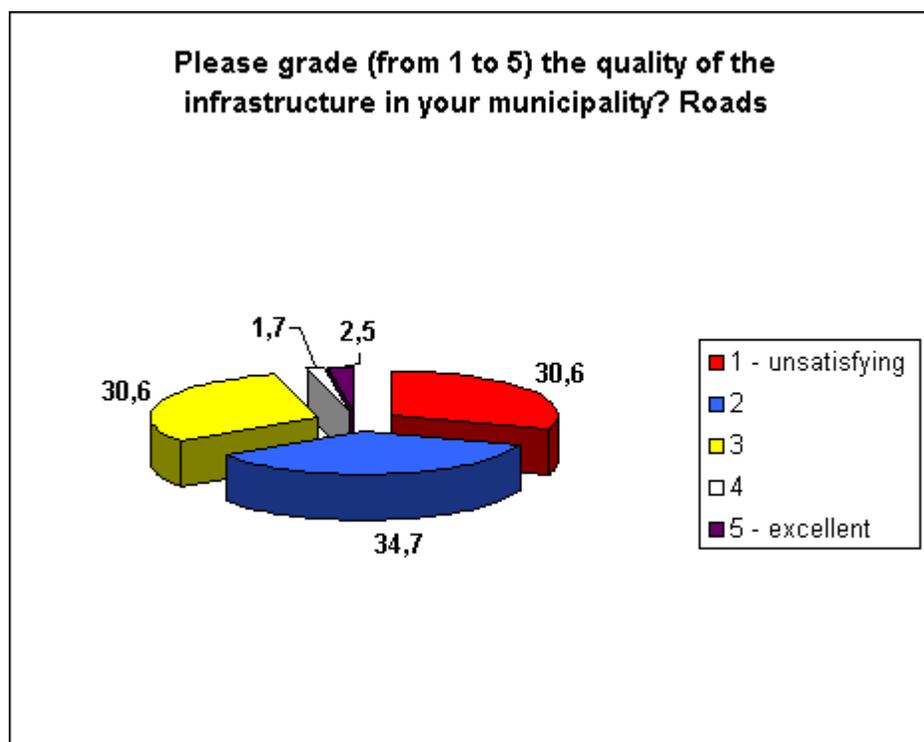


## Question 2.1

Table 2.1

Please grade (from 1 to 5) the quality of the infrastructure in your municipality? Roads			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1 - unsatisfying	37	30,6
	2	42	34,7
	3	37	30,6
	4	2	1,7
	5 - excellent	3	2,5
	Total	121	100

Chart 2.1

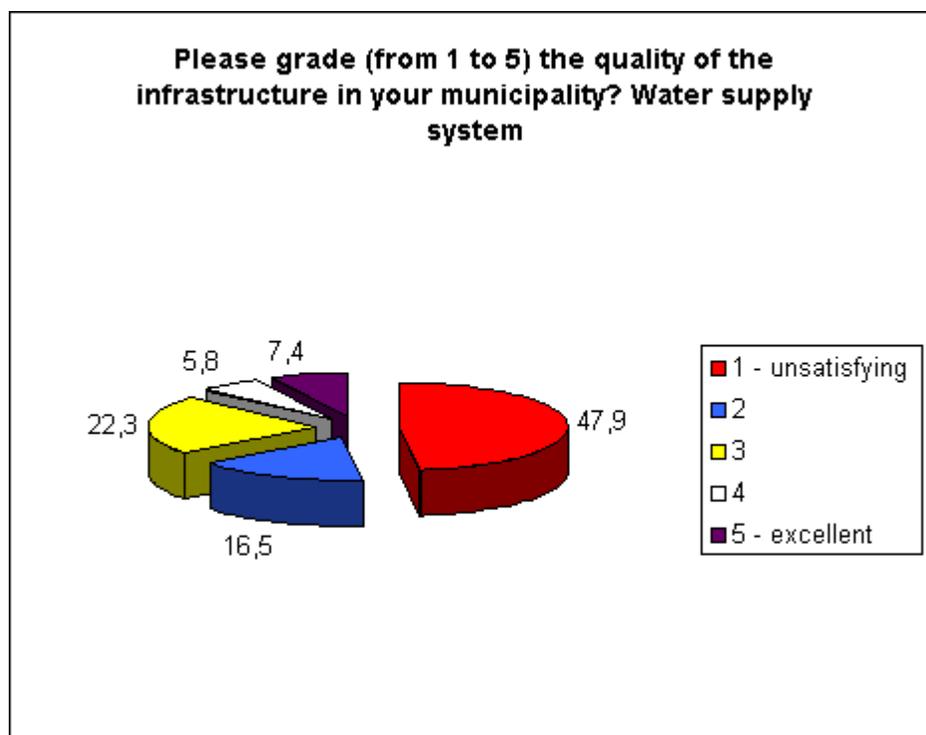


## Question 2.2

Table 2.2

Please grade (from 1 to 5) the quality of the infrastructure in your municipality? Water supply system			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1 - unsatisfying	58	47,9
	2	20	16,5
	3	27	22,3
	4	7	5,8
	5 - excellent	9	7,4
	Total	121	100

Chart 2.2

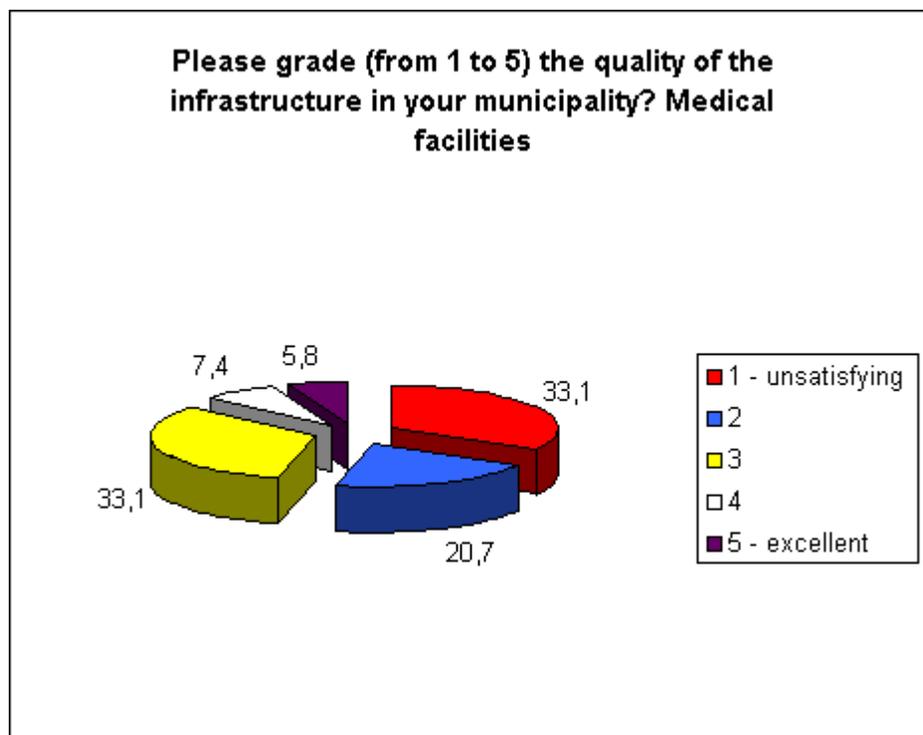


### Question 2.3

Table 2.3

Please grade (from 1 to 5) the quality of the infrastructure in your municipality? Medical facilities			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1 - unsatisfying	40	33,1
	2	25	20,7
	3	40	33,1
	4	9	7,4
	5 - excellent	7	5,8
	<b>Total</b>		121

Chart 2.3

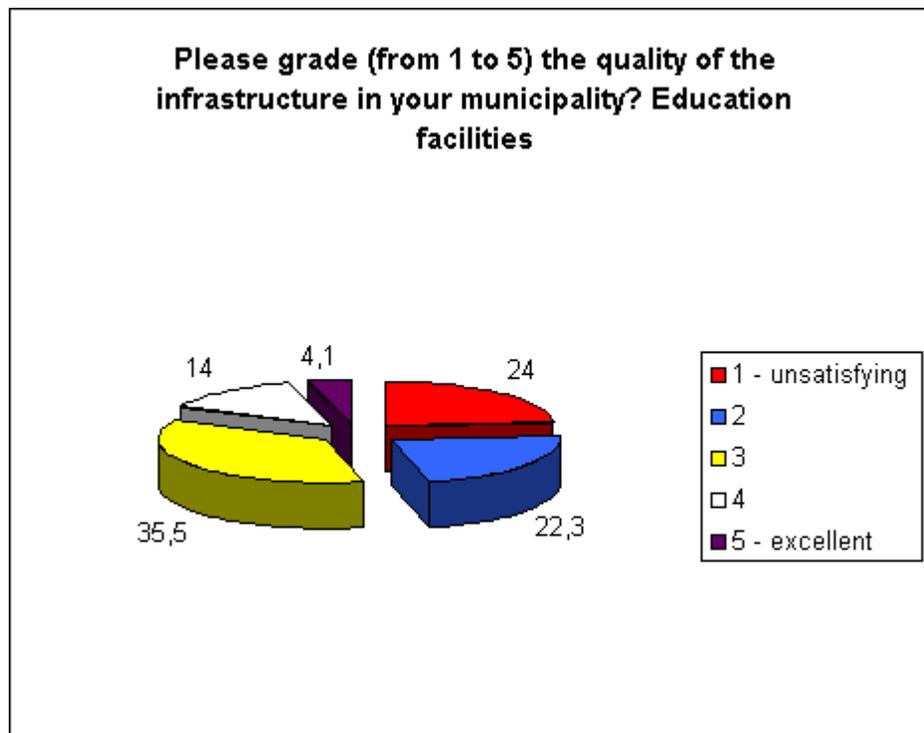


## Question 2.4

Table 2.4

Please grade (from 1 to 5) the quality of the infrastructure in your municipality? Education facilities			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1 - unsatisfying	29	24
	2	27	22,3
	3	43	35,5
	4	17	14
	5 - excellent	5	4,1
	Total	121	100

Chart 2.4



### Question 3

Table 3

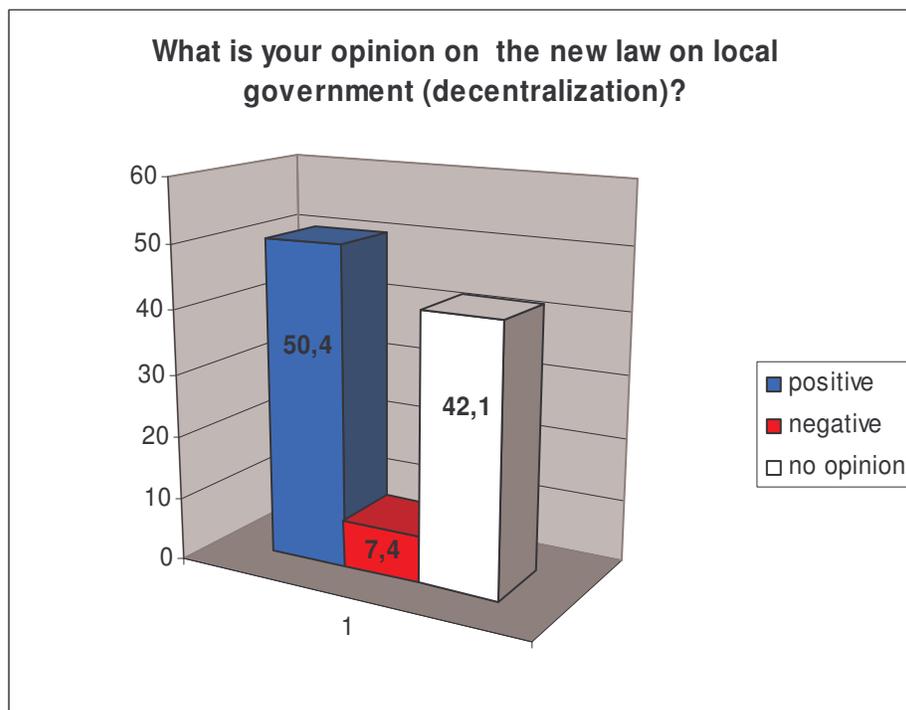
What is the major economic problem of your municipality?			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No answer	10	8,3
	Economic problems	1	0,8
	Financial problems	1	0,8
	Financial problems	1	0,8
	Infrastructure	1	0,8
	Yugoslavia	1	0,8
	I'm not satisfied	1	0,8
	Gender misbalance	2	1,7
	Lack of basic life preconditions	1	0,8
	Unemployment	71	58,7
	Unemployment	18	14,9
	Unemployment and hygiene	1	0,8
	Unemployment and low salaries	3	2,5
	Unemployment and buy out of agricultural products	1	0,8
	Unemployment and buy out of agricultural products	1	0,8
	Unemployment and water supply	1	0,8
	Unemployment, economy and social situation	1	0,8
	Unemployment, infrastructure	1	0,8
	Unemployment, local government	1	0,8
	Unemployment, poverty, migration	1	0,8
	Unemployment, foreign direct investments	1	0,8
	Buy out of agricultural products	1	0,8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100</b>

## Question 4

Table 4

What is your opinion on the new law on local government (decentralization)?			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	positive	61	50,4
	negative	9	7,4
	no opinion	51	42,1
	Total	121	100

Chart 4

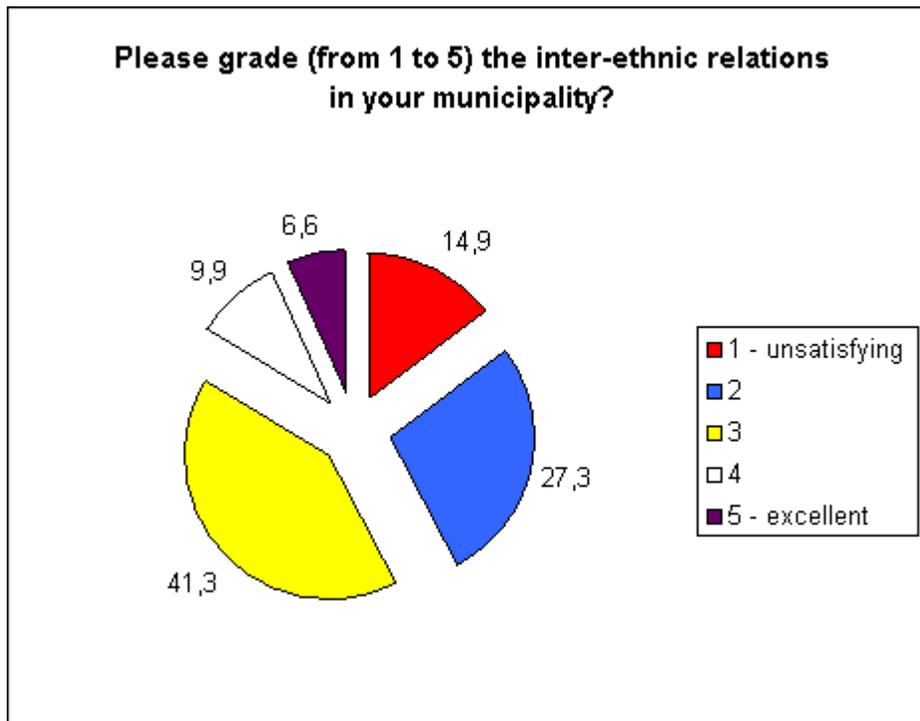


## Question 5

Table 5

Please grade (from 1 to 5) the inter-ethnic relations in your municipality?			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1 - unsatisfying	18	14,9
	2	33	27,3
	3	50	41,3
	4	12	9,9
	5 - excellent	8	6,6
	Total	121	100

Chart 5

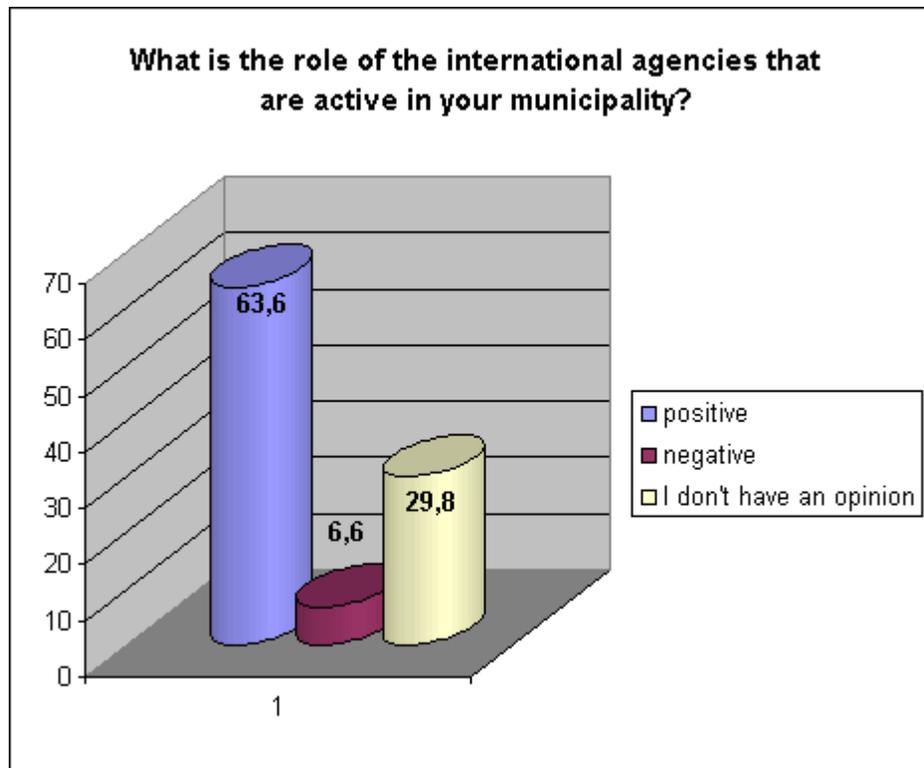


## Question 6

Table 6

What is the role of the international agencies that are active in your municipality?			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	positive	77	63,6
	negative	8	6,6
	I don't have an opinion	36	29,8
	Total	121	100

Chart 6

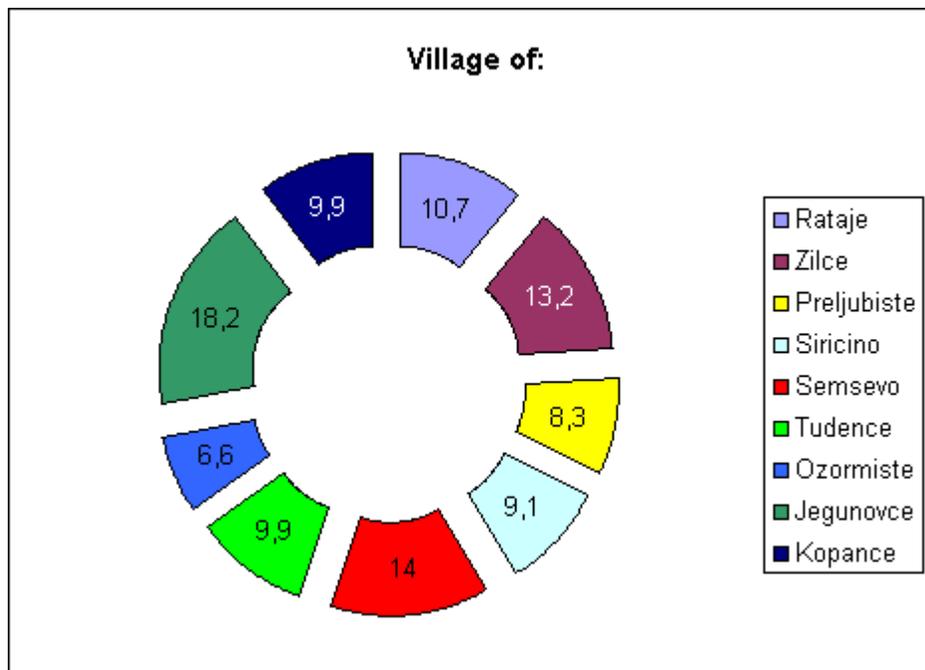


## Demography

Table

Village of:			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Rataje	13	10,7
	Zhilche	16	13,2
	Preljubiste	10	8,3
	Siricino	11	9,1
	Shemshovo	17	14
	Tudence	12	9,9
	Ozormiste	8	6,6
	Jegunovce	22	18,2
	Kopance	12	9,9
	<b>Total</b>	121	100

Chart



# **ANNEX III Questionnaires**

## GENERAL QUESTION FRAMEWORK FOR THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

### General Part

1. *How would you describe the life in your municipality/village?*
2. *Which are the basic economic sectors in the village?*
3. *What is the population number in your village?*
4. *What is the ethnic structure in your village?*
5. *Are you satisfied with the life conditions in your community?*
6. *Which basic infrastructure problems your municipality faces?*
7. *What is the traffic network with the nearby villages and cities?*
8. *Which are the places you think you should be better connected with?*
9. *What is the economic situation in your village?*
10. *Where do you see potential for economic development?*
11. *To what extent does the economic situation influence the inter-ethnic relations?*
12. *How will the solution of economic problems reflect on interethnic relation?*
13. *Do you think that by migrating to other places your life standard would be improved?*
14. *What do you think about the process of decentralization?*
15. *To what extent are you informed about the legal details of the decentralization process?*

### Inter-Ethnic Relations

16. *What is the level of communication between ethnic communities in your village (region)?*
17. *Is there any misunderstanding on certain issues among the ethnic communities in the region?*
18. *Where do you locate the reasons for multiethnic differences on particular questions in your community?*

19. According to you, in what extent is the mistrust, produced by the conflict in 2001, overcome?

20. How do individual interests influence the interethnic relations?

21. What are the necessary preconditions for establishing inter-ethnic dialogue?

## **Education**

22. Where are your children attending school?

23. Are you satisfied with the conditions and if not from what in particular?

24. Where do you locate the reasons for the events in Shemshovo?

25. Do you think that by retrieval of Macedonian students in Shemshovo inter human relation will improve?

26. Will the retrieval of the pupils influence the improvement of the inter-ethnic relations?

27. What are necessary precondition for retrieval of children in the school?

## **Recommendation of Local Problems Resolution**

28. Is there any need for assistance by international organization in solving your local problems?

29. To what extend they would contribute in lowering the tensions?

30. Which is the most suitable way of helping your community?

31. How do you see the future of your children and the municipality in general?

## Preliminary Focus Group Interview Questionnaire

1. To which extents are they satisfied with the life quality in the municipality?
  - Totally satisfied
  - Partly satisfied
  - “So - so”
  - Partly unsatisfied
  - Totally unsatisfied
  
2. Grade (from 1/unsatisfied to 5/excellent) the quality of the infrastructure in your municipality?
  - Roads
  - Water supply system
  - Medical institution
  - Educational institution
  
3. What is the main economic problem in your municipality?
  
4. What is your opinion on the new law for local self government (decentralization)?
  - Positive (it will improve our lives)
  - Negative (it will worsen our lives)
  - No opinion
  
5. Grade the multiethnic relation in your municipality (from1 to 5) ?
  
6. What is the role of international organizations in the municipality?
  - Positive
  - Negative
  - No opinion